

## Speech

by [Sarah Rossiter](#) in the [January 29, 2020](#) issue

Seated before the woodstove,  
bold tongues of fire licking  
the glass door, I wonder  
what it was like for the first  
person to discover she had  
the power to subdue the night  
by striking two stones together,  
sparking tendrils of smoke  
to rise from dead twigs, grasses,  
watching thin fingers of flame  
quicken, flickering,  
expanding.

She must have held her breath,  
scarcely believing such a thing  
was possible, a world not yet  
imagined, a circle of protection  
opening to warmth in winter,  
to light in darkness to the scent  
of meat, roasting grains stirred,  
thickening, a place to gather,  
together, faces lit by firelight  
as she struggles to form sounds  
that others will understand,  
struggles to find ways to say  
*This is how I feel.*  
*This is what we need.*