

PEGGY SHUMAKER

Strokes

Whether painter's sable or flogger's lash
each slash is meant
to stay, to mark the moment
and to live on, bearing witness
to all who see the scar
whether or not they understand
where it came from,
brush or bullwhip.

Bubble or clot, hard block
stopping blood to the brain,
blanks out territories
that won't be heard from
again, blanks out
the middle of a sentence,
the whole family
of words, paints over
whole passages
of a marked life,
memorable to those
marked out, remarkable.