

# SU Book Club

## FALL POEMS AND FAMILY TRADITIONS



### A PHOTOGRAPH

by Sudesh Mishra

My suited and booted grandpa reminds me of a weighty door hewed from fired vesi or oak. If, upon turning the brass knob in his breast, you push against him, he's swift to push against you, and for an instant you're a doorman and he the mule of a man-door until the moment of letting go when he pulls you along after him into an open room where history reclines vacantly on an armchair.



### AFTER APPLE-PICKING

by Robert Frost

My long two-pointed ladder's sticking through a tree  
Toward heaven still,  
And there's a barrel that I didn't fill  
Beside it, and there may be two or three  
Apples I didn't pick upon some bough.  
But I am done with apple-picking now.  
Essence of winter sleep is on the night,  
The scent of apples: I am drowsing off.  
I cannot rub the strangeness from my sight  
I got from looking through a pane of glass  
I skimmed this morning from the drinking trough  
And held against the world of hoary grass.  
It melted, and I let it fall and break.  
But I was well  
Upon my way to sleep before it fell,  
And I could tell  
What form my dreaming was about to take.  
Magnified apples appear and disappear,  
Stem end and blossom end,  
And every fleck of russet showing clear.  
My instep arch not only keeps the ache,  
It keeps the pressure of a ladder-round.  
I feel the ladder sway as the boughs bend.  
And I keep hearing from the cellar bin  
The rumbling sound  
Of load on load of apples coming in.  
For I have had too much  
Of apple-picking: I am overtired  
Of the great harvest I myself desired.  
There were ten thousand thousand fruit to touch,  
Cherish in hand, lift down, and not let fall.  
For all  
That struck the earth,  
No matter if not bruised or spiked with stubble,  
Went surely to the cider-apple heap  
As of no worth.  
One can see what will trouble  
This sleep of mine, whatever sleep it is.  
Were he not gone,  
The woodchuck could say whether it's like his  
Long sleep, as I describe its coming on,  
Or just some human sleep.



### Home Sweet Home

*children parents pets  
noise in and around the house  
lovely atmosphere*

– Nikhileswari Swaminathan



### A Family Praising

*A gather of hands  
A feasting at dinnertime  
Hear the sounds of smiles*

– Laura McKenzie



### Autumn

*Fluttering of colors  
grey skies, warm clothes, softer smiles  
nostalgic musings.*

– Srivalli Pavan Rekha



## FIRST FALL

by Maggie Smith

I'm your guide here. In the evening-dark morning streets, I point and name. Look, the sycamores, their mottled, paint-by-number bark. Look, the leaves rusting and crisping at the edges. I walk through Schiller Park with you on my chest. Stars smolder well into daylight. Look, the pond, the ducks, the dogs paddling after their prized sticks. Fall is when the only things you know because I've named them begin to end. Soon I'll have another season to offer you: frost soft on the window and a porthole sighed there, ice sleeving the bare gray branches. The first time you see something die, you won't know it might come back. I'm desperate for you to love the world because I brought you here.



## ALL HALLOWS

by Louise Gluck

Even now this landscape is assembling. The hills darken. The oxen sleep in their blue yoke, the fields having been picked clean, the sheaves bound evenly and piled at the roadside among cinquefoil, as the toothed moon rises:

This is the barrenness of harvest or pestilence. And the wife leaning out the window with her hand extended, as in payment, and the seeds distinct, gold, calling  
*Come here*  
*Come here, little one*

And the soul creeps out of the tree.



## UNDER THE HARVEST MOON

by Carl Sandburg

Under the harvest moon,  
When the soft silver  
Drips shimmering  
Over the garden nights,  
Death, the gray mocker,  
Comes and whispers to you  
As a beautiful friend  
Who remembers.

Under the summer roses  
When the flagrant crimson  
Lurks in the dusk  
Of the wild red leaves,  
Love, with little hands,  
Comes and touches you  
With a thousand memories,  
And asks you  
beautiful, unanswerable questions.



## THEY SAY I HAVE

by Shel Silverstein

*They say I have my father's nose,  
My grandpa's eyes,  
My mother's hair.  
Could it be that my behind's  
The only thing that's really mine?*



## LEAVES

by Elsie N. Brady

How silently they tumble down  
And come to rest upon the ground  
To lay a carpet, rich and rare,  
Beneath the trees without a care,  
Content to sleep, their work well done,  
Colors gleaming in the sun.  
At other times, they wildly fly  
Until they nearly reach the sky.  
Twisting, turning through the air  
Till all the trees stand stark and bare.  
Exhausted, drop to earth below  
To wait, like children, for the snow.