

Burn Ward & Cold Fire of Diamond

Go about living with the care of a diamond-cutter now.
Twilight, clinic closing
doors clang
silent.

Only emergency beds in the burn ward are open.
(Somewhere snow's blowing
fiercely in a little sawmill town.)

Take me not back there.
Life.
The hospital glints, a small diamond on this desert hill.

Rolled back down the wards of memory
I see that bed of enormous suffering
a tonnage of roses, banked.

Burnt-off touch
of a child's hand.
"Oh flesh, my small coat—taken."

Words
like ashes blew into my eyes.
Shipped back in this skiff of flesh.

Trembling, travelling.
They bring ammonia, one step shy of oxygen, the cruel-bright.
It's a long way from here
but don't lose consciousness—
moving fast, now my clear sight.