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The Last Page

October with Old Masters

I am not finished
Gorging on the verdure of July—

Dear cathedral architects,
I'm often sure we'll be received
In a big Delft sky,

Though the world's accomplished
Physicists say there's no place

To put an afterlife:
Eleven dimensions already

Accounted for, according to
My dinner partner over soup.

We need more ingenious eyes, you
Servants to the table, gold vinaigrette
With maker's mark, objects of vertu—

Tell about the soldiers
And the mothers, whose infants

Died and still the milk
Soaked whole gowns through—

I cried at the Mauritshuis
And in the Gemäldegalerie:

Sir, the thunderstorm's my
Province, for I have careless
Loved it.

Leslie Williams*

* This poem first appeared in Leslie Williams, *Success of the Seed Plants*, Bellday Books, 2010.