Alma Mater: The Hudson River School

A Puzzle Poem by Dennis J. Hannan

Identify the artists and the paintings.

Every lazy autumn day
I live again my memories
of that Hudson River School
where my friend Irving slept

while we his classmates
gave no heed or heart
to our French schoolmarm
whose itinerant authority we dared not guy
as she droned on and on

in tone more sere
than the yellow leaves
that carpeted the lawn of our old church.

Indian summer's October leaves
whose crisp dry sound would curry

favor of my shuffling feet
as I walked the path to the village
home with Stuart
doughty fellow with coal black hair
son of the local cooper

sharing a Bartlett pear
I'd saved from lunch

We were cousins
kindred spirits
each vying for a homer in the Sunday game

Coats fingered from our shoulders
in the uncertain heat of afternoon
we gaze down across the now brown fields
above the shimmer of the easy ripples
on the Hudson far below

30 to where the distant Kaatskil silhouetted wall
shadows in us beneath the slanting sun
imagined bateaus of French and Indians
we’d read about
come paddling coolly toward us

35 leaving their silent silver wakes

We should warn the settlers
but our chores await
and there’s a chance of storm
portended by a distant thunder clap

40 so with quickening steps
reluctantly
we hurry home
Key

1  “Autumn” (1868), Jervis McEntee (1828-1891)
4  Washington Irving (1783-1859)
6  Martin Johnson Heade (1819-1904)
7  Henry French (b. 1704)
8  Francis Guy (1760-1820)
12  Frederic Edwin Church (1826-1900)
13  “Indian Summer,” Jervis McEntee (1828-1891)
13  “October,” George Inness (1825-1894)
16  “The Path to the Village” (1882), J. Francis Murphy (1853-1921)
17  Robert L. Stuart, wealthy collector of John Frederick Kensett (1816-1872)
18  Thomas Doughty (1793-1856)
18  Thomas Cole (1801-1848)
19  George Copper and James Fenimore Cooper, whose Last of the Mohicans (1826) inspired David Johnson’s (1827-1908) “Harbor Island, Lake George” (1871)
20  William Henry Bartlett (1809-1854)
22  Abraham M. Cozzens (1811-1868)
23  “Kindred Spirits,” Asher B. Durand (1796-1886)
24  Winslow Homer (1836-1910)
27  John George Brown (1831-1913)
29  “On the Hudson, Nyack” (1871), Francis A Silva (1835-1886)
30  William Guy Wall (1792-after 1864)
31  George Inness (1825-1894)
34  “Cooley Homestead, Greenwood Lake 1866, home of Judge Isaac Cooley,” painted by his son-in-law, Jasper Cropsey (1823-1900)
35  Francis Augustus Silva (1835-1866)
39  Clinton W. Clapp (1831-1915), born in the Town of Wappinger; some paintings hang in the Grinnell Library.