The leaves have done their annual death-shimmy.
Now the streetlight, with no soft green curtain,
cuts a silver blade across my bed & (unless I sleep
on the edge) my body. I didn’t want to start with leaves,
even though I love how the trees turn the color of my aunts
& soul train line to the ground each October. No one
wants to hear a poem about fall; much prefer the fallen
body, something easy to mourn, a body cut out of the light
body lit up with bullets. See how easy it is to bring up bullets?

It’s impossible to ban guns, even from this poem.
I lie in the light, body split by light, room too bright for sleep
thinking of all the leaf colored bodies, their weekly fall,
how their bodies fall & look likes mounds of a tree’s shed skin
as if a child could jump into their bodies & play for hours.
There I go, talking about our dead, & if you don’t think
they are your dead, I’ve run from your hands. They are red
like the tree down the street, which looks like a hot air balloon
of blood, the leaves dyed fruit punch red, red as child’s red mouth
after an afternoon spent on the porch with a bag of Flamin’ Hots
watching other kids walk past, waiting for kids who don’t
pass anymore on the other side of summer, who maybe go
to a different school now or moved or made like a tree
& now sleep in a box made from one.