

**first spring (Baltimore is burning)**  
PL Thomas

“It'll be summer in Dallas/ Before you realize/ That I'll never be/ Anything you ever want me to be”

[“Slipped.”](#) The National

thunderstorms blossom on the radar  
green yellow red maroon

like animated flower bouquets created by  
Jackson Pollock Georgia O'Keefe & e.e. cummings

because springtime is rising again

hail taps my office window  
rattled by wind gusts in shared rhythm

this season demands i pay attention  
this building storm lifts my eyes

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precious [child of my child](#)  
this is your first spring

your first angry sky  
your first thunder&lightning

we will hold&comfort you  
but only you can understand Mother Nature

we can tell you stories in soothing tones  
but we cannot guarantee anything

except our hearts are filled with you  
etched forever into the bones of us

/

this is the story they are telling my daughter

*snakes can smell when you are nursing  
slithering into your house for the milk*

*snakes will strangle nursing babies  
sleeping&dreaming in their cribs alone*

my child who is a mother tells me this  
her eyes&voice beg of me a mother's plea

*what is a mother to do what is a mother to do  
if even Nature conspires against her baby*

/

the news tells me this story in the last days of April

*Baltimore is burning  
thugs rioting&looting*

flames blossom on the TV screen  
yellow black yellow black

(if you look close enough you can recognize  
the strings&make-up but not the puppeteers

performing this 21st-century minstrel show  
masquerading as fair&balanced reality TV)

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Baltimore cries  
Baltimore witnesses

like the first thunderstorm of spring  
tossing hail&wind against your window

Baltimore shouts  
Baltimore [explodes](#)

*if the fires are large enough  
if the fires burn long enough*

*if the soot [covers over everything](#)  
painting every single face black*

will you listen will you look  
will you recognize will you act

Baltimore is burning

Phoenix rising

we can tell you stories in soothing tones  
but we cannot guarantee anything



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