

David Dodd Lee

Yellow Poem

(for my mother)

And so you look beyond the shadows and there's something simmering
in the heat, the past—edging closer, not staying put—and all you
wanted was a walk, but instead got these channeled memories:

little darts of sunlight, like small, obsessed-over kernels; wads of
unopened envelopes;
or ice, the silence of waking up
in a hospital room where it is snowing, all the monitors

frozen. God appears to be an immune fly, or a speck
on the wall, opening like the roar of the sea that is hidden
deep inside the fog in the dreams you've been having.

God isn't watching anyone, a sleeping, dying woman—your
roommate—intones.

And the wind spiders over the frozen lake north of the hospital campus,
tangling in chaotic ribbons in the black trees
that are dripping with dust-tainted yellow-gray water.

Maybe your roommate once sat in *her* car in November,
trying to catch her breath
while gazing across the choppy lake with its million small whitecaps.

Or maybe she opened the trunk of her car
and plunged her hands into a cooler full of ice
so she could feel something
hard she could roll into a ball in her mind and sit with
in the front seat, the heater blowing on her:

Now I am warming up and it doesn't matter what anyone thinks.

I have a maple leaf inside this bible.

One autumn it turned yellow and it is still yellow

and flat and delicate as a piece of paper with a love letter written on it.