

# After You Have Vanished

by Kevin Prufer

The little red jewel in the bottom of your wineglass  
is so lovely I cannot rinse it out,  
so I go into the cool and grassy air to smoke.

Which is your warmly lit house  
past which no soldiers march to take the country back?  
When you reached across the table to touch my hand  
is not attainable. I cannot recapture it.

And no gunners lean on their artillery at the city's edge,  
looking our direction,  
having shot the sky full of bright holes.

The light bleeds from them  
and it always will.

Long ago, they captured our city  
and now they are our neighbors,  
going about their business like they were  
one of us.

Soon, like you, they will be asleep,  
having washed the dishes and turned out the kitchen lights.

When I inhale, smoke occupies me.

When I exhale—

By morning the wine in the bottom of your glass  
will have clotted.

I'm sorry I called it a jewel.  
It is not the soldiers who have shot me full of holes.  
It is not light that pours out.

Love did this.

I was filled with wine.  
Now I am drained of it.