

## LIGHTING THE FIRE

*Scott Samuelson—Department of English*

Into my gathering hands I take  
the solemn axe, the wood I break  
into sharp, cream-gray wedges.  
I first cradle their wavy edges,  
then set a teepee on the land.  
Taking tinder into my hand,  
I note the cast of this dying light  
on duff and fir. A blaze seems right  
for nothing stirs anywhere—  
no smell or feel or flight of air  
as I kneel down upon the earth.  
I flame the fire with whispered breath.  
Igniter and ignited, I  
follow the smoke into the sky  
where sparks swim up like speckled trout  
to flutter, dart, and flap about.  
In the rhythm of their upward swim  
I hum Wm. Clayton's four four hymn,  
"Come, Come, Ye Saints." Heat  
explodes, pops the wood right on beat.  
My bones and blood also burn;  
like dead fathers and mothers I yearn  
to find a place. For now, I'm content to tell  
the star-strewn sky, "All is well. All is well."