

Seasons
Five Poems

The Truth About The Fall:
A Sestina

There's something about October and the leaves
in Boston that I can't describe. Blanketing the green
grasses of the Public Garden, falling
in operatic syncopation, yellowing
to gold and brown... Beautiful, yes, but honestly
not as thrilling as watching tonight's Red

Sox game. That's what I'm thinking when a red
sunset sets that maple ablaze; a brave leaf
escapes, gets whipped about by that dishonest
breeze who tricked it into jumping before all the green
had drained from its arboreal abode. Its yellow
sisters cling to their branches, giggling at the fool's downfall,

ignorant of their own fate. It reminds me of some other Fall,
or maybe it was that poem I read,
the one that fell out of my old yellowed
journal I just happened to be leafing
through, written when you and I were still green
and full of all that fairy tale crap. Come on, let's be honest:

You and I both know that honesty
was never your best subject and all our life's a fallacy.
Thinking of it now I still turn a little green –
it makes me sick – your face never once reddened
with shame. You didn't even have the decency to leave,
just hid, all those years, behind your lies. You yellow

coward, afraid to face yourself, you yelled
at me instead, ripped my mind to shreds. Honestly,
you are ridiculous. Your face when I left
was Priceless. But that happy ending didn't happen in the Fall;
No, it was in the Spring, the world at the ready,
birds chirping and the trees just turning green.

In Boston, in October, all the green
fades and falls. The trees put on yellow
dresses and gold necklaces, dye their hair red
and dance with the wind, who, in all honesty,
only wants to see them naked, their fallen
garments in parched brown piles at their feet. Leaves

might stay green in fairy tales, but we're more honest
than that in Boston: yellow trees just mean the hours are falling
into dark white Winter, when frozen red faces will be the only colors left.

When

How many years have passed
Since you and I were kids climbing trees, and,
Later, wrestling in the rain, is not important
What matters is that you are no longer in love
With me. I realized it today at the white hot beach
Surrounded by friends of yours I did not know or like
It's not that I wanted you, and when I smell
The liquor on your breath
I still don't. But when did it happen
Tell me, when was it

The night I chose him over you, your hands
Everywhere, your mouth
Hot
On the back of my neck,
Asking me, asking me to
Let you kiss me

Was it then, when
I left your bed for the last time, left you
With my jewelry on your nightstand, or
Was it after that

The night I brought him to your house we
Talked
Awkwardly
Watched the game
You touched my face in the kitchen and I
Turned away
Made a joke
Brought him his drink
Was it then, when I went home with him
Was it, when

You stand in my kitchen now while I make you dinner and
You tell me about your women and I ask
You about the condition of
Your liver. You do not ask me about the break-up or
Why I moved back to town and
I do not tell you. I still have all your poems and letters
That picture hangs above my bed
This time, when I left him,

I did not run straight to you

Now that he is gone for good
I miss the things he didn't do,
Like the way you took my jewelry off when
You thought I was asleep
And how you read me poetry while
I dangled my feet in the lake, the blindness
Of the sun obscuring
The way you looked at me
The light was so bright
I never really saw you

Ode to Passing

there is nothing like the smell of decomposing flowers
wilting, wilting
full with death
sickly sweet and somewhat sour
in sadness the roses they bow their heads
to the moment of romance passing, not yet dead
while the dripping daisies they remember
a game of luck, he loves me, he loves me not
and the carnations rotting soften and sag
the colors lag and fade and blanch
lackluster, wasted, they crumble and cower
the loss of life like ebbing embers
perish, perish
they sigh and whisper
a long last breath
for it is slow, this creeping death
oh the sorrow, the suffering!
the agony of what is left
despairing now for what is yet
aching, *aching* not to forget
the lilies who cry and mourn the most
they smell of funerals and eulogies and toasts
of sympathies and catastrophes
the lilies weep and long for hours
there is nothing like the smell of decomposing flowers

On the Mania of March

First, there is zipping
65 around the endless s-shaped banks of the Charles
a song unfamiliar but beautiful
full of cellos and saxophones stacked up against a piano

and some drums thum – dah – thumping
plays in tune to the boom – boom beat of your heart strings singing

on top of all that is the sun bright behind the clouds illuminating
gray water rippling so you know there is a breeze but
no buds yet on the trees and the grass
is still brown but it's warm enough now
for the windows down for the first time this year so your hair
gets whipped into your face but your eye still catches
 a glimpse: her jogging in yellow shorts
 him on his bicycle in red behind her
and you're zooming to the music that you think is in everything
the birds getting lapped by the shore and the naked oaks and the clouds that are swimming
in the metallic sky reflecting
the river that is swaying and rushing
like you are rushing
rushing not to anywhere just rushing
because you feel you must and sometimes
the sun finds a space in the clouds and comes down to the earth like a stab
lighting up the river mist and it's *thrilling*.

You race against yourself, never fast enough, wanting
to pull over and write this down
but not wanting to stop
or let go of feeling
the rush of the river and the swirling of the sky
against the song intoxicating and the road twirling
you shift gears
again and again
you try to keep hugging the curves

you try to keep up with the sun

the feeling of tasting what it means to understand
how they all go together like one motion on a string but
before this beneath it and within it
before everything because it *is* everything
is the giddy sadness that comes of knowing that
no one, nowhere, not ever, will know exactly how it feels to be on the road
in the midst of this partly sunny cloudy grey mania of March.

Baby, I'm Blue

Jack came home at 4am
Stumbled in from a New York night
With breath full of beer
Searching for that empty pack of Reds
He'd left at the bar

Next to a ½ empty glass of yesterdays

Lily was in the bathtub
Soaking in her winter sister
Waiting for morning
Smoking and thinking:
“When did it end?”
Then Jack came in and so it begins

She looked at him with vacant eyes
“Baby, I’m blue” was all that she said
“And I’m a nobody filled with you”
Was the answer he gave as he looked away
Then Lily got out of the tub
And Jack sobered up

Jack & Lily at the kitchen table
“It’s cold in me and too warm with you”
“What’s missing in me just isn’t in you”
With no more words it ended there
And they wondered in silence
About mornings without

Heading downtown on the 6
On a day that felt like late September
Jack’s vacant eyes locked with Lily
Whose own were filled with someone new
And it all became clear with the words lodged in his throat
“Baby, I’m blue” was all that he knew

The Mistress Takes a Stand:
A Response to John Donne

Go, Sir, go, all rest your powers I’ll deny,
Until we labor fairly, in labor shall you lie.
Know me not as your foe, resisting your tide.
I’m not fighting you; I long to be by your side.
For my passions lie dormant (yes, I’ve desires too);
I’m burning to come alive in the company of two.
But I’ll not be controlled,
And I’ll not be seduced.
I’ll not be ordered to strip down to the nude.
You’re being disrespectful and, frankly, quite rude.
If undressing me from head to toe is the fantasy you seek,
You’d be wise to ask me nicely, or your answer will be bleak.
The labor of love is clearly what drives you,

So, please, pay attention while I guide you:
My body is my temple, and I decide who enters -
It's not your kingdom; around you this world does not center.
Know that I long for your hands to rove:
Let them go before, behind, between, above, below.
But be aware of your love, for I shall make it known,
Where your hands roam is not for the pleasure of you, alone.
A selfless lover shall in turn be most loved,
But labor greedily and this union quickly shall be dissolved.
So be not juvenile, and be not erred,
You'll find love's most ecstatic when ecstasy is shared.
Do not blame me for your innocence in carnal matters,
All foolish expectations must someday shatter;
I did not con you into this position,
You are in my arms by your own volition.
I have offered you only honesty; I play no games,
And I'll not allow you to put me to shame,
For what is mine, I embrace,
So drain that superior look from off your face.
And side by side let's venture forth,
(For I dare say you've realized my worth)
Together let's alight the passions of this pair
And relish in the ecstasy of a love that's fair.
To teach thee, you are naked first; why then
What need'st thou be so offensive in the loving of a woman?

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