

A CANTICLE TO OCTOBER

Now that we've formally turned the corner into Fall, I'm thinking a few Autumnal Reflections might be in order. For me it's always been a pretext to go inward. Here are a few lines from a Rainer Maria Rilke poem aptly entitled 'Autumn' :: "The leaves are falling, falling as if from far away, / from distant orchards in the heavens. / They fall reluctantly & loath to leave. / So, too, the eARTh is Falling / Through the Night Stars / Down into SOLitude. / We are all falling. This hand will fall . . . / And yet there is One / Who holds us tenderly." Which is 'pre-echoed' by a poem by AleXander Pushkin also entitled 'Autumn' :: "October has arrived -- the trees have tossed / Their final leaves from naked branches; / There is an Autumn chill in the air -- the road begins to freeze . . . / This is my time: I am not fond of Spring; / The tiresome thaw, the mud -- Spring wearies me . . . / With cruel Winter I am better satisfied . . . / I love sleigh rides through the moonlit snow, / With a carefree friend, warm & cosy, beneath a sable mantle." The long-lived (1905-2006) American poet, Stanley Kunitz, would appear to agree when he writes, "What's best in me lives underground, / rooting & digging, itching for wings."

Apropos the aforereferenced Inward Journey, a week or so ago it occurred to me that such highly resonant archetypal quests as the Search for the Hall{rhymes with 'Fall'} of Records, the Golden Fleece, the Philosopher's StOne, & the Holy Grail, etc., are all to be found WithIn. You might want to advise any Seekers of Wisdom you know accordingly . . . This InSight being the result of an Epiphany I had recently, which left me highly energized creatively. Let's hear it for T. S. Eliot's "Condition of complete simplicity, half-heard in the Stillness / Between two waves of the sea . . ." For, verily, to quote a well-known WordSmith by the name of William, "Our birth is but a sleep & a forgetting: / The Soul that rises with us . . . cometh from afar{like Rilke's 'leaves'} . . . / Trailing clouds of glory . . ." (from "Intimations of Immortality"). It's high time to banish what David Whyte in his "Crossing the Unknown Sea," 2001, terms this -- hopefully not terminal -- 'self-inflicted amnesia' ('Aletheia,' which we translate into English as 'Truth,' meaning literally in the original Greek 'Not Forgetting'). In the {seeming} end, said Quest has everything to do with what R. Maria Rilke calls dying, 'which is {but} the letting go of the ground we stand on & cling to every day . . ." to sail away to our homeland where it all began. For once our eYes are Open, we realize -- beyond the proverbial shadow -- that(to quote David Whyte yet again) "Life is no passing memory of what has been / nor the remaining pages in a great book / waiting to be read . . . but rather our Vision of Far-Off Things" seen in their LumiNous Silence. For, as Rilke puts it in his evocation of Darkness(here as we {re}enter the Dark Half of the Year), "I have faith in the Night" (as did NoValis in his day).