

Burning the Old Year

By Naomi Shihab Nye

Letters swallow themselves in seconds.
Notes friends tied to the doorknob,
5 transparent scarlet paper,
sizzle like moth wings,
marry the air.

10 So much of any year is flammable,
lists of vegetables, partial poems.
Orange swirling flame of days,
so little is a stone.

15 Where there was something and suddenly isn't,
an absence shouts, celebrates, leaves a space.
I begin again with the smallest numbers.

20 Quick dance, shuffle of losses and leaves,
only the things I didn't do
crackle after the blazing dies.