

ASH

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Consider the neighbor with a face of sand dunes, soon to be resting in cold soil, or the classmate—mouth glued, eyes of stone—so far in the class' corner, she might as well be a portrait on the wall, or perhaps the professor with a voice containing less sound variation than a heart monitor flatline. Considering any of these might be more back-breaking than splitting wood with a butter-knife, but alas, consider yourself in a wooded area of rural Ohio. Don't just place your eyes on the Osage tree, its rocky bark and nuclear green brainy fruit. Don't pick up the brilliant symmetrical maple leaf, resting on feathery grass. And don't let enjoy the scents radiating from the pine. Though these are tantalizing, remember to look at the dying ash tree, towering and grey. Though nearing its end, with its bark that peels like old yellow wallpaper, and rotting beehive branches, let your eyes move high above the other trees to the clusters of small, precisely designed leaves at the ash's top, blowing wildly while the others stand still.