

The Lineage of Fire-walkers

by Matthew Haughton

They will never speak to you,
these young men
out front of a Quik-Stop,
passing an Ale-8-One
bottle between them,
spitting chewing tobacco
down its long neck.
They will watch you silently
with eyes that seem to flicker
from an ancestral spark
of hot coal,
pulled up from this ground.
Their daddies, their daddies's
daddies, all labored
beneath the earth.
Like fire-walkers,
they walked a different way
to keep from getting hurt.
But these young men haven't
worked that life;
they will watch you without
uttering a word,
sizing you up for trying to talk.