

2004

Intimations of Autumn

Robert Dana

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Recommended Citation

Dana, Robert. "Intimations of Autumn." *The Iowa Review* 34.3 (2004): 180-182. Web.
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.S935>

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No, not that one,
but a cheaper silk rep (7.50 the tag still says),
black,
slashed by gold and dark red stripes.

I chose tan slacks slightly frayed at the hems of each leg
and socks worn thin at the heels.

In memory of our modest beginnings.

A time when mothers darned and mended.

In our America,
immigrant girls still grow taller and more beautiful
than their lost parents could ever have imagined.

Dear friend,
while you were dying,
I walked an empty morning beach in North Carolina.

Across the Intercoastal Waterway,

I could hear the WHOMP WHOMP of rockets
slamming into their targets at LeJeune,
the pop of chopper blades.

Back at the rented house,
the resident barn swallows sliced the air
above the sea oats and shrinking dunes,
the hot macadam of the drive,

skidding,
flittering,

coasting up gusts.

Perfect and oblivious in their sheerness.

I see
the sea I have loved is too large.

My smaller spirit cannot fill it.

I make this wish for myself and for you:

A high sky.
An intenser, deeper blue.

—*Robert Dana*