

BURNING OF THE BOOKS

Typewriters wait at desks,
stories loiter outside hotels.
Far from the boiling pulp of Thunder Bay
starved spruces in wordless bogs
wait to be books.

You who leave the bookstore
will know how the snow waits
for the white fox to venture out
when hunger is spelled in his gut,
how his tracks end in a tuft of fur
and the asterisk of blood
which is the only color on this page,
the unwritten preface to your book.
It will speak to you in your study
like the claviforms on cavern walls
that have kept felling bison
for forty thousand years.

As you open the cover
an axe will strike in the north woods
and teams of draft horses will haul
great logs across the ice.
And if you read well when you read *fire*
the censor's match will fail,
the heart of a pinecone will shine.
Incendiary slogans that sleep in libraries
will inspire arsons in the night.
Fireballs will crown the forests,
and in your book-walled room
the sweet smoke of a word's entrails
will rise from ashes of the page.