

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.