

## John Schneider

### Mid-October

I.

*Are you afraid of dying?*  
I asked my father once.

For a moment he was silent  
eyes glinting.

Then *No*, he shrugged.  
*Everything dies.*

*You can't do anything about it,*  
*so why worry?*

And he went back to watching  
the Jackie Gleason show.

II.

Overnight, the chattering stand  
of birch trees hushes,

their colored charms scattering  
across the woodland floor.

Leaves never question  
as they let themselves go.

It's time.

**John Schneider** was born and raised in Wisconsin and has lived and worked in Berkeley, California for most of his adult life where he has studied poetry with Robert Hass. Recent poems have appeared in: *California Quarterly*, *Canary*, *Worcester Review*, *The American Journal of Poetry*, *Potomac Review*, *Slipstream Poetry Magazine*, *Tampa Review*, *Bitter Oleander Press* and elsewhere. He is a Pushcart Prize nominee.