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Robert Schultz

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Robert Schultz

LIBRETTO: FOR THE FALL OF THE YEAR

Except for the red-oak's splash, an occasional jay, or the breeze sliced by the sumac leaves, the trees have been empty for days.

Our vision's cleared.

Now we see

all the way to the lake. Light rips the water at the wave-tips, cuts bright doors in the town's west edge.

That's where we want to go, Sally, out to the lake to cruise on the jingling sparks, canoe like the fools we are for the lightning rippling slowly like fat water snakes on the swells.

Dip oar and the water whorls at its blade like a shoulder flexing. We and the lake pull by. Reflections quiver, slip with our strokes. The roads and the trees, we ourselves fan out in waves from the prow. Your hair and a road wind trellised in the limbs. Where does the body end?

*

This is the road I'll take, gone blond with dust.

I'll stroke,

You steer. We'll ride on out that lithe geometry of water lights.

Remember this: we've named the fall a clearing. Pull for the bright west edge.