**Smoke**

I

Smoke rises from ashes

as the silence between two words speaks its sentence

only proving the ineffable is unquenchable.

Mystery sloughs its skin

and finds promise in a universe

that creates

just a spark.

Smoke rises from ashes

Outside it is cold.

Wood fires burn

It is cold, a cold that craves

Fire’s warmth

It is cold and quiet.

Silence between two words speaks its sentence

as a breeze swirls ashes

smokes’ remnants rise

into the nearby branches.

as the silence between two words speaks its sentence

only proving promise

mystery sloughs its skin

and finds promise in a universe

that creates

just a spark.

Smoke rises from ashes

as the silence between two words speaks its sentence.

A breeze swirls ashes

Darkening the sky

And smokes’ remnants rise

into the nearby branches.

II

Combustion is between -

a match and its cover as magnesium flares

and orange dances behind a cupped hand,

cherry red steel and the blacksmith’s hammer,

my fingers and chickweed

browned by sun and lack of water pulverized by my touch,

fire’s flicker dance and smoke’s long slow ride home,

twisted carbon of the burnt forest

and grass peeping through ashes.

Fire ignites just as

commas divide, separate

and then finish the distance left to go.

It leaves black white

and a rainbow of shades of gray

smoke crawling with shimmering air

toward a vacant sky.

It leaves only ash.

And a bit of smoke.

2004 Bill Schreiber