

Publication

Accumulation of Four Electrons on a Terphenyl (Bis)disulfide

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The activation of N₂, CO₂ or H₂O to energy-rich products relies on multi-electron transfer reactions, and consequently it seems desirable to understand the basics of light-driven accumulation of multiple redox equivalents. Most of the previously reported molecular acceptors merely allow the storage of up to two electrons. We report on a terphenyl compound including two disulfide bridges, which undergoes four-electron reduction in two separate electrochemical steps, aided by a combination of potential compression and inversion. Under visible-light irradiation using the organic super-electron donor tetrakis(dimethylamino)ethylene, a cascade of light-induced reaction steps is observed, leading to the cleavage of both disulfide bonds. Whereas one of them undergoes extrusion of sulfur to result in a thiophene, the other disulfide is converted to a dithiolate. These insights seem relevant to enhance the current fundamental understanding of photochemical energy storage.

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