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Confessions of a Book Burner

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The Ladies from the Fairmont Unitarian Church Poverty Relief Fund

The good samaritan box
is painted brown and orange,
and is brought out once a year
for the can drive —
cans don't spoil.

All the members of the congregation,
carry bags filled with fruit cocktail, yams
and cranberry sauce - fit for the holiday spirit
but enough for eight nourishing meals.
After the sermon they come forward with their gifts,
like gladbag wise men,
trying to ignore the runaway bartlett pears
rolling back down the aisle.

The ladies from the Fairmont Unitarian Church Poverty
Relief Fund,
deliver their poor people's thanksgiving day turkeys
on the friday after.
Filling their station wagons
they drive to where the needy live.

The ladies from the Fairmont Unitarian church Poverty
Relief Fund,
are dissappointed.
They thought the poor
were always at home.

Sharon S. McCartney

Confessions of a Book Burner

It started out so simply - a single page torn and removed and set afire. Quickly the blaze would then settle into embers of ashes and dust.

So brief, so brilliant, so consuming - the elimination of words, thoughts and ideas through the cleansing purity of fire.

I work in a library reshelving books. Late at night I burn a few of the oldest volumes I can find in the furnace down in the coal cellar.

The old leather-bound classics burn the best. They burn the brightest because of their thin brittle pages. But they also burn the longest because of their thick leather coverings.

I'll never forget the joy and exhilaration I felt when I burned my first dictionary. The entire English vocabulary reduced to the purity of yellow flame.

People die and turn to dust just as their recorded words must turn to dust and blazing embers.

Damned idealists, damned intellectuals, may your works die and burn in hell.

Your glorified works are but spiderwebbed collections of musty rotting paper.

I burn them nightly with joy in the darkened coal cellar of the library

A. Acker