

### Clean Slate

I can't very well just walk up to the man and tell him,  
I like to watch you work from my bedroom window.

I can't say watching him rake up layers of dry dead leaves  
and scoop them into bags with a giant plastic shovel gives me hope

on a morning where it seems like we've pried free our country  
from the fetid purple clutches of a wax-skinned tortoise.

I watch this man remove great rakefuls of rot  
and decay from the empty park across the street,

pulling back autumn's soiled linens to expose  
the soft dark earth of winter's possibility underneath.

I can't tell him the black barren dirt he's revealing  
makes me see green and reminds me of spring.

Daydreaming of flowers and budding shrubs to come,  
it's still too soon for any of that, but a clean slate is a start.

BENJAMIN WATTS