

Matches

Red-faced, arguing briefly
their one point against the night,

or blackened, sober as blown
light bulbs, they are communicants

in the Eucharist of brilliance
and will not be ashamed.

Infernal dragonflies, their wings
torn off. Informal flames on crutches.

I use a fresh match like a needle
to sew a gown of blue fire

for my wife. I hold a spent match
like a pen, signing my name in soot

to petitions for firemen.
When the night holds me

by the shoulders how a deep chill
holds me, I open a matchbox

like a warm canteen and drink
deeply the fermented lumens.

Studying the Book of Matches
a man goes blind. That testament—

which includes the diary
of an arsonist's daughter,

her virginity like a fistful of tinder—
is the history of glory

in the language of ash.
It will always be the hidden

tonnage of match-light that can truly
confound us, how the mutable

glisten on the end of a splinter
might be the name of God.



Poet **George David Clark**'s poems can be found online at *Linebreak*, *Verse Daily*, and *Poetry Daily*. He teaches poetry at Colgate University. Artist **Meghan Keane** is currently a teaching artist at Kentler International Drawing Space and a visiting alumni artist at the Brooklyn College art department printshop.

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