

Autumn

by Jane Flett

October has started and I promised I'd write, so here are words, take them, remove them from my hands before I worry them like a matchbox in a pocket on a day of bad news.

I am giddy for autumn, delirious for the leaves. I don't ever want it to stop. Their offerings seem paltry, here in the suburban streets. (I need to flee to the forest.) Pitiful bundles of rust and tangelo and amber, kicking around the ankles of cars.

Imagine they kept falling. Picture it in time-lapse photography. To the hubcaps; to the windows; over the roof. It would not be like the purification of fresh snow. We could let the city go to scrub and crackle.

The leaves are pages of Gideon's bibles torn from the spine. Their words crumple into the streets and are trodden on. They shift from gold to mud.

The leaves are the dandruff of the trees. The wind pummels and the trees dance furiously as the end of the party draws near. They thrash and toss their heads and the flecks scatter.

The leaves are telegrams sent from the branches to the wind, saying, "it's over stop don't send kisses stop forget me." They send the same message every hour for a season. The wind finds no reason to pause.

Flee to the forest, that's what we must do, wrap up with rabbit-fur muffs and flasks of hot, spiced wine. Pull our boots to our knees and our striped socks higher. My cheeks ruddy, my pockets full of pencils, my lips gnawed and cracked. Listen for the snap of leaves beneath our toes. Ask the undergrowth its plans for the fall.

