

First Frost

Ceres, the dark mother, returns to her underground abode.

There is owlhoot in the pines now, blackbirds'
Complaint; cicadas and katydids
By night: "a stridulation of crickets."
Crows announce the dawn; the cardinal's whistle
Now is gone or call of mourning dove.
The green caravans are moving out of town.

The river here is boisterous and broad,
A young horse that's given his own head
As it races by beneath the wooden bridge.
The dirt road is a patchwork quilt of leaves,
A counterpane in amber, gold and red,
As it winds along beside the foxy wood,

To open on a field of goldenrod.
Headhigh canes here sleepwalk in the wind,
The veterans left too long on campaign.
Milkweed pods depend on rigid stems,
Like semaphores to long departed trains
On a spur of track that weeds have overcome.

The pensioners are idling in the sun,
Awaiting one last fling of revelry
When stingy pods unclench a hoard of seed
And fling them forth in little chutes of down
Wherever wind or earth will have them now.
Who's to say if spring comes back again
And young birds sing? Forget the past,
We've had our say. Broadcast! Broadcast!

Jack Flavin