

IDENTITY CRISIS

by H.C. Lee

Teachers are born to be
phoenixes, some say

they light up for the young
and leave in ashes.

I am among the few matchsticks
contained in this souvenir

box clad in the Slovakia
scenery, waiting to earn

my fame as I brush
against its thin rim.

My blue head sizzles as
it sweeps to the end of the

runway. Stars twinkle
like the tail of a burning

comet. It bursts with a hollow
hiss, followed by an outbreak

of light from the coating.
The covetous flame eats

deep into the wood in the birth
of a carbon-crafted seahorse —

There are no phoenixes.