

Autumn Flames

Flaming red, orange, and yellow leaves
Have flown off from now barren limbs,
Carried off, away, and down to the ground,
To return to earth and feed the soil anew.

My heart turns to memories of years ago
When rakes pulled our nature's old beauty
Into colorful mounds that belied their death,
That flamed into a heady, smoking incense.

From seed to tree and limbs, from bud to leaf, Lord,
Life swelled and grew and waned into colorful death,
Image of life for all of God's creatures that contain
A spark of his Spirit in tenderly beating hearts.

Through seventy years now, you have taught me, Lord,
To nurture your growing flame within my heart,
And in every season, to sow in other yearning hearts,
The seed-love of your Word for all to profit by.

As autumn reaches my limbs and hollows out your space,
I glimpse your beauty showing forth despite my sin,
And I wonder at your wonderful mercy that heals me
Despite the obstacles I placed on my heartpaths.

I praise you, Lord, for the harvest you prepare
And for the flames of love that now consume me:
May your fire glow and produce an evening incense
That ever rises up to you and pleases your heart.

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