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As Fire

Richard Tice

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As Fire

When I live
let me live as fire
let my movement be heat
let burning fill my bones
live coals sear my words
tongues of flame halo my head

When I die
let not my body turn utterly cold
let ashes smolder
embers wait for stirring
let oil cover me as a blanket
and holy fire devour me

When the Lord God calls the four winds
let my dry bones rattle
let them shake bone into bone
let flesh clothe them
skin lay upon me fresh as newborn
and winds breathe fire into me

When I stand
let the cords of death melt as in a furnace
let even the earth beneath my feet
become glass let sun and moon
burn overhead let all people cry out
Holy holy holy Lord God Almighty
and let the whole earth
inhale light

—Richard Tice

This poem won first place in the *BYU Studies*
2004 poetry contest.