

DOROTHY HOWE BROOKS

The Thanksgiving Tree

Beneath the tulip poplars it waits,
 a shy bit actor in the wings:
 the tiny Japanese maple, leaves

green and firmly attached.
 The dogwoods redden and shed,
 maples glow brilliant gold,

overnight are gone. Sycamores
 and hickories slip out, littering
 the ground at their feet, while

in the shadows this tree,
 that sprouts fall-red each April
 like an unwanted wedding guest,

is discreetly transforming:
 green to burnt orange to radiant red.
 Each day it catches more sun, gleams,

lights the drive, reflects through windows—
 a shimmering beacon, as if all of Autumn
 has compressed to a tight focus,

and the tree has burst into flame.

Dorothy Howe Brooks writes poetry and fiction. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in numerous literary journals, including *Hampden-Sydney Poetry Review*, *Poem*, *Louisiana Literature*, *Iron Horse Literary Review*, and *Cumberland Poetry Review*, as well as the anthology, *If I Had My Life To Live Over I Would Pick More Daisies*, published by Papier-Mache Press. She lives with her husband in Southwest Florida where they enjoy sailing in the coastal waters of the Gulf.