

The Fall of My Fiftieth Year

Dixie Partridge

Winter already edging down
from mountain passes, I walk past
our first town cemetery, filled with upright
markers and gold-red trees.
It's had no vacancies for years.

Toward the river, the slant sun before dusk
illumines the top halves of birch
and willow.

Only since mid-life
have I noticed how autumn air and the human eye
can liquefy thick sunlight;

how dense the tapestry of reeds,
leaves pooling over grounds;

the water's visual rustle
of silk surfaces.

In a shedding of summer, limbs
and trunks of the landlord trees
along this river
 are emerging
prominent again, with their creased
and furrowed barks:

my body, with its slow wrinkling
toward more intricate maps, applauds . . .
steady footfall sounding
through its tempered bones.