

Original Fire

by Leslie Marmon Silko

for Aza

I watch my daughter build a fire
not from a match or cigarette lighter
but from the original elements,
two sticks, a length of sinew, friction.

She has formed a cup of juniper shreds,
and when she spins out a black ember
and breathes it to life
she transfers the radiant pebble
into the nest and breathes again.

Sparks fly from her lips.

A dove of flame bursts from between her hands.

She speaks to the spark
until the words catch and burn
and I think, here is my daughter
who is innocent of all things
yet from whose lips
the terrible and merciful
flame flies out, the truth, the fire.