

These Days Between
—*After Leaving Our Youngest at College*

Dixie Partridge

It's turning fall in this long alley of young trees,
poplar leaves still and golding in deep shade.
You see no one and hear not even birds.

But the pale trunks together seem to hum
like choir rows, the performance
of their true colors imminent.
Chlorophyl diminished as if by some faint
baton signal, so begins a movement toward
what they are deeply: it begins to shine through.
Finally left to their own devices,
they are creating their own light—
bright yellows to copper edged tawny.
How easy it looks.

A flutter, and like slow
wings, branch to branch,
one leaf then another. A great relaxation
is coming—widening pools will color the ground.
How brief the days seem.
What's changeable, what's not.

Photos of these tree rows hang on our wall,
near windows, where a slowed process of light
works its way: they receive openly
and over time give up
their paper color by faint degrees . . .

Better to walk with the upright
trunks and feel each part
of the falling—the infusion toward boldness
in frescoed light . . . the tremor . . .
the rift . . . the letting go.

DIXIE PARTRIDGE {pearantree@gmail.com} grew up in Wyoming and spent most of her adult life living along the Columbia River in Washington State. Her poetry has appeared in several anthologies and many journals, including *Poetry*, the *Georgia Review*, *Midwest Quarterly*, *Ploughshares*, and *Southern Poetry Review*. Her first book, *Deer in the Haystacks*, is part of the book series Poetry of the West from Ahsahta Press. Her second, *Watermark*, won the national Eileen W. Barnes Award. She has served as poetry editor or reviewer for two poetry journals and coedited regional anthologies in the Northwest. Personal impact of landscape is most often at the root of her writing.