Autumn. Light. Under what sun were you born, did you grow.
Under what king, what tyrant.

What window. What door. The four horsemen, the seven sisters, at rest.
Whether a thousand years, five thousand,

is a long time. Still, a stone held in the hand will warm.
The same goes for bone.

Who fed you, a hand extending the spoon. What fed you, music, art, or light. Was there an empty room,

shadows cast upon the floor, the boards liquid with sunshine, and was that how you imagined

the soul: open, ready, very still, even if the day itself was windy. Or was it for you like the wind,

tempestuous, infiltrative, lifting the fallen leaves.
Did you think about it at all.

Many lights cast many shadows, so that the hand on the paper is reflected time and again,

the knuckles like the mountains, one range after the next, and each a fainter version of the same color,

so that our sense of the faraway is brought close, the brush dipped again into the water, a little less paint
for the next stroke. The path curving away to the right, around the hillock, into the copse.

A little gate breaks the view. Beyond, the beyond, given as a stripe of blue.

This is how I came to know you, as a smudge or trace—thumbprint on the potsherd, residue in the flask.