

## She Set Herself Aflame

Rachel Back

Do not look at your daughter in disgust  
and say, "I raised you."  
Because she knows that in her,  
you raised hell itself.

You raised the fire of the earth.  
Put it in her soul where she tended  
the flame with careful hands,  
feeding it kindling until it burst from her

like hairspray meeting the wicked  
warmth. She refused to stop  
when in her anger your world burned.  
Consumed in hot golden flames,

were the pillars of hate you poured  
the foundation for. Now ashes fall  
towards the black scorched floor.  
Do not look at her and despair

at the arsonist you have armed.  
And when she sets out with match  
in hand to incinerate the pieces  
of herself you crafted

with needle and thread, know that hell  
is your reward. And she walks  
barefoot through the smoldering coals.