

**“Autumn”** [222 words]  
**Speaking In Whispers** (ThirdSide Press 1996)

It's raining and cold today. Even sitting near this roaring fire, I am chilly. I miss your arms, your body.

When was the last time you were here? It seems so long ago – a Halloween though – I remember, because we carved a jack-o-lantern and made love by its light.

You were sitting on the floor, a quilt wrapped around your naked body. I brought in cups of hot cider and you welcomed me into your cocoon. We sat together, silent, smelling the cinnamon from our cups and the spicy pumpkin roasting by candle flame in the window.

I kissed you, tasting rum and apples on your tongue. You held me close, breast to breast. I could feel your heart beating against me.

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As the candle melted, the wax dripping out and on to the table, so too I melted, my liquid self pouring out on the carpet beneath me.

I felt you too – your breath hot, ragged as you whispered incantations in my ear, hypnotizing me, anointing me with your oils. I became your priestess, your supplicant tending your shrine. I tasted your plump, ripe fruit and drank your sacred wine. And you came – and lifted me to the heavens with you.

How can I bear Autumn without you? I miss you. I wish you were here.