Libretto: For the Fall of the Year

Robert Schultz
LIBRETTO: FOR
THE FALL OF THE YEAR

Except for the red-oak's splash,
an occasional jay,
or the breeze
sliced
by the sumac leaves,
the trees have been empty for days.

Our vision's cleared.
Now we see
all the way to the lake.
Light rips
the water at the wave-tips,
cuts bright doors in the town's west edge.

That's where we want to go, Sally,
out to the lake
to cruise on the jingling sparks,
canoe like the fools
we are for the lightning
rippling
slowly like fat water snakes on the swells.

*

Dip oar
and the water whorls at its blade
like a shoulder flexing.
We
and the lake pull by.
Reflections
quiver, slip with our strokes. The roads
and the trees, we ourselves
fan out in
waves from the prow. Your hair
and a road wind trellised in the limbs.
Where does the body end?

*

This is the road I'll take, gone
blond with dust.
   I'll stroke,
You steer.
   We'll ride on out
that lithe geometry of water lights.

Remember this: we've named the fall
a clearing. Pull
for the bright west edge.