

Romping with Autumn

Autumn, the raciest of the four sisters, arrives Saturday. She trips in officially at 9:54 p.m. (EDT). My love affair with this wild and wonderful maiden, who garbs herself in garments rich and robust in color, will begin.

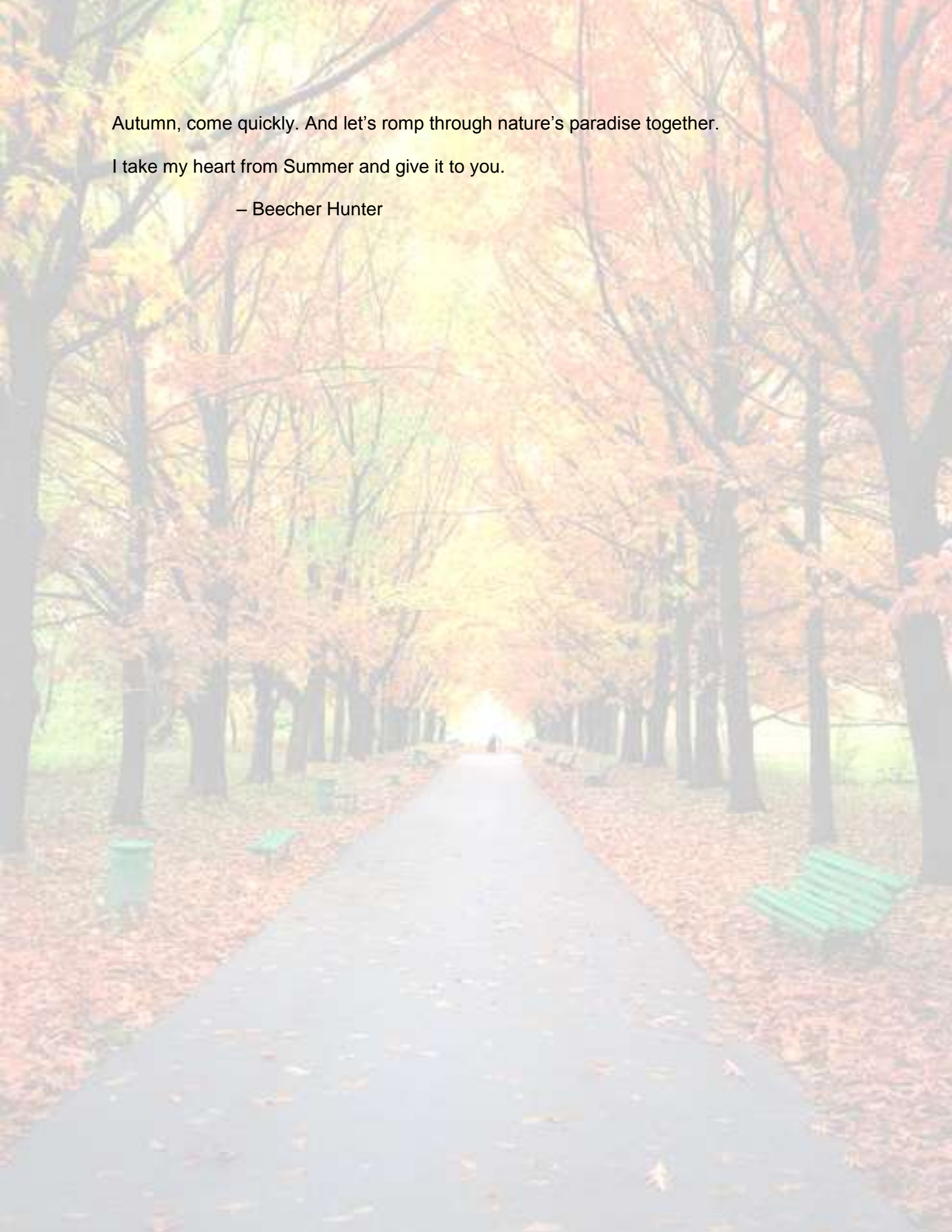
No shy and retiring matriarch is she. Her majesty is robed in oxblood and cordovan, butter-yellow and brown, red-purple and apricot-lavender. She is a show-off, but I am smitten by her charms, and I am under her spell.

She comes to the green-carpeted valleys and monarchial peaks of Southeast Tennessee with all the boldness of a lover come home, certain that she will be greeted with open arms. And she is. Oh, how I have missed her. Our relationship is founded on the good times we have spent together, and the promise of those we shall experience afresh this year. With her, I long to ...

- Wade barefoot over smooth pebbles in a cool brook.
- Lie in the warm sun and drink in the grandeur of a far-off, hazy mountain ridge.
- Watch as a full harvest moon creeps above a distant cornfield and casts a shimmering path of gold across a dark lake.
- Pick blushing-red dogwood berries from low-hanging limbs and throw them at a playful squirrel scampering up a black oak tree.
- Gaze spellbound as the sun burns its radiance through the crimson leaves of a black gum tree.
- Enjoy the hushed stillness as we listen to the mournful, faraway sounds of a whippoorwill, deep in the forest.
- Pucker up, as we sample a not-yet-ripe persimmon and wonder why opossums like them so much.
- Warm our feet by the crackling embers of a campfire and inhale the aroma of burning hickory.
- Share melted, toasted marshmallows impaled on a long maple limb.
- Drink in the purple hues of the white oak and winged sumac trees as we wander through the glade.
- Sit on a rail fence and witness the wind cavorting across a field of reddish-brown sage grass, creating ocean-like waves.
- Recline against a sycamore tree at river's edge, with a cane pole resting on my knees, only occasionally glancing at a red-and-white float bobbing in the water.
- Play in a windfall of leaves, pitching them above our heads and watching their graceful, circuitous path to the ground again.
- Marvel at the orange cast of a sunset as it matches the patches of a showy quilt in the woodlands and is reflected in her eyes.

Is it any wonder that I love her and long to see her, to be with her again?

(more)

A long, straight path lined with trees in autumn, with fallen leaves on the ground and benches.

Autumn, come quickly. And let's romp through nature's paradise together.

I take my heart from Summer and give it to you.

– Beecher Hunter