

## Joanna Fuhrman

---

### **The World is Burning, But Everyone Needs Sleep**

Why bother to lift the cloud's galvanic veil?  
Why remove the halo contact lenses  
from my solid white eyes?

If so many crows like to watch the blurred  
screen of my face, how can I be expected  
to understand the truth of the obstinate  
fire hydrant? The meaning of the space  
between the prongs of the unplugged iron?

Maybe it's enough to bask in the shadows  
of the thighs of the monumental icon,  
to rescue dented souls with the tongs  
of a sparkling imagination, to stretch out,

on the floor of our carpeted basement,  
counting the heads of our ceramic turtle collection  
until the meditative gesture  
becomes you, and you it.

So don't ask me to sleep on the other side  
of the bottled-water bed.

Don't tell me to flick on the light, and stop  
drinking cocoa from the Van Gogh  
museum's ear-shaped mug.

Yes, there may be a river of tomato-juice blood  
surrounding our neoclassical-pueblo duplex condo,  
but that doesn't mean the blinds should be open,  
that everything should be allowed in.

**Joanna Fuhrman** is the author of five books of poetry, most recently *The Year of Yellow Butterflies* (Hanging Loose Press 2015) and *Pageant* (Alice James Books 2009). Her poems have appeared in many journals, including *Lit*, *New American Writing*, *The Believer*, *Fence*, *Quarterly West*, *Conduit*, and *American Letters and Commentary*; and in anthologies published by Soft Skull Press, HarperCollins, New York University, the Pushcart Press, Bloomsbury and Carnegie Mellon University. She teaches poetry writing at Rutgers University and Sarah Lawrence, in her Brooklyn apartment and through Teachers & Writers Collaborative and Poets House. For more see: [joannafuhrman.com](http://joannafuhrman.com) and <http://theyearofyellowbutterflies.weebly.com/>.