

September
(For Carolyn)
By Margaret Price

This coming Autumn brings a disquiet in my soul.
Cicadas trill and single-minded yellow jackets
Belie an understated, expectant hush ... frost is near.

Morning sun slants golden in the oaks
Russet outlines glossy dark green.
Little green acorns relinquish their hold,
Rustling down ... muted plops punctuate the woods.
Tiny time capsules, pulling down moments,
Dropping like tears.

"To me, to me!" beckon the bright fingers of the Sun,
summoning wraithlike tendrils of mist,
dancing,
upward from the barn roof and pasture;
to descend back to dew
on darks return.

Fools, these frantic squirrels;
Driven by dread of cold and want
To tire paths, and death.

The hens exclaim, announcing their daily miracle,
See! There, in the hay! Eggs!
Rich brown ochre, colored warm as their
Body heat, soon dissipated in my hands.
As the mist.

Startled tears for the abandoned feeder yet
Half-full of sugar water.
Some maudlin, melancholic moment,
Today's calendar entry: "Hummers gone".

Can't recall the joy of the scrawl on the fifth of May: "Hummers here!"
Unable to recapture any of the memories,
Over any of the years, moments so determined to emblazon in my mind...
A sunset, the pensive profile of a dear child,
The feel of the old mans' calloused husk of a hand...
Gone, unable to summon to this Now.

Like the barn swallows, filling the air with flitting and swooping,
Stuffing yellow mouths agape,

Stilling the strident shrills...
Then the last fledgling totters on nests' edge.
This morning, they're gone.
The barn feels full of regret.

Better, perhaps, a life such as this old pony;
Once shining and supple, winner of ribbons,
Now her harsh coat as hard as her hearing,
Rheumy eyes knowing ... her work is done,
Her Autumn is over.
Winter awaits.

Do dim memories flicker in her mind?
The calls of riding instructors, children's laughter,
Cadence of hooves marking worn path at the rail?
Over-grown, now, that trail.

No more Saturday morning stall cleaning,
To "Car Talk" and "The Food Schmooze"
On the radio.
The unique flavor of Connecticut Yuppie.
This bright September morning is burning away
The remnants of an era.

In the garden, peppers and tomatoes bend in surrender
Graceful offering of fruit on earthen altar.
Proud chard unfurl sleek dimpled fronds,
Basil bravely blossoms atop pungent oval leaves, flaunting the
Certainty of being the first to succumb,
To be blackened in death by Frost.

Why draw from this well of woebegone?
Out of that poignant pool to nourish
The garden of This Life.
Time for the Harvest - Autumn is here.

This urgency, this unrest;
I know from whence it comes.

Must hasten about my Fathers' work;
His purpose in me,
And mine in Him; His Spirit my muse.

I am undone by this brilliance, this aching clarity
Of moment...
My September has befallen me.