

The Naked Man at the Fireplace

Dying embers, and dying embers.
He is allowed up, by leave, to put
the ashes safe to rest. But the coals
persist, lighting his body as well
as any lover's; the heat shines red
irrelevant on him, like any other.

Speak, someone, of how to turn
his moment to his moment: make some
coal into a lasting light; a flesh
Egyptian, impervious, brown god's.

Hear the wisdom of the naked man:
glowing coals within a darkened room;
this is it and there is nothing more.

—*John Ditsky*