

Dudley Saunders, Locust

she tells a list
of daddy's family names
like all the begats in the Bible
and dark is singing in the car

and daddy aims the car to eat the road
so silent that you start to know
your ma don't know who those names are

cuz I am buried in the basement
like the locusts who all sleep inside your yard
and wake one day and try to tell you who they are

and daddy starts to cry
and no-one says a word
because the locust that is buried in the dirt
comes back in seven years to hurt

lord I am one
lord I am two
lord I am three four
lord I'm five hundred miles
from that aching rocking car

while locusts rise up from the ground
I'm hanging upside down
in a basement underneath some town
yelling hard

'come daddy deeper come inside
grease me up and spread me wide
and when I spread my teeth to cry
it'll move the earth

with leather sinking deeper in
I think I'll finally slip my skin
just like this locust in the dirt
come back this seventh year to hurt

in my body made of all the missing years
you can see the limbs of screaming children
move like bones beneath my skin
and the fingers of that other wife
who'd finally gotten out of hand
and he can't stand

I heard him pray Jesus make my family new
he buried me but then I grew
a weed unwinding in his back
a buzzing plaguing the skies to black
yes I come back

you say, I am a tumbleweed
some decades down the line
to an Arizona barkeep
with a lean untroubled mind

I'm rooted in the wind
I'm grooved into the road
and when I cry
you know just why
and there's nothing else to know'

but nestled in the sandstorm's whine

a language you can't read
a song you cannot sing along
an aching you don't need

like conversations through a wall
you listen hard but all
that you can hear is
mmmmmmmmmmmmmm