

Morning View Kentucky
27 October 1958

I am very sorry, Mr McCarthy,

but no interview. It may seem incredible to you, but I panic completely when confronted with a microphone. My hands shake and my teeth chatter. My tongue becomes stiff and my brain skids into total disarray. I gulp and gurgle and run out of air. Through the years, radio people have occasionally tried to interview me, but we never came up with one good enough to be used. You and your listeners would be disappointed, while I would feel most embarrassed and idiotic.

I have always been highly susceptible to weather, but never have I been so captivated by it as during the past several weeks of perfect October days. No enchantment of Lotus-land could weave a more powerful spell than that under which I have wandered through the flawless weather.

All the little, diligent, thrifty, scurrying chores that accompany autumn, I have brushed aside as unimportant and almost unreal. I spent no more time indoors than absolutely necessary, and begrudged even those few moments. And yet, all my hours outdoors were devoid of practical accomplishment.

I stood for long minutes watching the roof blow off the tree patch, and drift down past me, leaf by leaf. Columns and rods of sunlight quickly touched spots under the big trees where there had been only shade since spring. The floor of the tree patch, matted soft and thick by the leaves of other years, is newly carpeted with scarlet and gold and bronze, so glowing as to appear almost luminous.

I have never been able to grasp the forlorn melancholy habitually read into falling leaves. Personally, I think they have a wonderful time. All summer they had remained in one spot, toiling patiently for their parent tree. Suddenly autumn changed their sober green to blazing sunset hues and released them to go where they would on the bright winds. There is the gayety of a child's birthday party in the flickering dance of fallen leaves amid the stolid, dark trunks of the great trees which stand as firm promise of other springs to come.

Only slightly less brilliant than the swirling leaves were the hordes of migratory birds which gathered here. Apparently, they flew southward until encountering the lovely weather, and elected