

# On the Autumn Equinox, 2019

JEANNINE HALL GAILEY

The sunlight turns golden, the twilight  
full of shadows. The last dahlias and sunflowers  
dazzle us in a frenzy of color.  
On television, they're telling us another woman's  
rape does not matter. They're putting another rapist  
in charge. I spent last month in the hospital.  
I didn't have much fight left. At home  
I watch the towhee dodge the neighborhood cat,  
the Steller's jays and flickers jostle in my dead birch tree.  
I write another story. Sometimes my brain  
misfires, my legs stumble, my body refuses  
to try to survive. I have to drag it back  
among the living, slowly. What do the faces  
of the last flowers make you think of,  
the frantic hummingbirds and bees?  
Margaret Atwood says to carry cash,  
reminds us the end of the world  
has always been coming. Time's up.  
The owls' dark song is in the air. Despair  
won't help repair the lesions in your brain,  
or make one more child's life easier.  
The fight of living things against winter's  
cold withdrawal reminds me to watch  
the pink light as the sun falls behind the mountains.

