
Coastlines

Debut

by Philip L. Levin

Under belligerent knotty clouds
with brown oak leaves slapping
their wet flat exo-skeletons blanketing
a hard dirt, exhausted from nourishing,
once-vibrant emerald organics,
topped with daffodils or hyacinth,
now hang limp as brown tinged slackers.
A silver blade, barely a hand-length long,
stabs, cutting deep,
disrupting earthworm-tunneled clods
creating a mole-hole, an ant's cavern
in which a brown flaky ball, placed snugly,
sleeps beneath its nurturing blanket -
unaware of rain, sleet, and snow,
pummeling its roof, percolating down
to tickle a root mass, tender tendrils
anticipating a future, waiting patiently.
Until a brave chloroplastic explorer
pokes though to warming light,
tentatively, unsure if frost still threatens.
Gathering strength and length and faith
until, tipped with gold or chartreuse or azure
it joins its cousins in a cacophony of color,
a month of glory,
before fading again
into a year-long repose,
gathering nourishment
for next year's symphony.