

Witnessing



*Tugging on her sleeve and whispering
I tell Nana the neighbor's barn is on fire.
I've just seen the sheltering pines and cedars
explode into flame and orange-gold sparks scatter
from the roofline like children playing tag
or birds in the cornfield frightened by gunfire.*

*I feel myself becoming a faint companion
to the fire's bright and pulsing core.
Flowing from branch to branch,
relentlessly spiraling, something is escaping
from my trusting heart.
Stunned by the splendor, stunned
by the dark heaven, this impetuous flash
of pheasant wings
flying east and west
north and south
leaving nothing to anchor
the timid candle behind my eyes.*

Diane Warner