

## AMOS WRIGHT

### *The Patron Saint of Lost Causes*

Last among the saints,  
you bend to me  
with your hopeless cases,

supplicant in the direst  
hour of your late need. You've  
squandered all your prayers on the others,

and what have they given you

but a carpenter's ruler with which  
to measure the length of your own  
viscera? That is their usufruct.

But the hospitals are turning away  
the heartbroken, mothers sorrowing,  
fatherless multitudes and no insurance, you say.

The very air is thinner, blacker. The sun  
is a cataract and pushes up only weeds,  
where once there was forest thick as a city.

The Chicago police cannot stop an earthquake,  
nor collect the best English murderers.  
If only you had brought your orisons

to me in the beginning, not mistaken  
me for Iscariot, some haruspex in the  
classifieds, what causes might have been spared:

The guerrilla boy in the rainforest  
cradling an AK-47 like a doll,  
from which follows the image of Edessa.

If I said, stand as trees before tanks,  
would you have brought me one hand,  
or both?