

PATRICK COLE

Leaves

Let these words be the dry leaves on which you walk through the deep Te Deum of autumn in the city; sky stilled by the blue with no synonym, trees by bared brown, the people's faces cool, their woolen chests hot. These words now the path down avenue and narrow market street littered too with cardboard and crates and folding tables carrying overpopulated still lives. Past dim stone history, its churches hunched beside apartments wherein must live its saints, past forgetful glass windows faintly reflecting and the very many peering silver-eyed rear-view mirrors, curious as frogs. These crunchy dry leaves you step on lead along the river known more for solid being than running, then you cross on your choice of bridge, here or further along, or further along. On you go breaking up these words and smelling the resulting dust and burnt memories exhaled by inner chimneys belonging to you and all the world's neighbors. Up a gentle slope upon these phrases snapped by the feet under your eyes, then turning right past the sad red neon-named café in which you forever forget to sit, its outdoor tables abandoned now, the choir of wicker chairs damp, the choir of wicker chairs damp. And to the park. Where upon these leaves you sight the trees in outstretched fall ritual, the simple blue above saying you can know whatever you wish, though there's no rush, inside the park which sits hard as the city it buttresses, parents, occasionally forgets. Walk on through the low light now, one of the secondary suns off-white behind the branches now, and perhaps before you get to the park's other side and its abrupt resumption of vertical congestion and block towers ever over-seeing, you'll decide not to die, by stopping forever to look beyond when arriving on this pathway's very last crackled word



ABOUT PATRICK COLE

Patrick Cole received a master's degree in nautical archaeology from East Carolina University. Now a scientific publishing manager, he lives in Barcelona, Spain. His work has appeared in *Cosmonauts Avenue*, *The Conium Review*, *Arsenic Lobster Poetry Journal*, *Parcel*, and the *Writing That Risks* anthology.

