

HUES OF YOU

sometimes i think autumn tries
to personify you

m e m o r i e s
drift down as the thinly veined
leaves scatter gold
red and fiery orange
c r i s p
on tired ground

your hands had veins like these
p r o m i n e n t
as the bare
dark limbs are against
the cloudy white sky

i pick up leaves gently
thinking of how i last held your hand
c a r e f u l
where the fragile
fingers lay cold

r e m e m b e r i n g
your words like pale whispers
of the evening breeze
crackles with every breath
dry leaves drifting across the ground

how evident was your effort
above the whirl of dialysis
till the work it took
t o
b r e a t h e
became too much

when the evening shadows grow long
casting visions of pumpkins
apple pie and tea on
leaf-strewn porches
i t h i n k o f y o u

thoughts that threaten to suffocate
drowning in these gold-red hues
each breath heavy when
autumn brings
m e m o r i e s

would you be proud
of how I put these memories to work
how I listen to other lungs now
c a r e f u l l y
and see the ghosts of you
in physiology books
and the eyes of patients like you
who draw every breath
s o c a r e f u l l y

unlike you i do not know
how drowning from the inside
o u t
f e e l s

but when dry leaves drift
and orange skies burn earlier
when my tired eyes study in the long evenings
till thoughts blur like foggy breath
in crisp air
i t h i n k o f y o u
and start to
u n d e r s t a n d

—Marilee Kneeland

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