

Puzzled Puzzlers

By Graham Best

The blessings pile up in a heap
and children climb all over it
playing godly games unconcerned.

They pour the gasoline joyfully,
laugh at the liquid's deceptive
coldness on their sapling fingers.

I am holding the match and book
and light the one on the other
and read the other by the one

and when the verses claim all
sound and unite it in my voice
I feel the lit match burn me.

My finger ignites and I point
at my heart, but not my heart.
Without knowing it, I touch

the blessings, the mountain,
the children, the sky and stars.
In my twinkling skull the cosmos.

A word flashes, spoken to me
alone, defiant of repetition
and I bow my head to learn it.

When the moon rises, the earth
defers to her, lets her kiss
me. Her invisible brilliance

becomes my halo, secret circle
for none to see. As I turn
my cheek, the sun rises in it,

the moon ascends. The mother
of God calls to her children,
who have turned into flames,

but stand still at her behest,
lick themselves to solidity,
glow all over and mirror life.

"All who live are fragments,"
she says, her head and hair
somehow shaking in her voice.

A radiant joy embraces me.
I use my new vision to unite

her children into one figure

as if assembling a puzzle.
The resulting image shifts.
Before me eyes: It is me.

It is me as I've never seen.
It is the seeing not the seen.
It is to see what is not seen.

There I am, but there am not.
The puzzle is too puzzling
and makes us puzzled puzzlers.

Our tiny fingers knit and weave,
fretting over frayed edges
that believing in edges frayed.

I am no puzzle, nor puzzler,
nor plaything for a wicked self.
Snap me into place and imagine

the greater picture, whose ends
cannot be reached, and striving
for them, I am of no account.