

AUTUMN COMES TO THE PARK BENCHES

There is room now for the yellow leaves
to accept long standing invitations.
Intended functions are outdated;
the scene has shifted to stale rooms.
Behind soiled lace curtains simple pasts may
take shape in phrases that defeat
dispersions of space, the green laughter
springing from the ground; walls
are all ears now. Here only
the sniffing dog makes his rounds,
a bit of old newsprint stirs,
absences emphasized by slant of light
allow the whispers of the season
to fall in their proper cadences, chilling air
to hand down reserved decisions.
There will be time, at last, for
worn anecdotes to settle seed-like
into the brittle grass, to lie dormant
until the time of their retelling
by frailer voices warmed again in the sun.

—*John V. Hicks*