Lullaby

dust
slowly
dust slowly
dust slowly gathers
gathers grows grips
the surface
gleamless
grayly spurns sunlight
spurns wonder
copies color
claims top more than sides
more than under
dust slowly
slowly dust
gathers grows gleamless
slowly slowly
dust

—Thomas John Carlisle

October Pantomime

Fall has set the stage with Dionysus
for a tragedy. Behind the wings,
a crippled russet leafing the calendar,
swings a pendulum—the play begins.
Winds limp about to cue the cast.

First on
fragile strings, a dragonfly planing
amber air in quest of acorns, trapezes
under the glare of autumn. One twang,
and fractured is a brittle prow; on the
proscenium lies a splinted hull.

Act two opens. A crusty bow, and upstage
tumble mummied weed and panicle
of goldenrod, until the tangled strands
of the corymb crouch into a guise
of sculptured vermicule.

Next hoary hands, for
a macabre role, phlebotomize
the hollyhocks; a whispering campaign
in leaves, and the oakred curtain-drop
asphyxiates love-lies-bleeding. Wild geese
By honking the denouement.

From the top
Melpomene weeps; with thaumaturgy,
flings on the properties confetti
Bakes. All hibernate while the isochronic
rehearsals pulse a new tragedy.

—Sister Mary Honora, O.S.F.

Aqueduct

Let it stand
A stone guest
In an unhospitable land,
Its speech, the well’s speech,
The unsealed source’s,
Carrying thence
Its own sustenance. Its grace
Must be the match
Of the stream’s strength,
And let the tone
Of the waters’ flute
Brim with its gentle admonitions the conduit stone.

—Charles Tomlinson

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