

Alfred Corn

Hudson Heights

The twain do sometimes meet, desert light
and dryness a brilliant match for this year's rainless fall,
gold leaves cycling down from their hardwoods,
while one last catbird gears up for the crisp flight south.

The married woman strolling among reckless
yellow pinwheels still finds in them a surprise equal
to the first a northeastern autumn sprang
on someone who, as a girl, had run and screamed
through sprinklers on a lawn in La Jolla.

Labor Day, her youngest packed and left
for school, in his wake, the famous "empty nest
syndrome." Which helps explain tingling magnetic fields
that lately center around Joaquín of Hudson Hardware—
his nostalgic Spanish voice, his eyes' respectful guesswork.

A visit from her twin, high on a Mexican divorce,
salved, but solved exactly nothing.

Far down, steeply down, the train tracks' trellis, which
a delayed express will soon be climbing. In the park,
however, twining, red-leafed Virginia creeper
has borrowed an oak to give it a leg up in the world.
And how deep in the earth would you have to dig
to mine the coal that locomotives used to burn?

Low thrums, a rumble, a rush, and there it is:
*Train, take me with you, sir, north, south, east,
west, anywhere, I don't care, I've stayed slender,
my eyes still sparkle, they have that uncommon color
halfway between blue and green.*