

October Incantation

BY JACOB BUTLETT

O wind swing between bare branches,
rake red leaves beyond gray hay bales,
blanket silent lakes and cadaverous
soil with glassy pillows of frost.

Bombard us with pumpkin patches,
kicked-in orange heads of rot, seedy
guts bleeding and freezing in the breeze
you bring to kiss our children's cheeks.

Blow wilting gardenia blossoms to our
front porches, dance with the green wreaths
on our front doors, billow tutus
of zombie ballerinas passing through.

Cast dark nets of clouds to keep
fleeting stars and sun. Tell us you love
us enough not to die. At least, convince
me you want me, though I know you don't.

Cling to the beaks of crows crying on utility
poles. Break the surface of the first undertow
of falling snow, the unspoken spaces
in the sky. Listen to our jack-o-lanterns,

the flickers of music in their hollow, hallowed
heads. Blow out their lights until the last
second, until you can no longer stand it.
No one deserves you.