

The Arrival of Autumn

Autumn, the showiest of the four sisters, slips in at 4:02 p.m. EDT today, and I greet her with open arms. Summer was carefree and adventurous, but her fiery demeanor and her stormy personality smacked us around.

I bid Summer goodbye with fondness and special memories. But I welcome the gifts that her sibling brings, and we begin our journey together with great expectation.

With Autumn, I look forward to ...

- Toasting marshmallows over a campfire, and swapping stories with friends as the firelight dances in the darkness.
- Admiring a full, golden harvest moon hanging low over the purple-robed Tennessee mountains.
- Thrilling to the soulful call of a faraway whippoorwill, deep in the woodlands.
- Witnessing the splendor of yellow-orange pumpkins, both large and small, lying in farmland fields and adorning lawns and porches as holidays approach.
- Gazing at shocks of corn, silent sentinels along a rural landscape.
- Marveling at clusters of red berries on a dogwood tree, recalling events from my boyhood when they supplied ammunition for popguns hollowed from cane.
- Watching with great admiration the process of making molasses, and shooing away the yellow jackets that are attracted by it.
- Wandering through valleys and over mountains quilted by 250 varieties of hardwood trees splashed in reds, yellows, oranges, purples and greens in a panoply that stirs the heart.
- Listening to the crackling of wood burning in a fireplace, seeing the smoke curl up and out of the chimney, and inhaling the unique aroma of flame-kissed hickory logs.
- Tasting the first batch of apple cider, knowing that it will get even more flavorful as the fruit matures.
- Being mesmerized as layers of fog transform a crystal lake into a dreamer's canvas.

Welcome, Autumn! I await your arrival with great anticipation. Let us savor the moments we shall share in the short time available to us, before I must bid you goodbye.

– Beecher Hunter