

Incense
By Jazmyn Nam-Krane

Scratch, tick, spark
Tiny flame kisses sandpaper stick
And lingers until my sharp breath
Pushes it away, leaving a tiny orange ring
That sighs out wisps of smoke.
The sweetness of it is emphasized
By contrasted memories of
Putrid paper sticks filled with brown
And tired glass bowls filled with green.
The wisps stretch out
And curl as they spread,
Flirting with the air.
I imagine that as they dance,
They shove that which refuses to move.
They calm 4 am sobbing,
Inner and outer doubt,
A shaking heart and still body.
They expel exhaustion-fueled yelling,
Mishaps, misunderstandings, misleading,
A fading glimmer where a bonfire once thrived.
They banish pessimism and frustration,
An illness that forced stagnation.
I cautiously inhale, verifying that ventilation will save my lungs,
And exhale, letting this intentional breath
Iron out my wrinkled heartbeat.
Orange glow turns to grey dust,
Falling repeatedly,
And then, just like that,
The magic wand has burnt away.