

End

Upturned stacks of Webster's blue-backed spellers.  
Broken slates. *Liberators* burned to ash.  
Ninety panes of first-floor windows smashed,  
frame wood splintered and jagged as tinder.

I can no longer protect my students.  
Strangely, it is not God's words that ring  
in my head as I search for understanding,  
rather, words that I saw on a charred reader:

*I must remind you that the earth is round.*  
*Men and animals live on the surface.*  
There is no comfort in these words,  
yet the fact of them comforts me: schoolbooks.

I am a teacher of colored misses,  
but I can no longer protect my students.