

Joan Maiers

Burnt Offering

Someone torched Van Duyn's chocolate factory
when the calendar was half-past Valentine's.
Crowds tasted the smoke on Broadway,
inched their eyes up ladders
where firefighters rearranged the sticky flames,
their hoses erupting, horns of plenty
pouring over blistered stucco walls.

On suburban homestead property, a Victorian
incited troubles for its occupants.
Long ago, bees had taken over
until honey marbled the insides of wooden walls
and a demolition crew reamed out
years of sweet living
decanted from each story.

Back in the city, ladders from the fire trucks
looped hoses down around the factory siding
in the same fish-scale design
as the Victorian's honeycombed chambers.
Then clouds gathered the business into their facade.
Bittersweet, they lowered about the city
like some new-age shekinah.