Driving Past Dead Sunflowers in October

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**Keywords**
creative writing, poetry

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This poetry is available in The Mercury: http://cupola.gettysburg.edu/mercury/vol2014/iss1/18
Crippled and brown, as if burnt, 
shriveled from weeks of thirst,

yet still they are as tall 
as scarecrows, thin roots 
staking the dirt with some unfeeble strength, heads sagging 
in a downward glance 
as if to make sure they are still there,

the legumes that tie them to the earth, 
gossamer umbilical threads yet to be cut. 

Though I know this is how it is here, 
this is how the harvest is done 
(by killing the golden crop in late summer), 
still I feel an internal companionship 

with these entities as they wait, 
solemnly, for the black gems 

to slip from their mouths, 
seeds tokens of another year gone, 

one year closer to the inevitable turning 
of the field to fallow.