

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.