

Tom Brown's

FIRE

Poems

Glow

The human race now runs in place,
Exclaiming, "Little we don't know!"
Yet mark its path,
Count all it hath;
One truth's been lost:
We are born to glow.

We started out from land untamed,
From boundless rock and root.
Only man could see past trunks of trees,
Through river's roar;
Creating, we did grow.

On farms, in mines,
From seas to timberlines,
We shoveled, cast, and cut,
Our progress never slowed.
Till now.

We've trounced this planet's wealth
And claimed it as our own.
And every house and every car,
Each creature comfort known —
Yes, every shoe and every phone
Shouts our presence home.

We've made the world
Reflect ourselves:
Our wishes ceaseless flow.
The human mind,
Stretched enterprise-wide,
Hungers still to grow.

Then doubt not that —
From infant wiggle
To elder amble slow —
Within each breast
The spark *is* there.
We are born to glow.

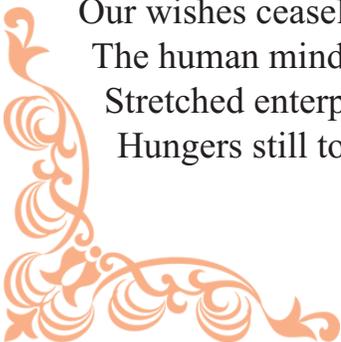
The human mark,
How we most shine,
Exceeds accounting line.
Accrue? Create?
Don't hesitate.
We are born to glow.

On mankind's cake
Our time is marked
By candles,
The progress show.
Each new Age
Inspires a wish —
Each wish a gift —
'Cross wax alit,
It blows and blows.

But wax snuffed out
Is not the flame
Tomorrow yearns to know.
What was the wish?
What was the wish?

We are born to glow.

Tom Brown, from
The Anatomy Of Fire,
Chapter 4





Embers



That very first day
On that very first job:
The call, the work, the quest —
How you did aspire!

You stormed all tasks,
You donned no masks,
You seldom felt much higher.
The secret to that heady time?
Oh, to be driven by the fire.

No “boss” could make you feel
like that —
No, not then, not even now.
The pay for you was more than cash:
Striving hard, showing strong,
And pining to achieve.

The advances sought,
The problems caught,
Each improvement wrought —
It was what *you* created,
Crafted,
Sired.

The magic of those moments when?
Oh, to be driven by the fire.

How different now,
How sadly less,
It seems your work berates.
The job’s all task;
Your smile’s a mask;
False starts, you fluctuate.

It doesn’t feel so warm inside,
When you’re an ember dying.
When wonder’s gone,
Is your memory strong?
Oh, to be driven by the fire.

What would it take,
Whom would you need,
To spark that flame again?

Is it leading,
Or being led,
That lacquers a life with glee?

That first day
On that first job:
You knew the answer then.
The future begs; will you recall?

Oh, to be driven by the fire!

Tom Brown, from
The Anatomy Of Fire,
Chapter 5





Dawn

An infant bursts from mother's womb,
Broad smiles illuminate the room.
Each birth a chance to celebrate:
Youth, aglow, anew!
Once more, a precious fireball rises,
Shimmering above the morning dew.

Who you are, what you do,
Each day's a dawn
If you stay true:
The fire's deep down inside of you.

Your days blazed fast
When you reprise,
How few the dawns
Since the dawn of you:
The day your lips spoke ooh;
The day you tiptoed through;
The day you learned in school
The thought you never knew.

Who you are, what you do,
Each day's a dawn
If you stay true:
The fire's deep down inside of you.

First dream first friend first kiss first fight
First job first home first speech first
flight:

Every alpha, each aurora,
Those flags you made and flew,
In your mind, now folded carefully,
Locked away ... they're you!

Who you are, what you do,
Each day's a dawn
If you stay true:
The fire's deep down inside of you

Ticking ever older,
You ache; you mourn; you fear.
Life's quest? A welled-up tear?
All those dawns behind you:
Mere ghosts of greatness now;
Fleeting flecks of fire,
Smothered in the snow.

If mankind's urge is forward:
Ideas, then as now, the glue;
If your own emanations
Have shaped the life you grew;
If you yearn to peel away,
To find once more the new;
Then go again to where you've been:
It's *right there*, though out of view.

Who you are, what you do,
Each day's a dawn
If you stay true.

The fire's deep down inside of you.

Tom Brown, from
The Anatomy Of Fire,
Chapter 6

