

POETRY

Pronouncing death 2

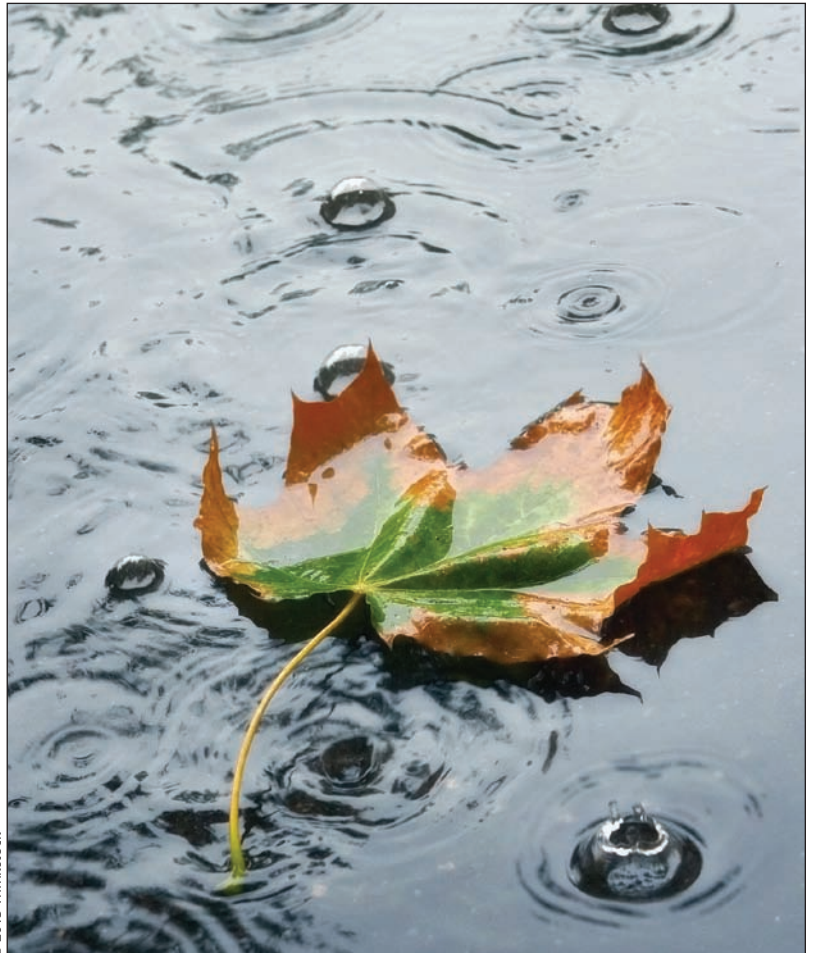
I have practised these words
 the motions of this form,
 watched for the rise and fall
 of a chest,
 listened for a heart
 expecting it gone.
 At nursing stations
 I have written names
 last, first, middle
 checked boxes
 declared antecedent causes
 signed.

Still here I was arrested
 alongside your stranger bed
 by octogenarian nails
 painted fire-engine red.
 Nobody left to explain the story.

I too have left you
 alone in a room
 with motes of retinal light.
 Stepping around puddles in the driving rain,
 recalling infants prefer to sleep
 with something touching their head.

Kevin Bezanson MD
 Family physician
 Temmy Latner Centre for Palliative Care
 Mount Sinai Hospital
 Toronto, Ont.

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