**An Understory of Loss and Promise**

E.N. Loizis

It doesn’t take much to see them

turn any corner of this place you call *home* and there they are:

amber, scarlet, yellow, auburn, some last live ones

face down on the cold floor of their falling

bodies stacked on top of each other

a bleeding tapestry of *Nos*

Pick one up — any one will do

hold it against the last of the day’s light

and look: a myriad roads intertwining

collapsing into the cruelest treasure hunt

in which the prize is life and losing means little

to the men drawing the map

Someone tell them: the earth doesn’t forget

it takes the mulch, breaks it down until what’s left is chaos

trying to make sense of itself

feeding the dirt we sprung from

Some will become venomous plants feeding on

worms with a taste for human blood

while others will nurse the forest back to life

one tiny seed of promise after the other

Time will tell which sprouts in your backyard:

the man-ending labyrinth of a million ways to die?

or a garden of creation filled with the laughter

of the children buried in its soil?