

To the Men Who Mow the County Graveyards

It won't be long before the designs you form are echoed
in the shivering leaves of an ash tree right there on the hillside

and because it's November those patterns will remain
all winter long, a sort of engraved, emblazoned pattern.

You are walking cautiously and must be able
to read the stones: *Earth bath no sorrow heaven cannot heal.*

Robert Morris, Garland Maupin, Jacob Hall
who just this spring whacked at the bull thistle in his clover field

with a steel scythe, timbre so sheer I held my breath,
as I did, once, under water, because the clang of an anchor

resounded in the heavy sea and my whole body
unwrapped right there in the harbor.

Look back over your shoulder.
The grass is gently sweeping like water at your feet.

It's the same lustrous quiet as the time Robert held
the black string of his dousing pendulum over a plat of land.

At first he whispered, then was wordless, balancing the lead
teardrop between thumb and index finger, letting it sway

and sway in shorter and shorter arcs.
Watching him I felt I'd come a little more alive.

In the dusk somewhere tonight a table lamp comes on.
A woman sits under it recognizing, suddenly, she is all alone.

*There is a river moving under all the land.
There never was a night that had no morn.*

Charlotte Matthews