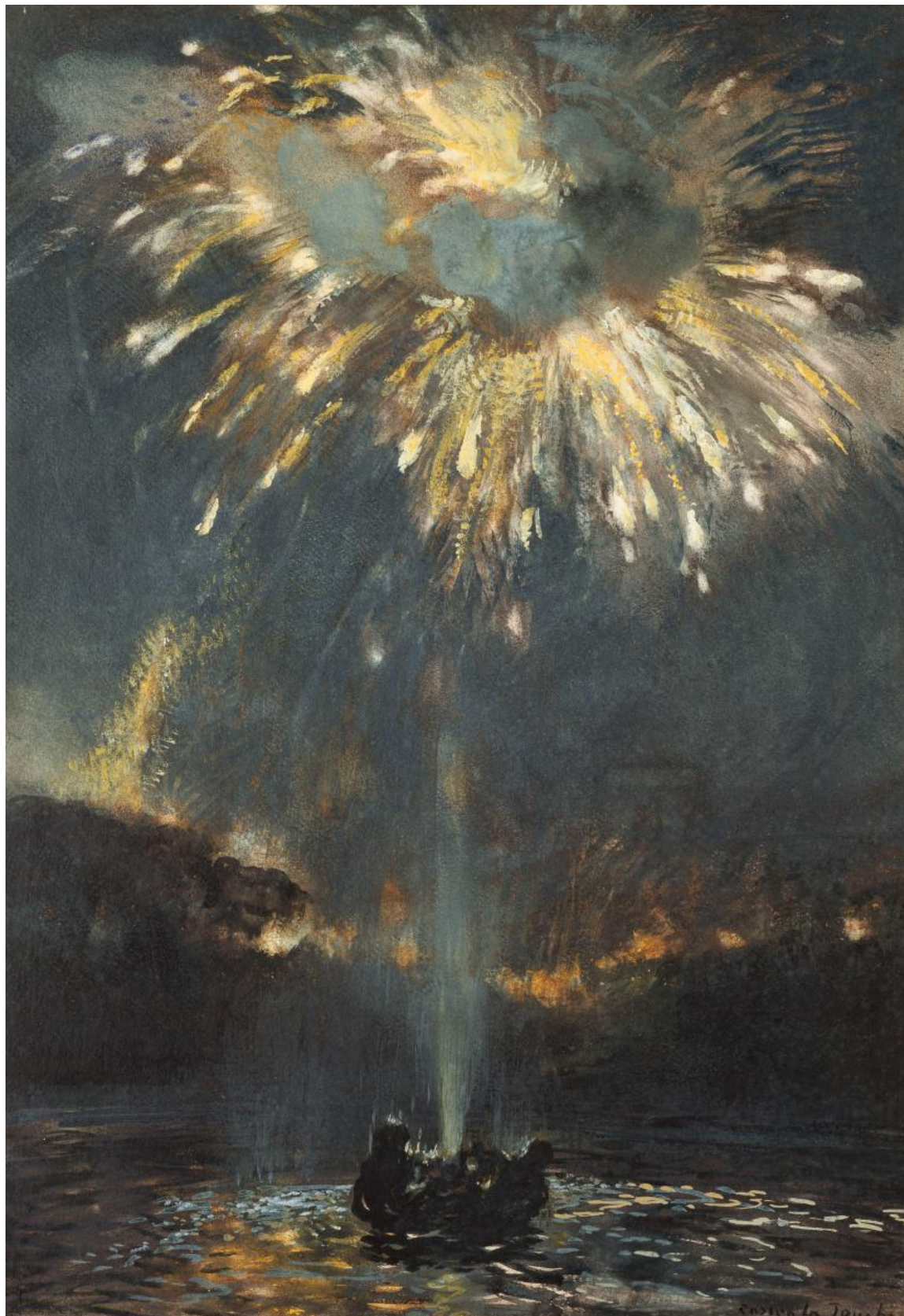


July Explosion & More

By [Diane Webster](#) (August 2023)



July Explosion

Firecrackers explode
as a brave boy
strings them together
for bigger, louder
"let's see what happens"
until in reality
raindrops ping, echo
through the swamp cooler vents,
and a wet sidewalk confirms
it's a July day shower.

Of course, a rainbow arcs
like a firework shot
to light up the sky
in ooh aah display
even as an afterglow
doubles as a reflection
as thunder rolls in distant travel

heard again through
the swamp cooler's vents.

String Unravels

Like a trapped victim attempting
discovery, escape
the string unravels from the car's trunk,
lies limply on the pavement
like bread crumbs marking
the path home
or like a joke planted, luring

while laughter, finger-pointing
hide.
Hesitation lasts longer and longer
until walking away hunched
like after a kite wraps around
the power lines flapping for assistance
not coming, not coming.

Cigarette Gesture

A half-smoked cigarette
stuck in the car hood's
seam, left for the homeless man
incapable of bending
down in the gutter
to retrieve discarded butts.

A middle-finger gesture
to non-smokers:
"I'll be back!"

A Halloween finger
smoked to the bone
like a cadaver scratching
its freedom from the engine
compartment.

Pristine in Purple

Grasshoppers clack and leap away
as I wade into the hillside
of fireweed pristine in purple.
A wander of wonder steps through
spikes blooming their own selves.

On the lake below anglers fish

from boats gliding across
from shore to shore
on upside down reflections—
their voices drift upward
with paddling and trout talk,
but I see fireweed only
as the hillside bursts into flames,
and the lake waters shimmer.

Fear Tucked In

At night streetlights
stare
with wild animal eyes
caught in flashlight
beam, unblinking,
creating fight-flight fear.

A ghost body unseen
behind those eyes,
hope of identification
sunken in darkness
behind perpetual eyes.

What I can't see
won't hurt me,
isn't there.
I close my eyes,
wad the blanket
over my head.

[Table of Contents](#)

Diane Webster's goal is to remain open to poetry ideas in

everyday life, nature or an overheard phrase and to write. Diane enjoys the challenge of transforming images into words to fit her poems. Her work has appeared in *El Portal*, *North Dakota Quarterly*, *New English Review*, and other literary magazines. She also had a micro-chap, *Between Journeys*, published by Origami Poetry Press in 2022.

Follow NER on Twitter [@NERIconoclast](https://twitter.com/NERIconoclast)