

# AUTUMN LEAVES UNDERFOOT

*by* Tyger Williams

I thought I was saying goodbye to the little girl who left too soon almost forty years ago. It turns out, that I was really saying goodbye to the little boy that left with her. I didn't even know he was gone. How could I? He was me. I'm still here. Or am I? Had I really been here or had I just been dreaming. I have physical proof that I was here. I have children. But that only proves that they are here.

Goodbye comes in stages. At first you recognize that you will "miss" someone when they are gone. Then you have to accept the fact that they are leaving. And finally accept the fact that they are gone; and not particularly in that order. If only it were so neat. That can happen in any order, over any number of days, months, years... some say epochs. Those would be the truly romantic. Loss is romantic. Saying goodbye even more so. It's passionate. Things in life are never final, but like a book, all chapters must come to an end. It doesn't mean the story is over, but it does mean that something new is set to happen.

I barely knew her before she left. My earliest memory is of her. My most vivid memory is also of her, some thirty years later when in the midst of a very lucid dream, we met under a forest canopy and falling leaves. She told me she was okay and that it was alright for me go; that I didn't have to worry anymore. She told me to go.

I said goodbye. I felt so relieved.

Closure.

Still, years later I find myself saying goodbye all over again; to the little boy this time.

I didn't even know he was gone...

