

EMILY GROSHOLZ

November

for Dick Davis

My friend, it seems as if we know at last
we won't be here much longer.
Crossing the mountain of a hundred years
we've gained the shadow side. Against our faces
Boreas falls, the breath of nothingness.

The Chinese sages recommend reflection:
characters like willows
bend to the river where cold water flows
unceasingly, changing its fluid mind
with every passing cloud or boat or leaf.

What's left behind? Only a few brief verses.
Come to visit soon, and drink a glass
of wine and watch the woods behind my house
decant the autumn moon
overblown and gold on the horizon.

Spring Cleaning

This season's a disaster: autumn leaves
still cram the hidden, blind interstices
bushes subtend between the house and lawn,
between our property and someone else's,
crawl spaces tunneled intermittently
by rabbit, squirrel, and children, who emerge
crusted with twigs and pillbugs.
And underfoot the glint of broken toys.

And overall the new leaves burgeoning
and branches downed and gelid daffodils
which bloomed and froze,
volunteer bluets cornering the grass,
plaited mouse and chipmunk, what remains
of barn owl night thoughts, crooked, undigested.
Bleached or blackening beside the leafpile,
that heap of sticks like vertebrae or ribs.

Weltering, paratactic, adjectival:
a great unseemly biomass, here and there
and neither here nor there. Too much for me,
who should by now have set the leafmeal curbside
in conical matched sets fit for the vacuum
cleaner truck, and racks of leafless sticks
for the great mulcher with its gloved and goggled
ministers, that seals the fate of spring.