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from Burn Tissue Cycle

J. Michael Yates

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From *Burn Tissue Cycle*

J. MICHAEL YATES

Any Scientist

Any scientist will tell you
Things burn best in the mist.
The fish which light the sea
At night are not mere phosphor turning,
And the water is not boiling
When the stream-green goes red with fins and flames.
Call it oxidation, disarm it, call it rot,
But explain slowly, clearly, and decisively
To yourself
That this is the organic, the cycle, perfection.
And the oily ashes
Of the fish will save you.

A Long Green Laze

A long green laze
Low over the windless, blue pools of days.
All the pater-noster ponds
Downpour toward the silt-fans of an imperious delta.
The red whales are not on fire. Sunset.
Or a coloured filter between the light and the world.
Moon-fangled dolphins crescent toward
The centre of the sea where light is still
A black vacuole.

A Large Fire at the Centre

A large fire at the centre.
Weak fires around the circumference where darkness ends
And skin begins.
From here where the scorpion self-struck,
To log to log, following the air,
Things burn on in toward the hotter hub,
Toward the place
Where, possibly, the light lives.
But the centre
Is too everywhere and too, too however.
There are at least two choices:
To peer into or pass through the mirror of ashes.

The Trees

The trees of the heavens
And the trees of corporeity
Burn inequally.
The trees of hell: nonflammable.
Satiety is a small uncharted isle
In the orange open ocean of the hunger.
My time is of the old trees:
Dangerous, unstable, combusts
Quickly near others.