

Maple Leaf

The maple leaf turned ripely autumn-toned
And fell uncertainly toward the ground
But then was rescued by a whirling wind
And carried to a brisk, impatient stream
And set so lovingly and lightly down
It did not sink, but floated swiftly on
And on past apple orchards, meadow lands
And rocky crags. The river over ran
The cliff's tall edge and with it fell the brown
Half-moistened maple leaf. "How far I've come!"
The leaf exclaimed, "and yet how far from home
With no way ever to return again!"
And with the water falling all around,
It plunged into the pool's dark depths. And then,
It floated to the surface where the sun
Beat down its warmth to push the process on.
The blackened maple leaf could not have known
That it would finally come to winter-in
Among the mildew in the stagnant pond.
But this was not the lengthy journey's end:
The decomposing leaf would now return
Its elements into the pool, the ground
And then into the air where they might find
Their way back to the tree in early spring
To feed her for the new growth on her limbs.
And as her spring-and-summer-worth of green
Begins to turn to gold when autumn comes,
She'll willingly release what she has grown
Because the cycle must continue on.

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