

from **The Beechnut Gatherer**

All over the earth like a mantle,
Golden, and green, and grey,
Crimson, and scarlet, and yellow,
The Autumn foliage lay.
The sun of the Indian Summer
Laughed at the bare old trees,
As they shook their leafless branches
In the soft autumnal breeze.

I walked where the leaves the softest,
The brightest, and goldenest lay;
And I thought of a forest hill-side
And an Indian Summer day,
An eager, little child-face,
O'er the fallen leaves that bent,
As she gathered her cup of beechnuts
With innocent content.

I thought of the small brown fingers,
Gleaning them one by one;
With the partridge drumming near her
In the forest bare and dun,
And the jet-black squirrel winking
His saucy jealous eye
At those tiny, pilfering fingers,
From his sly nook up on high.

Pamelia Sarah Vining Yule (1825–97)

The Poetry of Earth

'The poetry of earth is never dead' – Keats

There is always room for beauty: memory
A myriad lovely blossoms may enclose,
But, whatsoever hath been, there still must be
Room for another rose.

Though skylark, throstle, whitethroat, whip-poor-will,
And nightingale earth's echoing chantries throng,
When comes another singer, there will be
Room for another song.

Florence Earle Coates (1850–1927)

from **The Path that Leads to Nowhere**

There's a path that leads to nowhere
In a meadow that I know,
Where an inland island rises
And the stream is still and slow;
There it wanders under willows
And beneath the silver green
Of the birches' silent shadows
Where the early violets lean.

Other pathways lead to somewhere,
But the one I love so well
Had no end and no beginning,
Just the beauty of the dell;
There I find my fair oasis,
And with carefree feet I tread,
For the pathway leads to nowhere
And the blue is overhead!

All the ways that lead to somewhere
Echo with the hurrying feet
Of the struggling and the striving,
But the way I find so sweet
Bids me dream and bids me linger,
Joy and Beauty are its goal;
On the path that leads to nowhere
I have sometimes found my soul!

Corrine Roosevelt Robinson (1861–1933)

September

Wind and the robin's note today
Have heard of autumn and betray
The green long reign of summer.
The rust is falling in the leaves,
September stands besides the sheaves,
The new, the happy comer.

Not sad my season of the red
And russet orchards gaily spread
From Cholesbury to Cooming,
Nor sad when twilit valley trees
Are ships becalmed on misty seas,
And beetles go abooming.

Now soon shall come the morning crowds
Of starlings, soon the coloured clouds
From oak and ash and willow,
And soon the thorn and briar shall be
Rich in their crimson livery,
In scarlet and in yellow.

Spring laughed and thrilled a million veins,
And summer shone above her rains
To fill September's faring;
September talks as kings who know
The world's way and superbly go
In robes of wisdom's wearing.

John Drinkwater (1882–1937)

The Homecoming of the Sheep

The sheep are coming home in Greece,
Hark the bells on every hill!
Flock by flock, and fleece by fleece,
Wandering wide a little piece
Thro' the evening red and still,
Stopping where the pathways cease,
Cropping with a hurried will.

Thro' the cotton-bushes low
Merry boys with shouldered crooks
Close them in a single row,
Shout among them as they go
With one bell-ring o'er the brooks.
Such delight you never know
Reading it from gilded books.

Before the early stars are bright
Cormorants and sea-gulls call,
And the moon comes large and white
Filling with a lovely light
The ferny curtained waterfall.
Then sleep wraps every bell up tight
And the climbing moon grows small.

Francis Ledwidge (1887–1917)

This Year I Have Seen Autumn with New Eyes

This year I have seen autumn with new eyes,
Glimpsed hitherto undreamt of mysteries
In the slow ripening of the town-bred trees;
Horse-chestnut lifting wide hands to the skies;
And silver beech turned gold now winter's near;
And elm, whose leaves like little suns appear
Scattering light – all, all have made me wise
And writ me lectures in earth's loveliness,
Whether they laugh through the grey morning mist,
Or by the loving sun at noon are kissed
Or seek at night the high-swung lamp's caress.
Does autumn such a novel splendour wear
Simply because my love has yellow hair?

Lesbia Harford (1891–1927)

Touché

Beauty is when
the blue unpeppered sky
matches the sea
and the tide flows
under the road-bridge

where our daughter swam
as a young child

and I asked
*how much room above your head
has the tunnel wall*
and she said
just enough.

Pauline Hawkesworth (1943–)

Quiet Afternoon

Apples in a blue bowl
Gleaming.
Late sun through white curtains
Streaming.
Cat paws twitch in rhythm,
Dreaming.

Janet Wright (1951–)

Lost

For Lucy

Up the sodden path with its view
to the back of the ocean, we hunted for hours
till hope was scoured thin.

Black, matt, with no gold band or pocket clip:
a four-inch steel shadow or stick of peat—
we continued until you'd given that gift
from your father away, laid it to rest forever.

And then

like an RSVP to any invitation, there it was—
snug in the heather, a parting word
held to the island's chest,
a word like *always*. We shared
a high-five, frisbeed our laughter out over the water,
walked back down the hill
into a brisk north-easterly, into all of it.

Sharon Black (1969–)

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