



# Jeff Guess

## GARDEN WEDDING

A bird in the Liquidambar  
will not obey speech and silences;  
and the children who  
wander beyond an imaginary line  
they have drawn for themselves  
play beneath the wet black branches  
shaking the red and yellow leaves  
into the green damp garden.

Guests cast them reproachful looks  
but they are outside the discipline  
we practice; outside our patience —  
pleasing only themselves.

And like the bird  
who is not bound by vows or verbiage  
will simply fly away.

And the children  
now under heavy sentence  
and chastisement  
will be bound to reluctant silence,  
where speech piles on speech  
like the shaken wet  
and dying autumn leaves.