



# Poetry

## Language Tinder

by Ivan Brady

Language is my ribbon snipper, my snare,  
My carving knife, my trimmer, my splicer,  
My woodpile splitter, soapbox, cup and glue  
— and inadequate in all cases,

Never casting strong light on dark boxes,  
Lifting flat grey into holograms of the color spectrum,  
Creating a volcano from a match that blows out  
in the wind of close inspection,  
Or pulling a watershed of love and dreams from a brief caress.  
at least not without a lot of pounding, sanding,  
pleading, begging, and polishing.

If I make it at all to the bridge of self and others  
On the strength of some lucky phrase or line,  
On the power of word sculptures that stir up audiences,  
give rise to shapes unbidden only seconds before,

Stuff is always left on the cutting room floor,  
Some of which makes sense in little bits and pieces,  
Some is simply there, bare shavings, sawdust,  
the little thought that thought it could  
but in the end couldn't climb  
the fine timber to poetry

In the ancient workshop of word parts jigsawed, juggled,  
Jawboned, angled, stacked, and clayed,  
cut in the lumbermills of the mind,  
kilned in the ovens of consciousness itself,  
and driven by a dictum coded in the brain:

Capture! Arrange! Display!

whatever clears light  
from the Muse's black forest.

But that's easier to think than to do,  
especially with language as a four-alarm friend  
who can't control a fire  
— or even a moon.

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