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Three Poems

Susan Zimmerman

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Three Poems

SUSAN ZIMMERMAN

A Charm

It was round, it was round
like a gold ring

it was small,
a perfect circle
till using wore it thin
like a gold ring

it was plain, it was plain
brushed with tiny strokes —
nothing more

it was warm, it was warm,
a gold ring
in a cupped hand.

A Slow Burn

Although they meet
on Hallowe'en
(familiar smell of burning leaves)

although his touch
ignites a punk
that smoulders in her skin

although his hands foretell
Roman candles, cartwheels,
burning schoolhouse

and his flaring eyes
promise conflagration —

they strike, leap,
describe a falling arc —
pssst! in the damp grass.

And though they lie for hours
two tinder-sticks
inviting blaze

show patience
beyond any child's

there will be no fireworks

at most, a smoulder
at best, a slow burn.

The Other Half of the Truth

(In response to Robert Phillips's "Afternoon
in Public Landing," *Ontario Review*, #6)

Being a woman is harder than being a man,
because a woman must deal with men
and with women.

A woman is not the woman she thinks she is,
only the woman she is in the eyes of a man
or a woman.

My hands in the sink, my face to the wall,
I see nothing happen,
the streets may be lively with children.

All the food I have cooked has been eaten.
the dishes are dirty again,
it rains down the window.

Last night I heard a marauder
in my garden, my garbage.
I tend to the garden, the garbage.
Tonight I expect a marauder.

I have accomplished nothing.
I have accomplished nothing.