

By Dilruba Ahmed

This morning, a light  
so full, so complete  
we might ask why

the god of sun  
is also god of plague,  
why the god of healing

also god of archery.  
The children under trees—  
unaware their hearts

have become targets  
red and inflamed  
as the eyes of men in thrones—

find sticks in the grass  
to fashion into guns. Some brandish  
a branch-saber. They are sniping

the golden light  
with squinting faces.  
And everywhere

they do not look,  
fences and more fences.  
There are no arrows

to point the way  
as they scythe  
through a woods or dart

between cars in parking lots.  
The miles of fence-links grow  
more & more impassable

even as the children try  
to follow the voices  
calling them now, at first

with tenderness and then  
with fierce intensity.

Source: *Poetry* (October 2019)