

1979

So much was golden then:
the descending chains I wore around my neck,
throat to breastbone, the charms—cross,
locket, tiny razor, his #6—my Fair Isle

sweater with gold threads in each row,
the metal lockers and the gold-
flecked linoleum of the gold wing
of my high school. Funny, how schools

can be winged things, whole limbs
subordinate to the structure. My school
had many wings, but few of us flew
very far. My school had a hollow heart:

the atrium with a single thick sycamore.
By that cusp of fall, its leaves had turned.

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By that cusp of fall, its leaves had turned
rust brown and gold, turned hungry
for the sugar they couldn't suck
anymore from the roots. That year, day
and night balanced: 12 hours, 8 minutes
long each, and though we couldn't see
while we smoked under the sycamore
at lunch, Andromeda rose over the wings
of the school, Perseus, too, with his
Heart and Soul Nebula. Equinox
tight as a fist pulled back, cocked.
What do I call that moment?