

*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*