Death Becomes Us
By Heather Gardner

You died first. Fast cars and Everclear.
We preserved your teenaged light.
Folded you between pages of books.
Museum of the doomed where you became
more beautiful. Luminous.

Is it unreasonable to sit near death
in a sea of orange leaves, ask
you to lift off the page?
I imagine you're a manuscript
illuminated by monks. Wolves
circling the margins. Breath in my ears.

Every year, there are more of you.
I practice alternate endings, unearth
your likenesses, wait for the wind
to turn the page.

Soon, we will all be beautiful
circling our own storybook endings.
The wolves of us. The howl.