

Fear

by **Bakhtiyar Vahabzade (born 1925)**

In my left hand there's an old wound -
A legacy from my childhood,
Unaware that wood burns,
I seared my hand on a piece of charcoal.
A warning hissed at me,
The sound of flesh singeing,
But I wasn't afraid,
I felt fear only when I burned my hand.

The real experience of life began with that fire.
Colorful flames from the embers
caressed my childish eyes.
I don't know why everything
I've touched since birth has burned me.
I wasn't afraid until I was burned;
I didn't know fear until I left my childish ways.
Since being burned, I'm careful when playing with fire,
And so life begins, and continues as a habit.

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