

One Dead in Violent Crash

by Emily Sparkles

Death came to my street, but I did not invite him.
He shrouded 35th like a dark, grey curtain,
a mist that you can touch but cannot see.

The trees are on fire but they do not burn.
Smoke billows from nowhere; incense to satisfy
which idol this time? Alcohol, anger, or medical emergency?

The newsmen come and don't know whether to smile.
We all want to know what happened, don't we?
Won't you share your front row seat? Here, inside the curtain.

Don't ask questions, we'll ask questions,
the police say as they escort you to your door.
But I am the one who sits inside, my Christmas tree unable
to block the frenzied view from my picture window.

Swing, THUD. The telephone pole finally falls.
Swing, THUD. So too falls the tree.
Men in high-viz with helmets and axes, doing work that almost is
routine.

I'm grateful I missed the earlier clean-up,
the crushed car and shattered people.
My mind pulls back,
my stomach turns,
the shroud remains.

