

Autumn

Today the temperature didn't rise
and the wind raked leaves
across the asphalt in a dry crackle.
I drove beneath the trees
and could sense it: finally,
the season of release is here—

I've waited for some time now.

Summer hangs heavy on the trees,
and scraps of lilies suffocate
the yard. Tomatoes still bend
the backs of vines, but I don't
care if they drop unripe—
as long as they let go.
I watch the trees for tints
of red as, just one season past,
I watched stalks for blooms.

This is not a dying season,
but a lightening, a letting go
of what has grown heavy.
I'm ready to breathe again, ready
for the thick summer air to break,
ready to see sharp branches cut
into an autumn sky, rocking
in their freedom, stretching
their tired backs and dancing—
dancing because they have nothing
now to carry, nothing left to bear.

—Suzanne Ehst, 2004