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Nobody Is Afraid of the Sky

When a school teacher returns home
 she is suddenly afraid
 because the hand-knit afghan
 in alternating rows of yellow, gold, orange and white
 is smothering her
 Her fingernails cut open her palms

A grandmother is unable to walk down the street
 she feels she is losing control
 of her breathing
 when her husband is even ten minutes late for dinner

Like the scientists who invented the nuclear
 bomb because the theory was so beautiful, so
 pure, they have invented simple fear, pure fear
 Nobody is afraid of the sky. They're afraid
 of the fear they have inside them, or so
 the theory says, they're going to
 fly apart, going to die, going to go crazy and this,
 too, is fear

yet they are still afraid of the sky
 prairie hailstorms that erupt
 smashing a librarian's living room window
 and then vanish

the rainbowed foothills light rain
 we are driving back toward the city
 when the car has a close encounter
 with the sun almost setting on top of us
 in burnished brightening colour
 I have never seen anything like it in the east
 is it the atmosphere, the altitude, the imagination
 kindled by an unrelenting terrain of sloping hills
 and silhouetted farm animals huddled together for the
 moment
 they resemble an indigenous herd that levelled tree and
 shrub
 in each direction for a thousand miles

The majority of doctors have no idea
 how could a grown woman possibly be afraid
 I look normal I don't start having seizures
 or foaming at the mouth, but my reactions are
 not normal
 Maybe it's just the things that happen
 When the symptoms started they made me feel
 like I had to be in control

there is a collision

there are dozens of thoughts that flow through
 your mind it is instantaneous

it is necessary to blame others when
 you have nerves that go off like a gun
 it is difficult to admit your own mind has be-
 trayed you
 I thought life isn't supposed to be that way
 I was ashamed and guilty...I wondered
 if life would have been different
 Well, life isn't supposed to be anything

Travel (driving, even walk-
 ing) seems to be at the heart of it

I live with tension This is the coda of fear
 the control is gone I have to just lie there

and let the world spin by

Anne Richard Burke
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