HAVEPOETRY.COM

LOUISE GLÜCK

BURNING LEAVES

The dead leaves catch fire quickly.
And they burn quickly; in no time at all,
they change from something to nothing.
Midday. The sky is cold, blue;
under the fire, there’s gray earth.
How fast it all goes, how fast the smoke clears.
And where the pile of leaves was,
an emptiness that suddenly seems vast.
Across the road, a boy’s watching.
He stays a long time, watching the leaves burn.
Maybe this is how you’ll know when the earth is dead—
it will ignite.