**Ash**

Vivian Tran

I have been the dirt beneath Mayan temples, the sand inside Egyptian pyramids, the soiled

waters running through Roman sewers. I have been the fiber in red apple skins, the eyelash of

an extinct bird that had majestic feathers, the sour milk from your mother’s ripe nipple, the

toenail of a dinosaur. I have floated atop fires, turning air into distorted glasses. I have been a

distant star. I have been explosions in the sky. I have swirled just beyond the Schwarzschild

radius. I was picked up by a new sun. I have been part of planets and moons. I have made rock

and cheese, water and air, god and art, you.

I have lived and I have died.

I will reach mountain tops, ocean floors, the edge of this world, and the horizons of human

experience. I will perch on empty branches in morning sunshine, ripple river waves alongside

heavy raindrops soar through the air riding singsong soundwaves. I’ll get caught in a plane

engine and fly in a rolling, swirling motion, against the wind, with the wind, against this planet’s

gravity, with the Milky Way’s. I will breeze through the labyrinth with my left hand on the canal

walls of your inner ear into your mind. I will sit in a tiny container by your fireplace for you to

hold onto me. I will fall with snow and sleet, freeze on rooftops within dangerous icicles. I will

melt into freedom once again.

Eventually I will reach the ground, become one with the earth. And when the earth disintegrates,

I will disperse with it. I will return home.