

Poetry is Alive. September 2026

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Fall in Poetry



Gathering Leaves

By Robert Frost

Spades take up leaves
No better than spoons,
And bags full of leaves
Are light as balloons.

I make a great noise
Of rustling all day
Like rabbit and deer
Running away.

But the mountains I raise
Elude my embrace,
Flowing over my arms
And into my face.

I may load and unload
Again and again
Till I fill the whole shed,
And what have I then?

Next to nothing for weight,
And since they grew duller
From contact with earth,
Next to nothing for color.

Next to nothing for use,
But a crop is a crop,
And who's to say where
The harvest shall stop?

Slowly: a plainsong from an older woman to a younger woman

By Judy Grahm

am I not olden olden olden

it is unwanted.

wanting, wanting

am I not broken

stolen common

am I not crinkled cranky poison

am I not glinty-eyed and frozen

am I not aged

shaky glazing

am I not hazy

guarded craven

am I not only

stingy little

am I not simple

brittle spitting

was I not over
over ridden?

it is a long story
will you be proud to be my version?

it is unwritten.

writing, writing
am I not ancient
raging patient

am I not able
charming stable
was I not building
forming braving

was I not ruling
guiding naming
was I not brazen
crazy chosen

even the stones would do my bidding?

it is a long story

am I not proud to be your version?

it is unspoken.

speaking, speaking

am I not elder

berry

brandy

are you not wine before you find me

in your own beaker?

A Short Story of Falling

By Alice Oswald

It is the story of the falling rain
to turn into a leaf and fall again

it is the secret of a summer shower
to steal the light and hide it in a flower

and every flower a tiny tributary
that from the ground flows green and momentary

is one of water's wishes and this tale
hangs in a seed-head smaller than my thumbnail

if only I a passerby could pass
as clear as water through a plume of grass

to find the sunlight hidden at the tip
turning to seed a kind of lifting rain drip

then I might know like water how to balance

the weight of hope against the light of patience

water which is so raw so earthy-strong
and lurks in cast-iron tanks and leaks along

drawn under gravity towards my tongue
to cool and fill the pipe-work of this song

which is the story of the falling rain
that rises to the light and falls again

Full-Length Portrait of the Moon

By Alice Oswald

She could be any woman at all,
caught off-guard on-guard.

With her hands stroking or strangling and maybe
with her intentions half-interred.

But she is as she is. Her gaze is always
filing away at its cord.

And what she's really after
is you to love her.

She forgets who she is.

She could be so small
she almost has no smell.

She feels like anyone at all.

When you walk up to her,
she keeps quite still,
but what she answers to
is never loud enough to know.

Eaten away by outwardness,

her eyes are empty.

They could be watching you
or not. They work indifferently,
like lit-up glass and if you ask
why she won't speak, why should she?
When what she really wants
is silence.

You know what women are like:

Kay, Moira, Sandra.

They move through a dark room,
peering round under
the hoods of their names.

Alcestis, Clytemnestra.

She could be either of those.

She scarcely knows.

She goes on thinking something
just over your shoulder.

This could be the last night
before you lose her.

But what's the use
of saying one thing or another.

When what she's really after
is you to love her.

**Sonnets from the Portuguese 7: The face of all the world is
changed, I think**

By Elizabeth Barrett Browning

The face of all the world is changed, I think,
Since first I heard the footsteps of thy soul
Move still, oh, still, beside me, as they stole
Betwixt me and the dreadful outer brink
Of obvious death, where I, who thought to sink,
Was caught up into love, and taught the whole
Of life in a new rhythm. The cup of dole
God gave for baptism, I am fain to drink,
And praise its sweetness, Sweet, with thee anear.
The names of country, heaven, are changed away
For where thou art or shalt be, there or here;
And this ... this lute and song ... loved yesterday,
(The singing angels know) are only dear,
Because thy name moves right in what they say.

LET'S WRITE TOGETHER: FALL IN POETRY

Write 5 things you see.

Write 5 things you hear.

Write 5 things you feel.

What does “fall/autumn” mean for you

Imagine your tree in a deep magical forest, what does it look like?

We look into the roots of tree, making them stable and sound against the wind. What are the roots in your own tree? (i.e. These can be values, your loved ones, anything that is your “wonderwall”)

What do you wish for this autumn?

Let this fall speak to you: