

Memoir

I scratch a line for each long hour  
I knelt in iron-wasted water and scoured

my brothers, dippeded gray and shaking.  
When I think of what we were those days--

a cinder's litter, a coal-scuttle's frozen load--  
our match-head father struck us in the cold.

O but words are a fast and useless fuel,  
twine-bound packets feathering in the flue.

I'll burn every page before I cry in winter.  
What's the use of memory if it leaves

before it warms you? That room draws heat  
the way I draw us, smoldering, alone.

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Lauren Wilcox