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## On Combustion

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## On Combustion

...It is rather unfortunate how our people spontaneously combust. To clarify: When I say this I do not mean to say that is bad that we do spontaneously combust, for I think it rather good. I only mean the how of it – the seemingly random nature with which it occurs is of no good use to anyone.

The combustion which affects our people is a rather great thing – without it, much of the fire we see would be nothing more than twigs and dried up kindling. Our roaring bonfires would be inert, dry and dead things. Because of combustion we have life! It is marvelous.

And we can't forget the men who made these fires possible – men (which, in the meaning of this sense, also includes women, to whom we owe a great deal) who, upon suffering an incident of spontaneous combustion, undertook the difficult process of bringing their person, still alight, to one of the places where twigs, logs, coal and kerosene had been piled. In contributing their fire to the bundle, they often sparked something which would become greater than themselves. Some of course, had it easier – a man may have been in the 'right place at the right time', simplifying their task, but we ought still be thankful for them.

We ought to appreciate even further those who, not being anywhere near a bonfire or pile of latent fuel, and thus lacking in support, built themselves a pile of fuel, and kept their own personal fire burning all the while. This is even more impressive when one considers the frequent half-completed twig piles built by those who were extinguished before they could finish.

This is perhaps the 'how' which I am most displeased about; how often I come to combust but can make nothing of it – how I'll just do it as sleep overtakes me and by the time I awake the fire is gone. I'll be in the shower, especially, and the water quenches my flame within moments of combusting. I can think of countless other examples – talking with friends, walking back from a dinner, playing the guitar.

I feel the heat and the flame, and I wonder if it matches the combustion of those who have gone before me. Then the heat will turn to a chill as I realize that it is not – how could it when it lasts for but a moments? When it does last longer or burn brighter, I feel that I cannot waste it on any lowly pile of twigs, but I do not construct a bigger pile, for lack of knowing how where to begin and for fear of constructing it wrong in our world of low light.

Perhaps of particular strangeness, but something I suppose I must be grateful for, is how I never manage to spontaneously combust while writing. Otherwise, I fear that I would set my notebook aflame, which would be of little good to anyone...