The Widow's Honeymoon

So this is the hour of lead,
the scent of deep-coloured roses
and a half-empty bed.

Tomorrow, and
tomorrow and tomorrow,
he will lead me through —
the gray corridor of faces.
Tear-stained, lopsided smiles
a trail of black
across the aisles,
The shower of roses.

And tonight,
the hour of lead —
the scent of deep-coloured roses
and a half-empty
bed.

M. C. Martinez
Matchboxes
For N.J.G.

They laid her to rest
in a matchbox,

all that was left of her
were ashes.
They found her,
gathered up in a little heap,
in the corner
where she used to sit,
old,
very old,
papery and gray.

According to accounts, she simply
and quietly, burst into flames,
all by herself, a process they call
spontaneous combustion.
Until now, no one knows why
it happens,
or why it has a special fondness
for rotten driftwood, deep soil
or grandmothers.
But, it could have been her stare,
she must have kept at it,
too much.
Or it could have been
her rasping breath
that rattled through her hollow frame.
Too much friction.
Or,
It could have been an accident —
A spark on the gray
of her crumpled skin, her paper nails,
her brittle hair.
Old people
are a mess. Now,
they are fire hazards, as well.

M. C. Martinez