October Poem

the pumpkins arrive too early now

stacked outside grocery stores
while the trees are still mostly green

their skins hold that manufactured orange
like safety vests
or traffic barrels

still

people slow down beside them

touch the cool ribs
with the backs of their fingers

children kneel to inspect stems
as though choosing
which moon to trust

and every year
someone cuts a face
that looks accidentally sorrowful

a candle lit inside

small heat trembling
through the mouth

while leaves collect
against porch steps

and the dark begins arriving

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October Poem

before we are ready

somewhere in the neighborhood

someone is carrying
a knife and a pumpkin
through the kitchen light

trying once again

to make the coming winter
look friendly

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