

KEN STANGE

Ranking The Elements (For Kate at Eleven)

*What's in a name? Everything: all the elements, and understanding too.
Our voice defines us—and all the universe as well. —Hippokrites*

The sun is brazing earth's edge.

.

We let our canoe slide us
to where ever it wishes to be.

.

The lake is more than black
and I search for metaphors.

.

“Obsidian,” you remark, startling me.

.

Leeward the shadow of our vessel opens
a dark window in the black mirror
beyond which strange tendrils wave

.

“Mop Muck,” you name
the translucent algae
that does indeed look like old string mops
my mother used, but I didn't know
you'd ever seen.

.

Hell, it isn't fire . (stolen from the Gods) . that matters.

.

Nor is it water . from where we came.

Nor is it earth . to where we'll go.

.

It is a young girl's words in Now's air
that ultimate gift
the gift of naming
that matters most.