

In Fall –

The children drag their feet
toward a life of clocks
and questions –
the day in fog,
and pumpkin fields
on fire. Memory
scatters your path
with leaves
and broken twigs.

How many calendars ago
did your own mother
kneel before you
to button up your new coat,
bought two sizes too big
with room to grow?

Then her hands
were skilled and quick
as they folded down your collar,
brushed toast crumbs
from your cheek.

When she bowed
to lace your sneakers,
you saw the silver in her hair,
the beginning
of that other season,
one whose dusk
the body can't refuse –

black flowers on a drying vine,
burning oak, cricket song –
the old smoke waltz of autumn.

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