

Orchard

by [Luci Shaw](#) in the [October 2024](#) issue

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The strong air of winter, my old friend
of many years, sighed against the house

all last night, a cold music—that icy wind,
blowing like a regret through the neighbor's

old apple orchard, a reminder of mortality
along with sharp memories of fall, long ago,

when those overburdened branches,
like tired gymnasts, bent low to the ground,

obeisant, as if awaiting our applause. Years,
now, since the trees bore any edible apples,

but this fall, as always, the rosy fruit are falling,
each with a soft thunk—one, and one, and another,

with a slow leak of juices, a rich fermentation
sinking into the soil, turning the deer tipsy

as they root and nibble. Each apple so splendid
to look at, so full of worms at the heart.