

Winston Farm

The barn falls slowly but not under fire.

It gives itself up to a cargo

of toppled turrets, ladders supporting

the ruffled nests of wasps and grape
tendrils tangled as barbed wire.

A roof thatched with feathers would keep
out the rain better than this one.

With no one to save them, the walnuts lie

where they fell, bigger than musket balls
and pungent. The stable's still

standing. The bridles and bits dangle
in the stalls, over which someone
has printed the names Beauty, Lance,

like the dead at Gettysburg whose names
penciled on old planks saved

what was left of them under those shields
when the living went out to harvest
their dead on a morning like this one,
moving quietly over the cropped fields.

Nancy Willard