HC SVNT DRACONES

I’ve eaten whole bridges before; chewed them slowly to splinters that caught between my teeth, molars grinding dry, mechanical and mindless of sparks.

To what end? I cross them off the map in pencil: Here Were Bridges, and Here Will Bridges Be Again, grown cheerfully back come spring’s first rain,

intractable toadstools, weeds of damned connection, traversal’s promise reborn—and me stuffed to gullet with matchwood futility, its weight pinning me still.

Tonight I drowned inertia in shots of pitch that burned going down, stress-ate sulfur in hollow frustration despite this permanent loss of appetite,

and felt them both touch to tinder past. I set out for the last bridge southward, stomach bursting with the keen flammability of dire intent,

and crossed while spitting up lit matches, hungry only for embers and salted earth; crossed again while sweating rivers of naphtha, stomping madly
in salamander boots with heels of flint,
aiming for nail-heads, in desperate search
of permanence—but found only wood
too wet to catch.

Denied the salvation of severance, I burned
the map, a final surrender to heartburn and blisters.
I haunt this bridge now, lost and oddly uncertain
of which side you live on.