

Like No Other Season

Night dresses in Dawn's colors.
This heat is orange. Inescapable.
Mountain laurels hold their breath.
Aspens don't move a muscle.
In the meadow, turkeys raise
a clatter but make no sound,
muffled by the fire's drumbeat.

Shadows of light-hoofed deer
clear the boundary fence.
In the face of angry winds,
eight hundred villagers flee.
There is but one road out. Only
Hermit Jack stands his ground.
Pistol in hand. He'll die here.

If the end ever comes, cold light
will follow rain. The long nights
of flame and fear will leave behind
on car and truck carcasses, on
scattered stone and remnant
steel, deep drifts of fallen ash.
It will be as snow on the moon.

—Nancy Cook

