Mt. St. Helens

My brother stole a car and drove me to Mt. St. Helens
where geologists cough up ash and cinder and their own blood
trying to prove that all mountains
have roots.
I’ll believe them; I tell my brother St. Helens
wears her guts on the outside. Like he does:
grey and green and angry, his grin
an empty stomach, his voice a portrait
of young criminal courage.
My brother,
the highwayman – disowned, permanently
estranged. Our parents say he’s always been rotten
at the core, but could they prove it? They taught me not
to trust anything ill-supported, and anyway, I ride
shotgun in his hotwired cars, smoke his cigarettes
secondhand; I cough up all sorts of
electromagnetic radioactive pyroclastic plumes,
hot air and molten rock,
and when we stop to look up at the mountain –
open-mouthed –
I know better than to say anything.
The Nixeon Civille Handy Poetry Contest

“Mt. St. Helens”

Kate Fujimoto