

Evelyn Birch

Photograph of Illegal Campfire

Sand sawed wood stabbed into dunes
pitched up as a tent without the fly
stark in the flash, and so are our faces
Sarah's covered hers though, of course.

My smile is only at my mouth
his attention on the burning of stars, or driftwood.
Cold sand as our seats.

Yes, this was before
when rashes washed away
when Sarah could at least try
to eat marshmallows melted over campfire.

Was it before
fresh air goosebumps?
Before debt to cover toss-ready textbooks
and fractured frustrations of empty pens
interrupting the progress of procrastinated paragraphs
when only eyelashes made eyes water.

There were sticks over me, earlier that afternoon
arching like the ribs of ship wreck
my skin aching from sunlight and salt
A frame of sanctuary without protection.