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Autumn Morning

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AUTUMN MORNING

Ellen Johnson

leaves fall
with amazing grace
like milkweed floss
or snow

I rake them
- or try to -
into neat piles
but the leaves of my life
with seemingly innate perversity
or fear
skitter away
like lovers
at the slightest breeze

not so the geese
honking firm south
in neat lines
encouraging each other
wings beating like hearts
decisive and regular
sure
as they seek surcease
from cold loneliness

a pair of geese
drift wavelessly
across the romantic mistiness
of pearly-gray dawn
then rise into mauve and tur-
quoise
and are gone

so it is then that
naked souls of lovers left
reach empty
yet growth-budded
branches
into the penetrating red-gold
fall morning
while the leaves, wet with frost
comfort the earth

the lone blue pansy
leftover from summer
smiles upward
seeking the geese