

# Fundamentalism

By Naomi Shihab Nye

Because the eye has a short shadow or  
it is hard to see over heads in the crowd?

If everyone else seems smarter  
but you need your own secret?

If mystery was never your friend?

If one way could satisfy  
the infinite heart of the heavens?

If you liked the king on his golden throne  
more than the villagers carrying baskets of lemons?

If you wanted to be sure  
his guards would admit you to the party?

The boy with the broken pencil  
scrapes his little knife against the lead  
turning and turning it as a point  
emerges from the wood again

If he would believe his life is like that  
he would not follow his father into war

Naomi Shihab Nye, "Fundamentalism" from *Fuel*. Copyright © 1998 by Naomi Shihab Nye. Used by the permission of BOA Editions Ltd., [www.boaeditors.org](http://www.boaeditors.org).

Source: Fuel (BOA Editions Ltd., 1998)