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Rose Swartz

Western Michigan University

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BONE-CHILLER AND THE MAKE-UP SELLERS

Rose Swartz

The trees are Mary Kay ladies
who spill free samples on the sidewalk
No pink Caddilacs just mulberry brambles,
fishing lures and hula hoops stuck on their arms,
kite tails shoved in wild hair.
They wear scarves of telephone wires
that leave whip-marks in the sky.
They lose weight by rain.
The lightning, a glamour shot flash bulb:
You deciduous, you, lose it all!
The special storm photographer tells them
sway with the wind Goddamn!
act like you need that water!
Hike up that picket fence skirt—
September elm, burnt maple October,
fleeting poplar leaf at noontime.
The free samples wash up on doormats,
get blown under windshield wipers,
float incognito in abandoned cereal bowls.
Leaf by leaf by crackle by skeleton vein
the season's brutal maintenance man,
the stylist to the trees, chiller of bones and
stacker of leaves, cleans up their enterprise.
Puts the spotted maple eyeshadow and
dying Rose of Sharon blusher in suitcases underground,
Sends the lipstick samples back to the warehouse and
wipes the painted face of summer clean.