

Fall Foliage

They tell me
it is only a matter of chemistry;
the handiwork of the sun's warming flame
and the blow of the secretive wind.

May be it is only the coming and the going
which no one can prevent;
for millenia the sun has inscribed
the same cruel message
on the green molecules of the cells.

And yet there is a time
for the blood to blossom
in tumultous colors;
a time when not all the city girls together
can parade such colorful skirts.

But do we not know
that colors too are a kind of grief?
the adolescent dresses falling away
in pale ancient memories
even when one feverishly pretends
to be untouched by the dark clamor of the earth.

The sun's warmth slowly fades
and the merciless hissing of the snake
echoes in your veins;
an inconsolable wailing
that ever inhabited you
suddenly lifts its wings
as you unstick from the branch
with a cold virulence
and the heavy consonants
re-embrace the earth.

Sitakanta Mahapatra