

LINDA SILLITOE

THE REAPING

Reading is one thing — and metaphors
imitate life in literature only.
Yet when birds flapped a curtain of chatter over a sky-scrap
and gold first dampened the solid trees,
a twist of coming cold pinched a frightened nerve.
We heaped every day's basket with ready wheat and fruit,
spinning late melons like toys on the grass.
Yet we were the harvest, unable to snatch the deliberate sickle,
but piled our resolution like a weightless springtime
against the trickle of falling leaves.
Then a week nearly all of gold, but we were too hurried,
turning and falling, to count the bright stream in the gutters.
Today when I drove the dizzy way home from the airport,
the harvest of leaves washed the road
in high yellow rivers and I was defeated.
I admit not all the trees are stripped yet,
but the storm continues, will become precise.
Inside, all the lights have blown black
and toys crack under my feet as I move in the dark.