

California ginkgos

by [Debra Rienstra](#) in the [January 18, 2017](#) issue

The palms on Allen Avenue never condescend
to throw out a low branch for perching birds

or shade the muscled workers trimming hedges,
skimming edgers along lush San Marino lawns.

Aligned in stately colonnades, the palms keep
nothing but complacency in their tasseled heads

even in November, when the scruffy ginkgos
beneath, weary of the California sun,

have the good sense to let their leaves,
fanned like a thousand open hands, turn

yellow and drop to the ground in rough
blankets of courage, messy assertions

of the need, now and then, to die.