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"The Amusement Park of Natural Disasters"

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The Amusement Park
of Natural Disasters

DENVER BUTSON

would be thrilling all by itself
what with The Tornado
how you’re lifted up
and spun around
with suitcases
kitchen chairs
and other ticketholders

or The Avalanche
a mountain that begins crumbling
as soon as the ride operator
takes your ticket
and closes the gate

not to mention The Tidal Wave
The Flood  The Forest Fire
and oh yes my wife’s favorite
because it’s hardly ever crowded
The Monsoon
we could hardly get our breath
last time
it rained so much

but what fascinates us even more
than the main park
are all the mini parks
that have sprung up
on the outskirts
across the parking lots
and railroad tracks
especially
The World Famous Festival of Personal Disasters
where just a rattling of change
buys a whole book of tickets
that entitle us
to choke on chicken bones
fall down staircases
lose everyone we love

and finally to grow old
fading quietly in photo albums

all of this under the supervision of our guides
a nervous family who laughs a lot
and never fails to genuflect
and look to the skies
if The Volcano next door erupts.