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All Autumn

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ALL AUTUMN

All autumn, in the graveyard, the dead
don't rise:
not one of them upturns the dying grass,

but the oak leaves keep falling
until the paths are all full,
covered and dark,
as if there's no way out of the graveyard.

*

I wish the dead would stay visible
a long time,
like burned-out stars
shining in little spikes among the living.

I wish God would let them die
a little at a time, like stars,
and burn their way back to His darkness,

like a black coal with its razor-cut of fire.

At least we could think they resemble us
before they disappear in the deep black of the dirt
or the sky.

At least they could wait here beside us

like a row of bare oak trees in the dusk.