

The Bounce

by Nonnie Augustine

I.

Two cancer scares since June, one
came up nothing the other nothing much.
(My breasts are dense: I know all about moles—
little bastards don't have to get sun to go nuts.)

My manuscript travels ether to beg, compete, get read?
Kind, crisp, exuberant notes let me know me why not.

Dubious choices abound. A scumbag persuades,
stupefies, berates, glitters, (his son had a gold baby
carriage, for Christ's sake) threatens, overheats.

II.

Hurricane Hermine's landfall hit just east of Panama City.
She bore down on Carrabelle, St. Mark's, Apalachicola,
Tallahassee, then on north and up the coast,
where it lingered for days, shattering nerves.

We (brother, dog, house cats and beloved strays, live oaks,
magnolias, roses) spent the night without even a bleep
in electricity, even a clap of thunder, while the Gulf of Mexico
pounded tiny Cedar Key's brave stretch of main street,
tore up Big Bend fishing piers, flooded old cemeteries.

III.

I'd been ready: sturdy candlesticks, working flashlights,
the manual can opener, bright yellow portable
emergency weather radio lined up on the dining room
table, a giant pot of penne edible hot or cold

waiting on the stove, The Weather Channel crowd
informing me of the latest developments.

Could be I overdid the urgency: played up the threat
of high winds, heavy rains, storm surge. Hot-sauced
my alarm, wanted it to blow away the enervating effects
of too much cable news and bemused time spent peering
at the damn spot with a magnifying mirror; of the dead—
ending emails from small presses coming after seasons
replete with the rush of composition and the particular,
peculiar vitality of living poem to poem.

