

# Euonymus Alatus

by [Barbara Crooker](#) in the [October 16, 2007](#) issue

Outside my window, the bushes have turned, redder  
than any fire, and the sky is the same blue Giotto  
used for Mary's robes. My mother says, if she still  
had a house, she'd plant one or two of these bushes,  
and I love how she's still thinking about gardening,  
as if she were in the middle of the story, even though  
we both know, she's at the end, the last few pages. Down  
in the meadow, the goldenrod's gone from cadmium  
yellow to a feathery beige, the ghost of itself. Mother,  
too, fades away, skin thin as the tissue stuffed  
up her sleeve. The scars on her stomach  
itch and burn, but inside, she's still the girl  
who loved to turn cartwheels, the woman  
whose best days were on fairways and putting greens.  
On television, we watch California go up in smoke,  
flames leapfrogging ridge to ridge. Here, these leaves  
release a shower of scarlet feathers, as everything starts  
to let go. Oh, how this world burns and burns us,  
yet we are not consumed.