

I Have Traced a Jagged Autumn

I have traced the paths of jagged autumn,
Found in the lightninged veins of maple leaves
Heaven's design to become the bottom,

To shed life, giving it up for rotten
Forest floors, a colored collapse that weaves
Sky and ground in strands of jagged autumn.

We collect the fragile, windblown emblems,
Place them into books, trying to believe
We can rescue heaven from the bottom.

Crying to our God, "the sky has fallen,"
We see the twisted nakedness of trees
Their bare-branched prayers through jagged-autumn,

Reminding us of what we have forgotten—
The contours of the land that no one sees
Except when heaven has touched the bottom.

We confuse death with depth of red on plum,
But the vibrant grasp at life finds reprieve
Birthed again beneath the jagged autumn
Through heaven's design to embrace the bottom.

—Scott Cameron

This poem won first place in the 2017 Clinton F. Larson Poetry Contest.