

BRUCE WILLEY

Lone Leaf, 2016
Archival Print, 24 x 16 in



COURTESY THE ARTIST

FRANK PAINO

Luna Moth

You will know two kinds of hunger,
the first, a smaller sadness—
a reciprocal thing that bends
the stave of your long, green days
toward splayed leaves of sweet gum,
fronds of walnut and smooth sumac
that will invoke, after long weeks
of exhortation, your exquisite
metamorphosis.

This is the hunger that drives you
to feed without ceasing,
not *as if* you cannot get enough
but simply *because*—
the hunger that will make you
spin around each viridian segment
of yourself a silken winding sheet
so you become, at last,
your own still ghost
sealed within the perfect artifice,
a single leaf from the tree
in whose branches you will sleep
until you wake
to a strange annunciation
that splits along the hardened seam
of your solitude, calls you back
into a world of night,
your mouth not sealed
but vanished, like a terrible wound
whose only bequest is a scar
pale and ravishing as a falling star.

What's left for you will be
the lot of every hungry ghost.

This is the second hunger,
which is the killing kind.
It will ransom
the sawtooth mandible
for sea-foam wings whose blind eyes
face the stolen light
of your namesake moon
while you drift, luminous,
insomniac with desire,
through the seven dwindling nights
that are your destiny.

Frank Paino was the recipient of an Ohio Arts Council 2016 Individual Excellence Award. His poem "Skeleton Lake" was recently selected as the winner of the 2016 Crab Orchard Review Special Feature Award. "If There is Such a Thing as Mercy" was selected as a finalist in the 2016 Briar Cliff Review Annual Writing Contest and will be published in that journal in 2017. Poet Marge Piercy selected his poem "Armageddon" for Special Merit in the *Comstock Review's* 2016 Muriel Craft Bailey Contest. He is currently at work on his fourth poetry manuscript.