

**Leaf Dried to Muddy Drain**

Think of the ends of things. The cut  
grape zinnia aslant in its vase; early winter  
crosswinds flattening fields; dripping gutter  
hushing to a freeze. The pyrotechnic love made  
and let atrophy. Melody thins as intermission  
widens. Gin residue overhangs. Even the hard,  
staid perspective of the passive Midwest thins  
as a landscape shoulders the jagged image of everything  
breaking. Downpressed. Compacted.  
My hand tracing the end of my wife's hair.  
Language and its grave ballistics. This plane eroding  
like James Wright's Ohio. Plump, sedated.  
Block by block people chew hands through  
cycles of grief and medication, locked in  
intoxicated graze. Tender and cushionpinned,  
they gaze up as certainty wrinkles dry  
to crepe paper. Poof.