

Morning View Kentucky
27 October 1956

Hello Mr McCarthy,

I have heard scientists maintain that things do not taste alike to different people, and that this is also true of the sense of smell. I have just discovered, most personally, that the same object appears strikingly different to assorted viewers.

On perhaps the most beautiful of all the beautiful days which have smiled through this October, a new adjective was bestowed upon the tree patch -- one that was a complete surprise. I had been showing off the big trees to town visitors, when one woman expressed the opinion that so amazed me. "I suppose you could get used to it," she began doubtfully. I had expected that, knowing she grew up and still lived in a town area where street cars once passed near by, and a drugstore is a mass of neon lights on the corner. Then she went on -- "But it is so gloomy." Gloomy -- not quiet, or lonely, or isolated, or pretty, or lovely - its gloomy.

After a blank moment, I gathered my face together and put it back into its amiable-hostess-expression, then looked searchingly at the tree patch.

From a cloudless sky, the bright sun filtered down through tinted trees. Only the very slightest breeze stirred the warm air. Pale yellow ash leaves fell as straight to earth as a leaf can fall, passing in their descent the branches of a black oak whose glossy leaves were still dark green. Over our heads billowed the golden crowns of great shagbark hickories, glowing with a luminosity all their own as they pressed close to their neighboring white oaks, which had taken upon themselves the hues of a ripe Tokay grape.

Among the oaks, young maples were flashing pyramids, the pure gold of the lower branches shading to blazing red at the topmost twigs. My unknown hickories wore a deep rich pumpkin orange; and even the lowly pig nuts, whose fruit is scorned by all but meadow mice, stood forth in golden gleamings only slightly darker than the shagbarks themselves. The beech trees bulked dark and stiff in their own particular coppery autumn colors. Sufficient maple leaves had already fallen to floor the tree patch with brightness.

Across the pond-field, the old sassafras in the hedgerow were a wall of flame, spilling in long fingers down into the field itself where younger trees have sprung up. Redbud, with big, light leaves, stood pallid among them, and spots of darker, stronger coloring were the younger persimmon trees. Beyond the hedgerow, pudgy corn shocks marched ~~in~~ in geometric precision across the rounded shoulder of the hill.