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Autumn Trees

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Autumn Trees

Author Bio

“Riley Gryc was here.”

Autumn Trees

Riley Park

A sighing exultation dimmed auburn
By ripened harvest eve. Chaste Summer ends!
The jealous greens of sun-dressed nymphs at play
Are calmed to August ease. The curtained Night,
Endowed with warming charm, entices soft
To oak-enchanted maids: "Sleep not, my doves,
But be with me in earthen fondness sweet—
A titian thirst no spring will ever quench."
With trembling blush, the sylvan maids let fall
Their vernal gowns. In flushed expectancy
They seem to float upon the earth. No rush
Does force the doffing faster. Merciful
And tender in their bare beatific form
The wooded sylphs gaze out with ardency.
A whisper, long and urged by sight's delight,
Runs airy hands across now star-strewn skins
That shudder at the twilight touch. Firm arms,
As strong and fair as Modron's kiss, stretch out
In dusk-spiced pleasure towards the firmament.
So caught were they in saccharine embrace
That seasons slowed to watch the unveiled dance
Of theirs, this whist moaned song of passions dark.

Let drift at hungered touch fly just-worn clothes
Upon the ground, as snow sent soft from sky,
And still do drop with many colored grace
In warmly envied sheets. A blanket made
Of earthly woven garments lies about;
A patterned floor of once adorning cloth,
Quick-shed in hushed impassioned play, rests lush
Around my feet. In dawn dressed ember grey
The tired carpet hardly stirs at breaths
Of these deciduous youths now spent, asleep.
I step out on this sea—a watcher on
The honeyed waves dispersing into dusk—
And there amongst the scattered cloth of Fall

I find I have been lost. That skin-born scent
Of lingered lusts since softened by the stars
Intoxicates my sense of self and leaves
All spread, as in an open field, quite bare.
Out from the folds of gentle sleepers' minds,
Set dreaming long of chills that swift will come
And overtake the staying Summer's grace,
Cool airs sound silence taken deep from those
Who wait for Winter's cloaking comfort here.

A time of seasoned, dancing change has come
And gone upon the wind: a thing, a joy,
A beauty now for ever which I hold
As dear to me as Memory or Love.
Cannot a man in earnest gain such calm
As those who dream tonight in shy embrace?
They lie as ash when laughing fire's left
To find its way back to the Sun. What a scene
They make! What secret they must share to gain
Such soothing respite from the frenzied throes
Of Life's adversities? What must I do
To join in this romantic play and ease?
Despite—or though, perhaps in spite of—dawn
These faery courtesans seem not to stir
Or break from this great envied spell of Night.
While Helios cracks stiff his brightened whip
Across the backs of the horizon's steeds
And all the Anemoi begin their waltz
Of winds, the Fae but simper and do stand
With shivers not of cold. They sigh and sing
For Night's return, when after work of Day
They turn to whispered passion play again.

The lonely blinks of Moon keep company
With me in this, this passing time. In all
The moments spent observing, I do not
Believe my heart will ever truly leave
This treasured, hallowed place. What once was me
Is gone: 'twas carried off with Night's first charm
And left still dancing in the dark. This mind
Is like a hand I have not shook, but warms
As if it were a friend's. These sentiments,

These aches of soul, are foreign-made to me
As if an unshaped spirit placed them in.
A burning, raw, and barely understood
New longing passes into me. I am
Of wood: with water flowing strong within,
With branches spread to shadowed heights at dark
And curling lips to drink the light's relief.
And there you stand as beauty, and I know—
But never can with words quite capture whole—
That in your painted red and evergreen,
With smiles only sylphs could know to make,
You truly stand apart from all the rest.
I am now tailor-made: an autumn leaf.