

Compost

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Filling a tarp full of spindled elm leaves
that cling and loosen in wake of dragging,
I stumble over frost-bitten lawn yawing

behind the yard into unbounded county
land where once dark falls ember-eyed
raccoon emerge to stride to the very lip

of the forest green high-impact garbage can,
where minutes molder the shape of cored
fruit, print ads, slightly fetid plastic bags—

all torn loose and strewn this winter night
I cannot sleep. Where I thought I was safest,
alone with stars and a rake, I'm startled.