

Kherson

Phillip Louie

In autumn's canopy the fading leaves
still huddle close upon the topmost boughs,
thin yellow eaves against a boundless blue,
all trembling at the flock of rushing wings.
Then one by one they loosen at the stem,
and falling find the blooms held in my hand,
and nestle now among the flower stems.
Silence falls on the trees, until a shadow,
droning close, lays a glassy filament
among the leaves; they scatter as they dive.
A child cries—burrows in his mother's arms;
and under trembling boughs she draws him close.
Flinching, I cross the street beneath a mesh
of thinner eaves, knotted between the lampposts
and market stalls; long filaments hang severed
in the weave—threads of glass now glinting blue.
I pull a bloom and find her hands, still locked
around her son: her fingertips unfurl,
like living roots that gently take the stem;
and petals rise to meet the sky again.

