DYING THE DAY PRINCE DIED

DAVID YEZZI

is the opposite of being born
on the same day as, say, Marie Curie or Bach
or even Prince, for that matter, or the artist
formerly known as The Artist Formerly Known
as Prince. Now, just Prince, as he will
forever be known. Too bad I never met him.
You, I met. A few times, as a matter of fact,
but you never remembered me meeting you.
Memory’s a tricky thing, and so I forgive you.
Who am I, after all? Just a person, with a pulse.
A pulse is good, particularly from your perspective,
I’d imagine. The internet is burning up with the news
of Prince’s death, almost literally on fire
with the heat generated by his solo on the all-star
“While My Guitar Gently Weeps” at the Rock and Roll
Hall of Fame. At the end, instead of a mic drop,
Prince throws his guitar up in the air, and as far as
we’re concerned, watching it on YouTube,
it never comes down. It’s like the blessèd
Assumption or something, a guitar-chariot of flame,
its stained-ash body somewhere becoming spirit.

I’m not sure where you died or how exactly.
I heard of it through friends. You had been ill.
There hasn’t been a whole lot in the press.
It’s possible that I missed it, that we missed it.
We’ve all been so distracted by the passing
of Prince, by our wish to be purified again
in the waters of Lake Minnetonka, by the terror
of a father’s drunken rage, by laughter and the rhythmic
click of boots walking in lamp-lit rain.