

LEONARD KRESS

*Storylines: Synchronicity*

*... in the morning an inscription containing a figure that was half man and half fish... fish for lunch. Somebody mentioned the custom of making an "April fish" of someone. In the afternoon, a former patient... showed me some impressive pictures of fish. In the evening I was shown a piece of embroidery with monsters and fish in it. The next morning I saw a former patient who was visiting me for the first time in ten years. She had dreamed of a large fish the night before... I walked over to a spot by the lake... a fish, a foot long lay on the sea wall...*

Carl Jung, *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*

Tell me, please, if you believe in synchronicity,  
whether or not this counts. Whether or not  
some marvelous sequence of events dismantled

the realm of the ordinary, warping the grid,  
forging something profoundly new. And if so,  
then how I should respond, even now, 25 years later?

It all refers back to fire, a specific fire,  
flames lapping the tight fist of smoke uprising.  
The flames of intolerable perfect love enveloping

the house where I lived in Wyncote, Pennsylvania,  
a few houses down from where Ezra Pound lived  
an epoch before. It was his first home in the east,

from which he commuted by train and street car  
to Penn in West Philly, befriending and rivaling  
William Carlos Williams, both of them going further

to Bryn Mawr to requite their love for pale  
and willowy HD. A literary menage  
that gave birth to Modernism. That stone house

where I lived in Wyncote, where just before  
the conflagration, our neighbor across the street,  
a former Prince of Palestine, now

professor of Islam, and his family were wiped out  
by a mysterious band of Black Muslims,  
never prosecuted. And then there was

the teacher that I lived with (a group of us helping  
to restore his old house, sanding floors and stripping trim,  
gutting and spackling gaps in dry wall). He circled

the flames bearing a small wrought-iron figurine,  
of Shiva, Hindu god of destruction, four arms  
upraised, one leg lifting a flexed foot,

the other crushing the spine of a tiny man  
whose desperate pathetic squeals are drowned out  
by roaring flames encircling the terrible god,

and the useless unleashed snaking hoses  
and cranking down sirens of the volunteer  
firefighters. He died soon after. A stroke

he suffered searching the char, the depths of his being,  
for lost treasure. I had tickets that day to see  
Thelonius Monk, one of the final gigs

before his breakdown, but never made it,  
of course, owing to this cosmic chord  
progression, *Straight, No Chaser*—everything

I owned, books, writings, records, clothes, bedding,  
burned to a crisp. It was just a few days later,  
amid ash and cinder still held aloft that long

by the stiff spring thermals, that it slowly  
whirled down like a seed pod, almost into my hands,  
as we surveyed the wreckage of the crumbled tower—

it was a page from Pound's *Cantos* cut  
like a tablet, outlined in black along the tear,  
the words mostly smeared: *Gods float in the azure air.*