

99 WRITING

# Burning Love

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**TYPE**  
**POETRY**

She told me that our love was like her favorite lighter.

It was small, I guess,

compared to the other lighters I saw her friends using.

She was always skipping school.

Smoking in the shadowed alley about a block away  
with her buddies,

‘cause she was just too cool to care about her health,  
her future.

She was the skip school, smoke your pain away kinda  
girl.

The Tumblr grunge, die young kinda girl.

The drink ’till you pass out, don’t care kinda girl.

But even after all this time, I don’t think she will ever  
be a matches kinda girl.

Always that same lighter.

She never strayed.

Her loyalty to the lighter was never questioned.

It had a rose carved onto its smooth black side,  
on the other, the initials of what I assumed to be a past lover.

It could be the initials of anyone or anything, I suppose.

I craved that lighter,

almost more than I craved her.

It was rare, authentic.

I wasn't sure that I could ever find one like it.

It's the kind of treasure you find at the back of an antique shop on a Friday afternoon, in  
the "50 c. Giveaway Box."

And I gave the stupid thing to her.

It would've been mine.

Mine to love.

To use.

To carve things on.

And I was so close.

God, I don't even smoke.

It doesn't matter now.

Its flame would flicker immortal in my eyes, as I watched her light every cigarette.

I watched her face grow wearier with every failed class,

gulp of alcohol,

puff of nicotine.

Her beauty was fading, and if beauty ever lived within her decaying frame, it was long gone.

I could feel her poisonous ways contaminating my own youth. She was dragging me down.

Still, for some ungodly reason, I loved.

I loved her more than I loved myself.

And despite the hurt, and all my hidden tears,

I was honored just to know her.

To cross her mind, even if it was once or twice.

She kept me tucked safely in the back pocket of her soul, right alongside that lighter.

Her favorite lighter.

Behind her forgotten feelings

and memories.

Until she had the urge to get high, or just to burn something.

Once she was done, I would go away.

Back in that pocket.

And I would find myself wondering if there was ever actual love in her “I love you.”

I would look into her dark eyes, and search desperately for an answer.

An answer that I knew I would probably never find.

I never found a logical reason for me to love her as avidly as I did.

I was finding it too difficult to see past her smirk,

and the cigarette pursed between her faded cherry lips.

It had become apparent to me now, that I was no better than her.

Her and all her addictions,

guilty pleasures.

I had let myself fall into her trap.

I had become addicted to my own kind of drug.

Her.

I could feel her slowly killing me with her merciless game.

And to her,

That's all it was.

A game.

So I let her go.

I let her soul slip through my fingers.

I cried like my heart had been ripped out of my chest.

I let her name fade.

With every week,

month,

year.

I burned pictures.

Created new memories.

I let myself heal.

I thrived.

And eventually,

When I was ready,

I bought my own lighter