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## Close Book before Striking

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## Close Book Before Striking

My forefinger strikes  
The match, and the flame  
Soars, the tobacco,  
Clean and fresh.  
I light my cigarette.  
The paper burns first  
With a sizzle, such  
A familiar sound.  
I could tell  
When my mother was  
Having her fix. A  
Small flame shines around  
The edge, then hits  
The tobacco. "How sweet  
The taste," she used to  
Say. "It's an acquired  
One," I would reply.  
I inhale, the fire  
Runs quickly down the  
Edges, as if it were  
Running from something;  
She always was, am I?  
The ash grows longer  
Like wasted time. It  
Frustrates me, but I  
Don't get rid of it,  
She never did; holding  
Onto it, as if  
She were holding onto  
Life itself. With each  
Draw, the smoke stick  
Becomes smaller and

Smaller, the cherry  
 Tip burns my  
 Fingers. As much as  
 I want it to  
 Last, it wouldn't. There  
 Was nothing left of  
 That clean white cigarette  
 To burn. I had no  
 Choice but to smother  
 The limp filter into  
 It's dirty ashes,  
 And watch the defunct  
 Smoke rise.

*Sarah Verdon*