

Knowledge

Philip Memmer

My philosopher friend is explaining again
that the bottle of well-chilled Coke in my hand

might not be a bottle of Coke,
that the trickle of bottle-sweat cooling in my palm

might not be wet, might not be cool,
that in fact it's impossible ever to know

if I'm holding a bottle at all.
I try to follow his logic, flipping the steaks

that are almost certainly hissing
over the bed of coals – coals I'd swear

were black at first, then gray, then red –
coals we could spread out and walk on

and why not, I ask, since we'll never be sure
if our feet burn, if our soles

blister and peel, if our faithlessness
is any better or worse a tool

than the firewalker's can-do extreme.
Exactly, he smiles. Behind the fence

the moon rises, or seems to.
Have another. Whatever else is true,

the coals feel hotter than ever
as the darkness begins to do

what darkness does. Another what? I ask.