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Autumn

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Autumn

Caroline Johnson

Standing in a river of fire,
 swept in a swirl of swollen maples
 now breathing in October's late
 afternoon fashion show
 like a lazy city tramp who has
 lost his way and is
 rustling in the leaves,
 touching wicker bark and
 wet, dark branches
 like an operetta symposium,
 it sings to us,
 in shocking silence of golds, burghandies
 with flames that leap towards quiet stillness.

Mauves and hydrangeas
 and paint-by-number canvas
 with soft brushstrokes someone has
 fingerprinted happiness
 and scattered the dreams of sunflowers
 across Van Gogh's sky, leaving
 lime green speckled bushes, baby pine,
 dead logs, and deer that stop for the moment.

"You see this tree here?" he said.

"When we come back here again, it won't be the same."