

## Linda Allison

### After the Fire

This is an old forest  
Thick with cottonwood, larch, and cedars  
A pile of dung, large enough to fill a bucket  
A reminder of trailhead warnings  
*Beware of bears. Hike in groups whenever possible. Make noise.*  
Open Pandora. Set the volume high  
Your skin warm and moist  
Your heart a hammer  
Ahead the forest opens  
A broad swath carved by fire  
Voracious  
Transforming trees into blackened spires  
Rising tall into faded blue  
Yawning, early morning sky  
Your eyes drawn to the meadow ahead  
Powder pink mist grazing bare calves  
Later you will learn a name for these flowers.  
Chamerion angustifolium, or fireweed.  
A flower full of promise  
First after a fire

**Linda Allison** is a mother, grandmother, rock collector, hiker, photographer, extremely poor golfer who loves to play, Linda Allison lives in the Woodlands, Texas with the love of her life found late in life. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Bright Flash Literary Review*, *McQueen's Quinterly*, *Dark Winter Lit*, *Utah's Best 2023 Anthology*, and others.