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Big History

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Big History

By Joan Baranow

They're measuring the age of the earth
by what it's lost—isotopes
leaching like childhood,
leaving you with a faulty memory
and rheumatoid arthritis—
Earth, is that how you feel?
How bad does an earthquake hurt?
We've been trampling you for years,
losing our hair, our senses,
all the while growing
a cortex that invents
new ways to strangle you.
We're like strangers in a bar
sizing each other up
until one throws a punch—
sometimes it's a thousand mile pipe line,
sometimes a tornado.
Afterward, the humans stand around
to gaze at torn lumber, a broken jaw.
It must be a law that came
with the Big Bang,
one no one saw coming.