

## *Intimations of Autumn*

The weather have overcasted.

And the sun have borne off some with some clouds.

And them peach colored trumpets,  
them daylilies is blaring out some ragged jazz,  
just low enough for bees and such.



And yesterday beside your casket,  
graveside  
 where I honored you with your own words,

I dressed in Fifties academic livery  
—the seersucker jacket,  
light blue button-down Oxford-cloth shirt,  
a tie.

But with a difference.

The tie was Henri's.

Not the lovely lavender Countess Mara he bought  
in a haberdashery on Rodeo Drive,  
the last time I saw him alive—  
the one he bought to impress his psychiatrist,  
a woman he'd fallen in love with.

(Oh, mellifluous Henri! Easy for heartbreak.)

No, not that one,  
but a cheaper silk rep (7.50 the tag still says),  
black,  
slashed by gold and dark red stripes.

I chose tan slacks slightly frayed at the hems of each leg  
and socks worn thin at the heels.

In memory of our modest beginnings.

A time when mothers darned and mended.

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In our America,  
immigrant girls still grow taller and more beautiful  
than their lost parents could ever have imagined.

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Dear friend,  
while you were dying,  
I walked an empty morning beach in North Carolina.

Across the Intercoastal Waterway,

I could hear the WHOMP WHOMP of rockets  
slamming into their targets at LeJeune,  
the pop of chopper blades.

Back at the rented house,  
the resident barn swallows sliced the air  
above the sea oats and shrinking dunes,  
the hot macadam of the drive,

skidding,  
flittering,

coasting up gusts.

Perfect and oblivious in their sheerness.

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I see  
the sea I have loved is too large.

My smaller spirit cannot fill it.

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I make this wish for myself and for you:

A high sky.  
An intenser, deeper blue.

—*Robert Dana*