After a summer of unprecedented high temperatures and a fall ‘rainy season’ with less than half the usual precipitation, the northern firestorm turned a city called Paradise into an inferno within an hour, razing more than ten thousand buildings and killing at least sixty-three people; more than six hundred others are missing.

“LIFE ON A SHRINKING PLANET,” BILL MCKIBBEN
OUT OF PARADISE

E. J. McAdams
As fire flows
hits objects
it consumes, or
may not consume,
leaves
indicators. That’s
where we start reading.
Clara Lane - nothing left.

Basically just a bunch of rubble
metal everywhere.
Cars wasted.

I mean, personal belongings completely gone.

I basically got out
with the clothes on my back and my pickup.
That’s all I have.

We knew it was coming.
I mean,
everybody’s been saying, you know, for years,
when this town goes up,
it’s going up.

And it went up.
GOVERNOR JERRY BROWN

This is not the new normal

This is the new abnormal

And this new abnormal will continue

UNIDENTIFIED EVACUEE

There's the Best Western

Basically the whole town's on fire right now

UNIDENTIFIED EVACUEE

Oh shit

that's a tree
that's on fire
there
right in front of us
This is bad
All those homes gone
I can feel the heat now -
my god

[woman crying]

I’m on Skyway
on my way out
right now
Everything is on fire
I’m in shock.
Those poor souls.
I tried
to get them out, but
we were trapped like rats.

I don’t know how
I made it.
I got in
a 3-foot deep V-cut in the stream.

This thing came over me
roared like a furnace from hell.

I said,
oh Lord,
no, no.

Nobody made it.
These people all
got burned out.
I was right down
below them here.

My friend,
you can see he’s dead,
and his mother.

I saw a fox
was running for his life,
so I said,
no Lord,
we’re coming, too.

It’s just really hard —
I’m traumatized.
But I have to believe
what I went through
was for a reason.
Go, go, go
Hurry up, people
go!
It’s getting hot
Come on, people,
go!

And the fucking wind
bringing it over

I wonder
what the fuck

they’re going to do

Hey, guess what?

We’re not going to catch on fire
ok?

We’re going to stay away from it
Then we’ll be just fine
ok?

We’re doin’
allright
That place is gone
Jesus!
Holy Shit,
half of our town’s gone

Should I pray to God?
I don’t know how to

Right now, Mother Nature is in charge.
BEN RAULERSON

It was hell on earth getting out of there. If we’d stayed 10 minutes longer we would have been burned.

MARY ETTER

I’m happy to be here, happy to be here and alive. The material things, we can replace those. They’ll be replaced. You can’t replace your life or your friends.

SUSAN MILLER

I was – I’ll have nightmares for the rest of my life. This was a bucket list I never wanted.
JEANNE NEELEY

We think we’re going to be okay, but we don’t really know.

DOUG CHANDLER

The first day shock and awe.
The next days fear and sadness.
Now it’s just frustration not knowing anything not being allowed
to return.

ERIN FINAFROCK

I’m closer than I have ever been to these people
When you go through a traumatizing event like this as a group you come together
Paradise is gone.  
There’s nothing to go back to.