

## **dandelions**

by Deborah Austin (1920-2013) from *The Paradise of the World* (1964)

under cover of night and rain  
the troops took over.  
waking to total war in beleaguered houses  
over breakfast we faced the batteries  
marshalled by wall and stone, deployed  
with a master strategy no one had suspected  
and now all  
firing

pow

all day, all yesterday  
and all today  
the barrage continued  
deafening sight.  
reeling now, eyes ringing from noise, from walking  
gingerly over the mined lawns  
exploded at every second  
rocked back by the starshellfire  
concussion of gold on green  
bringing battle-fatigue

pow by lionface firefur pow by  
goldburst shellshock pow by  
whoosh splat splinteryellow pow by  
pow by pow  
tomorrow smoke drifts up  
from the wrecked battalions,  
all the ammunition, firegold fury, gone.  
smoke  
drifts  
thistle-blown  
over the war-zone, only

here and there, in the shade by the  
peartree  
pow in the crack by the  
curbstone pow and back of the  
ashcan, lonely  
guerrilla snipers, hoarding  
their fire shrewdly  
never

pow

surrender