

HURRICANE

Dressed in red on the map,
that symbol with two wicked teeth,
she feeds on the moisture and warmth
of the sea. Cool and dry at the core,
empty of heart, she pulsates,

she pumps, she rises. Wind-spun,
cloud-swollen, obese, she rages,
swashes her buckler,* spawns surges,
spreads contagion, doles death by flood.

Oh, she is hungry, hungry. Chews
whole cities to bits. Bites into buildings.
Peels roofs like bananas, spits them out.
Masticates mangroves. Spoils soil with salt.

Insatiable, belching, she gobbles gazebos.
Gorges on gables. Gusts between louvres
of roof-vents, exits crudely from drains
with a drone like a drunkard's fart.

Now she's a Berserker bloated with frenzy.
Foam at her mouth, she howls for blood
like a beast, gnaws iron and steel.
A machine, immune to fire and sword,
she keeps grinding, churning.

The rampage forges her ruin.
The land resists her. Friction slackens
her speed. Stingy lakes, miserly rivers
starve her of that which sustains her:
ocean heat and humidity.

Fed by no fuel but her rage,
she declines,
dissipates,
dies.

~ Karen Whitehill

*To swash is to strike violently; a buckler was a small, round, handheld shield