

ashes to ashes
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i thrust my hand in boiling water
praying that the next time
the water would cool itself down.
i found hope in the dilapidated places
of your callous, empty heart,
i assured myself that something was wrong with me
for feeling everything so intensely.

i nursed my wounds like an injured animal
and twisted my hair into thick nests and bramble to hide in,
hibernating for the spring, summer, winter, fall,
cycling through manic highs
and depressive lows,
and digging elbow deep into piles of manure
looking for diamonds.

love was a hot wax candle with a crooked, low wick
that i kept trying to light after it was burnt to the bottom.
love was a fierce wind that blew and knocked me over
and i told myself i just needed to stand up taller, firmer,
that it was my fault for not challenging the elements enough.

it took me too long to realize that love is not
gentle whisper you search for,
hidden under a cacophony of suffering.
it does not partake in masquerade,
it will not etch the lines of my body and lie
like a greasy film over skin.
it is proud and undying.

i begged myself to let go
of the candle that was searing my hand
but i had learned to love the burning so much
that i let it turn me into cinders and dust
and i blamed myself for not being fireproof.

you may have found relief in the flames of my compliance,
but my heart hardened into coal.
i keep myself warm now.

i don't blame you for the fire,
i blame you for the burn.