What They Did Yesterday Afternoon

by Warsan Shire

they set my aunt’s house on fire
i cried the way women on tv do
folding at the middle
like a five pound note.
i called the boy who use to love me
tried to ‘okay’ my voice
i said hello
he said warsan, what’s wrong, what’s happened?

i’ve been praying,
and these are what my prayers look like;
dear god
i come from two countries
one is thirsty
the other is on fire
both need water.

later that night
i held an atlas in my lap
ran my fingers across the whole world
and whispered
where does it hurt?

it answered
everywhere
everywhere
everywhere.