

ELTON GLASER

Deciduous Variations on Akron

Fall is our favorite conclusion.

We can do without
the leaves backlit from heaven,
the gold coronas, yellow of old skulls,
and reds sparking like volleys from a banjo,
in whose presence the fine-tuned hairs
of tourists vibrate and gawk.

The sky goes nowhere, a sealed confession,
the stone of Lazarus undisturbed.
We like it that way. In this tale,
the hero turns back, his horse sore-footed,
the sword heavy in his hand, never guessing
that the girl's wild cries were just
one more sad joke from the dragon.

Three wishes are never enough.
We want the axioms of autumn,
X and Y of the big trees, a natural algebra
printed on the air like
"the timetable for a Chinese railway."

This is the landscape of necessity,
adventures of the ornery eye, all freaks
and flaws, aberration of atoms.
Here, the brain spins with the speed
of rearwheels in slush, snowmobile,
the engine in a high hot whine.

And we come to the dead end
of ourselves, as if some needle pierced us
pointing out true north, the lode:star
that leads wise men to Akron—no switchbacks
or byways, no last detour
around the damage, only this white weather
where nothing changes, everything hurts.