

Taylor Graham

Fairytale-Surreal

California wildfires, summer 2018

The woods are burning, neighborhoods. Propane
tanks exploding houses, cabins, cars –
our world of transformations, spells beyond
familiar words, works of human hands.

What remains is ash when the fire will be dead –
subjunctive uncertain future tense.

Grimm. Evacuated. But you drove back in,
dodged the roadblocks, searched out
a marked front door. Two live dogs left behind.
Your key is native stubbornness, courage

to enter the sorcerer's domain for sake
of a dog's brown eye. Dogs of friend or stranger.

Taylor Graham is a volunteer search-and-rescue dog handler in the California Sierra, and served as El Dorado County's inaugural poet laureate (2016-2018). She's included in the anthologies *Villanelles* (Everyman's Library) and *California Poetry: From the Gold Rush to the Present* (Santa Clara University). Her latest book is *Uplift* (Cold River Press, 2016). A new book from Cold River Press is forthcoming in late spring.