

Prayer for Survival

The History of Fire

My mother is a fire beneath stone.

My father, lava.

My grandmother is a match,
my sister straw.

Grandfather is kindling like trees of the world.

My brothers are gunpowder,
and I am smoke with gray hair,
ash with black fingers and palms.

I am wind for the fire.

My dear one is a jar of burned bones
I have saved.

This is where our living goes
and still we breathe,
and even the dry grass
with sun and lightning above it
has no choice but to grow
and then lie down
with no other end in sight.
Air is between these words,
fanning the flame.

Linda Hogan, *Chickasaw*