

A poem for January...

Poet Naomi Shihab Nye reflects on the constant changes, endings and renewals that occur in our lives from year to year.

Most of what we do in life is fleeting, and very little of our lives is permanent: “so little is a stone”.

Nye concludes that one of the only things that lingers after she “burns” the old year, is the feeling of regret about the things she did not do.

Burning the Old Year

Letters swallow themselves in seconds.

Notes friends tied to the doorknob,

transparent scarlet paper,

sizzle like moth wings,

marry the air.

So much of any year is flammable,

lists of vegetables, partial poems.

Orange swirling flame of days,

so little is a stone.

Where there was something and suddenly isn't,

an absence shouts, celebrates, leaves a space.

I begin again with the smallest numbers.

Quick dance, shuffle of losses and leaves,

only the things I didn't do

crackle after the blazing dies.

Naomi Shihab Nye