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JIM JOHNSTONE

HEAVEN

Heaven
is just a garden, really.
A plot of land where you might reach down
to touch the snow
and crystallize.
I don't know this for a fact.
Fact is
joy is as close as I've come
to a second act.
Maybe further.
During a craniotomy, metal screws were used
to refasten the wedge
of skull
that had been removed
to expose my brain.
The material
almost human.
Materially shaped with flame and driven into
the mind.
Cybernetic,
I can still pass
through a metal detector without setting off
an alarm.
The fire unharmed.
Look through
my head
and see the great waffle iron of the garden
glowing.
From the window seat you'll notice
angels skiing.
Don't take it from me.
There's a god, right?
I got that straight from the horse's mouth
when those
who inherited
the earth
decided they'd inherited idiom.
A neurosurgeon will tell you that using metal

to patch
a skull
is equivalent to picking up branches
and placing them
back on a tree.
Decorating purgatory.
In the air
cirrus,
stratus, and alto imitate aspects of the healed—
nonstop shadows
on an MRI.
Launch me into the atmosphere and eventually
I'll want to return
to the field
where I was born
despite the fact that it's burning.
There's joy, even in hell.
Artificial time,
painted reeds,
the garden soaring, soulless, shaken like a snow
globe.
When I fly, I fly
through a metal detector
before joining the seraphim.
No alarm,
no end.
Now I have a little more time with the flowers
that interrupt
the runway's
lift.
Thank you for this gift.