

Promethean Tango

If ever I wanted to make fire, I could wait
for lightning to strike a convenient tree
but since lightning and I are strangers
to each other, it might be better
if I rubbed two twigs together.

Or I could get religion and stand
on a sacred mountain, praying
for some bush to start its burning
or maybe I could seize the day
and squeeze it through a convex eye
of glass to make a distillate of light:
one hot, white spot of sun.

I could take a more industrial approach.
With due regard to every regulation
governing health and safety and pollution,
I could build a factory to blend sulphur,
phosphorous and binding agents
into a bright red bead to drop exactly
on the tip of a softwood stick.

Or I could just BUY a box of matches.

If I did any of these things in close
conjunction with a crumpled fist
of brittle bone-dry grass, I might
if I was lucky, get a thin, blue
bootlace curl of smoke, followed
eventually by a small warm glow.

Alternatively, I could put on some music:
“Milonga Triste” say, and you could close
your eyes and tilt your head, slightly
and your lips could brush my cheekbone
lightly, or that might be my imagination
since the touch would be so brief,
so soft, you couldn’t really call it friction.

And then we could dance in close embrace.
Just dance, *con dos corazones ardiendo*,
while the watching world went up in flames.

Rob Evans