

In Memory of Donald Justice

Now the trees, having borne a hard wind,
slowly straighten, good morning. Who said all night
shhh and slowly exhaled, perhaps a bit weary
from the heavy water riding down their leaves.
An outdoor music overlords your own now,
you who were, of all poets, the chief internalist,
the one who proved that strict beauty is one
with the sublime. If time is the soil, nostalgia
is its darkening flower, and our ideas too smart
for the heart. Still, you rendered, acute,
a time past that will not die, tempered
by form. If time were tangible, audible, visual,
we could reset the clock—if, that is,
we dared to, knowing. I would have you back
possessed again by words, music and games,
reading the scores, calculating the odds,
with no melancholy, just exacting forethought,
divining the end result of a good deal.

—Marvin Bell