

## Inheritance

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My younger brother pours the last  
barrel of leaves into the fire  
and each of us in turn stirs the ashes  
with a long metal rake,  
letting the fire breathe, feed  
on the autumn night air.  
The fire runs hot streaks  
over our calloused hands,  
across our long, shadowed faces.  
It won't let us leave this place  
without trailing the smell of smoke.  
My father moves first. He coughs,  
spits blood into the fire,  
and begins to speak.