

Autumn Leaves
Written by Lavinia Goodell
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“There is no death -- what seems so is transition.”

Yes; the autumn leaves are falling -- falling! A few days the forests glowed and quivered in the sunlight; one bright, sweet, parting smile they gave us. They arrayed themselves in their coat of many colors, for a farewell. Death was not sad, to them; they greeted it smilingly, joyously. And now the many shaped, many colored leaves are dropping, quietly, one by one, spreading a rich carpet beneath our feet, and making sweet, melancholy music for us, as we tread. All summer they have woven a green, shady net-work above our heads, have clothed rugged trunks, giving them forms of beauty, have whispered sweet poetry in our hearts, in the silent language nature uses with her children; and now, in death, they throw themselves, a gorgeous, golden offering, at our feet.

The trees stand up cold, dark; lonely; every branch and twig clearly outlined against the back ground of blue sky. Calmly they await the keen November blasts, and the long winter. The white, cold snow shall come and rest on those dark branches where, a few short months ago, the pulse of life bent warm, and the spring sunshine had kissed into being the little buds that ventured to peep out from the rough bark.

Dead? shall we call them dead?

No: within the bare, rugged trunk is still the principle of life. Still, with roots deep in mother earth, is it nourished and strengthened, and closely within itself it *lives* -- an inner life. No harmony around calls out the beauty within, in buds, and leaves, and flowers. But it is there, and when the storms and frosts are passed, and the warm spring sun shall come again to gladden and bless, what an awakening in the dear old tree! How quickly the sap will throb through every vein -- the buds will open -- the young leaves flutter! Yes: When the spring-time comes, Nature, dear old mother Nature, will stand smiling and singing before us, as fresh, and young, and beautiful as on the morning of creation.

Winter comes to the heart, sometimes. The glad, beautiful summer of life is all gone. The sunlight, and birds, and dew give place to frosts, and cold, bleak winds. The soul is shut up closely within itself. No warm sympathies, no loving caresses from the outer world waken into existence its buds and blossoms. Only the cold snow comes with icy touch, in answer to its wild heart-cravings. Yet, deeply rooted in the great Source of Life and Love, it still lives. Sometimes comes a warm day, the snow melts away, the sunshine caresses tenderly, and the soul feels, as it were, a stirring of warmer life through all its being, feels that it may yet bud and blossom, may yet live out its whole soul life. Learn, O soul, a lesson from our glorious mother Nature! Like her thou too shalt “flourish in immortal youth.” Be patient! Thy spring-time cometh!

Peterboro, Oct. 25th.

L.G.