

MULTUM IN PARVO
By Catherine Strayhall

As night falls, the Flint Hills are
Burning, fire racing in eager lines across the prairie,
Charring goldenrod grass to ash-black. The air is
Deep with the smoky-sweet smell of a Kansas spring.

Every smoldering acre helps the land stay healthy
and strong, and as the
Flames twist over the hills—almost alive—that
dreaming
Girl guesses rightly that Manhattan will always stay
with her.

Her lungs are full of fire and her eyes are on those stars;
Inside, even her heartbeat is quiet—it's
Just insistent, and steady, and there,
Keeping her present for future memories.

Life placed her here, amidst the blazing hills and
the limestone; and though she sometimes
Misses her city and family so much that it aches to
the bone,
No other place could have been a better second
home.

On the Konza, where the wind blesses her, offering
Peace that is desperately sought, she breathes
Questions to the crumbling path and the infinite sky.
Rest is somewhere ahead of her, always another ridge over, but
Somehow, for now, that's alright.

Til then, she will smile at the smoke in the air, at
the trail
Unending, at the familiar sound of Fort Riley's
artillery-thunder. She will keep
Vigil over the unassuming sunsets,
Wondering what mysteries her someday will bring.

Exhaling, she tips her face toward the breeze and the
Yellow light-fading, momentarily putting aside the countdown slowly slipping toward
Zero, and her inevitable Manhattan goodbye.