

DANIEL XERRI

The Great Mannequin Warehouse

(In memoriam A.B.)

In the Great Mannequin Warehouse,
my mouth choked by ashen dust,
I saw them standing still in silence,
staring at a point far off in the distance,
staring without acknowledgement,
the flames wreathing them
in swathes of shadows.

Row upon row of the unwanted,
the broken and deformed
lined the walls of this old warehouse,
immemorial first footprint on Earth's crust;
rejects paraded like books
heaped for the burning,
stories no one wanted told.

'This is the great mannequin warehouse,'
said the custodian with a smirk.
'You're witnessing what all refuse to see:
the exiles of the Great Department Store
expelled from the windows for being—'
'God's forsaken!' was I quick to answer.
'...for being who they were meant to be.'