

BURT BRADLEY

Falling

for T.H.

Autumn can't be drawn by broad strokes,
no wide, horse-haired brush,
stallion tail slapping the air.
So, still this twilight, it settles
inside small envelopes,
lacquered, gilded, used before,
sealed and unsealed with a whiff
of some primeval perfume,
vermillion scented, a hint of plum
dissipating into the deep red end
of things turning purple, indigo,
these last swaths of color on the horizon.

So layered you'd think this is all
there is to it—but hardly that simple
or that silent: the sound of cocoons closing
and stones, small round, slate colored things,
rumbling along the creek bed.
This autumn day ends wrapping her foliage
around the still air, an invisible child,
whose breath is edged with frost.

We practice silence to listen
to the sap beating in the pine,
the heart of the world just hidden
on the dark banks, under a new moon,
black and empty before waxing in an unlit sky.
No seams to any of it, no lines to cross,
nothing to decipher--like autumn itself,
falling into a full absence.