

A poem (*ghazal*) by ‘Attar

Love of the Beloved burned me like a candle, head to foot
My soul-bird burned like a moth, wing and feather.

The fire of her love smoked my heart like aloes;
then her fire consumed both the smoke and the aloes.

A coal from her face fell into the desert:
both worlds burned like kindling from her ember.

I was to offer my soul to the soul-mate.
The Beloved outsmarted me; I got burnt.

There's nothing left of my blood or flesh, but ash;
the zealous fire burned me altogether.

When I scattered the ash on her street
the blaze of disdain struck and charred the remains.

So I said: I've been reduced to particles.
She said: That may be, but all particles shall burn.

In ‘Aṭṭār's state of neither being nor not-being,
neither doubt nor trust, the pious and the infidel both burn.

from *Fifty Poems of ‘Aṭṭār*, translated by Kenneth Avery and Ali Alizadeh (Melbourne, 2007). p. 73.