

JENNIFER ATKINSON

**After the Burning of Flood Christian Church in Ferguson, MO:
An Exploded View**

—*in the manner of Cornelia Parker*

Arson undid them all | | all the pieces almost
Equally. The artist (Imagine her | | in rubber boots and yellow
Mackintosh shaking off rain) | | would take what she chose
And winch up those pieces | | suspending each on its own
Wire. A congregation of shards | | to abstract from the ruin quiet
Form. Parker would retrieve | | from the wreck and char silver
Tacks *By the rivers of Babylon* | | a fork a flattened silver-
Plated plate a cut-glass | | earring riffles of ash-
And gold-edged pages dog-ears | | and thumb-smears rests half-
Notes and time signatures | | the warped candle snuffer
The image of God as a rock | | a hen fire an anchor
A word a man a potter | | with clay underneath her nails
Pink-flushed puffs of fiberglass | | insulation keys a copper
And verdigris elbow of pipe | | the choir's indrawn breath
Before its first anthem | | *the words of our mouths and meditations*
The stink of burnt foam-rubber | | ozone tobacco and sweat
A bullet cast from melted | | trumpet brass easy
Sleep a cymbal and clang | | clang clang clang . . .
(How long can this listing | | and winching go on? Not

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Seven but seventy times | | seven wrongs and forgivens

Hundreds of ingots of lead | | hang in the air a sooty

Cloud of witnesses a pending | | storm Can you see it now?)

How can we sing | | bent notes a bent

Cup turned upside-down | | *We hang our harps in the willows*

Raze raze remember | | *my chief joy my son*

Head dashed against | | *a stone May the words*

Mouth heart harp | | Psalm 137

There we sat down | | *and remembered*