

SUSAN TICHY
The War Poets

—*for M*

They came to this the same way I did
They had to imagine it, except

They had to imagine it
As it happened

A large man, who is black
Or white

Carries a woman
A small woman, a girl

In through the door of a building
Without a door

Something else is burning, a building
And she is screaming

It is night and she
Is only one of the things they have had

To imagine
In their short lives

They want to help her
But they don't

I don't have to imagine this
But I do

And I don't help much
Either

'Sixteen years ago today'
You used to say

Twenty-eight years
Thirty-two

Years ago, today
Buildings burned

And something else was screaming

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In another dream, in silence

We get out of the car
It isn't our car

And follow the man and the woman
Him dragging her, her screaming

We know, although
It is memory, and silent

Past the fires' dangerous light
Past the fires in-

To the building
In through the door

Where he will be waiting for us
And he is

And what we do won't help her
But we go

In through the door in a full knowledge
You first and then I follow

I always come out without you
Without her

With or without him chasing me
On the dark, wet grass

And I will outrun him
I will outrun him because

SUSAN TICHY

There is something back there he wants
More

And whether it is
Your death or hers

I wake again
Without knowing