

## THE EXHIBITIONISTS

Gaudy. Shameless. Swaggering.  
Vast expanses of hardwoods are vested  
in orange and amber ruffles. Oak colonies  
stud the display with garnet flash.  
The tallest pines and spruces among them  
state their almost overwhelmed points  
the only way they can, tips barely visible.  
Complementary clouds moving closer,  
some blushing, hang low to take it all in.

There's even a sweeping swath of blue water,  
blue enough to turn Levi Straus green  
with envy, knowing his aniline dyes  
can't compete.

How does this place dare such flamboyance  
in the face of advancing claws of cold and sleet?  
This isn't a victory celebration, it's a taunt.  
Don't the showoffs know they're in for  
humiliating loss, destined to become bare  
and brown, rough skeletons stripped of all glory?

Or do they feel deep in the heartwood--  
this time--this year  
their splurges of ostentation will overcome?  
It's possible. Stunned by such outrageous pomp  
winter may surrender.