

Contours of Fall

A show expected of them,
fall trees in late September
I imagine dream of ugliness,
loss, discolour,

like girls of old New England
clustered a time together
might well have done to brace themselves,
shriek in a mirror,

as the contour is approaching,
men of miles away,
who see what comes as no surprise
rapturously,

and the trees can no more stem it
than the girls behind the door;
all slump into the strict allure
men gallop for.

The brown they think goodwill to them,
the red they read as love,
the golds and ambers anything
they're short of;

so the trees turn and the girls walk
and neither learns a colour
to make these strangers go away,
not grief, pallor,

not misery, till a stave of contours
swings by in a breath.
One colour does for all thereafter
in the north.

Wasps in Sweetness

All creatures that are creatures that I am
have mustered dabbling in an amber pool,
at what, I wonder. As I reach the rim
some creatures I see satisfied and still.

All creatures that are creatures that I passed
have fallen on one meal. I see so many
eyes so fixed, so many seeking west
and figuring it's down. The air is honey...

honey, dregs, and grain. If I'd been called
to mix the air myself this would comprise
the whole of it, all creatures of the world
would fall to it like this. I am the size

of all the creatures as I start to drink;
I taste them in this milk that each declined
to finish. I am marvelling as I sink
to work, late struggling creature of my kind.

Photos from Before

Pity and envy now for our late selves
in photos from before, when we led lives

we have to deal with now. There was a lark
we all were in on, and we can't have back

the pronoun as it was. What was it for?
We talked ourselves into an atmosphere.

I escape to, where the forest trees
are green and sleepless and I realise

they're each about to turn. And how that feels
is like a wade through infant boys and girls

who think my jaw will drop. Perhaps they saw
my face in an old photo from before,

and don't imagine I would have a clue
they are going to do what they are going to do.

Tomorrow in the Sand

That day had eyes—if days have hooks and eyes—
and I had hooks: it's not as if my feet
don't print upon the earth. I showed my face
at breakfast, I was chatted with, I shared
 comments, I was heard;

I jogged on the grey beach and in plain view
of fishermen. And yet there's no account
of me, there seems no trace, no residue.
I felt like something one was going to find
 tomorrow, in the sand.

I sat at tables set for families
and as I left them saw no sign at all
I sat there. This itself is one of those
notebooks that I bothered for a while,
 in which no syllable

gets written. Waiters and receptionists
saw through me to the windows. And the sigh
I gave as I went by the wedding guests
turned heads towards the shore. It was a day
 oblivious to me.

But it mentions you repeatedly, will swear
it saw you, nods when I repeat the name,
though the unlikelihood has been made clear,
and though each day that ever said the same
 retracted it in time.