

FRIGID WARMTH

Although it was autumn and autumn-colors always brought out his usual melancholy mode, the slightly warmer-than-usual breeze changed his whole state of mind. He was used to being contemplative, spiritual, melancholic at this time of year. And now the seasons were playing with him, forcing him to smile at life. Whereas he'd often find solace in Scott Joplin's *Solace*, he was now listening to Pink Floyd's *San Tropez*. What was frustrating him even more was his self-awareness – the fact that the warm wind and radiant sun was changing his habitual autumnal state of mind. Granted, golden-yellow and light-brown leaves were at his feet, sticking under the soles of his shoes, but the contrast between this usual October ritual and the upbeat thoughts whizzing by – actually halting to a stop – put his life into unprecedented unbalance.

He wished he could forget the warmth and focus only on the accustomed attributes of a third of October day. But he felt every unclothed pore of his skin react to this sensation: October warmth. Never before had he been so aware of warmth. Not heat, not fever – warmth. It was like warmth was the most potent stimuli his body could ever want. Not even the Montreal sub-zero temperatures he had endured some years back had affected his skin so. Ignoring the warmth would be like ignoring one's heartbeat. He hated to admit it, but it was so: warmth had become an essential part of October.

Such a revelation, maybe small from a planetary point of view, was nonetheless devastating for a man who lived by tradition. For forty three years he'd await, expect, anticipate the weather's change, and when the change took place, it's his whole life that would click into place. Happiness would dissolve into melancholy, and some weeks later melancholy would leave to let depression take its place. Depression was allowed to settle in for an indefinite period of time, just as long as a few of August's burning hours brought forth a choleric energy that would transform into awesome sexual energy. His seasonal tones of consciousness had been consciously and subconsciously measured to an exact science. His biological and spiritual clock had been wound up and the mechanism was supposedly stuck in that position. Warmth on a third of October was never an option.

So now life has changed. Unwittingly, the course of the man's life is altered, for better or for worse. For worse he is sure but all he can do, and all he will do is accept it. He sees himself as a silently-complaining fatalist... as The silently-complaining fatalist. And so his silent complaint is this: I tolerate this warmth today. My life is now in accord with this unnatural act of nature. But what will happen if next year's October third is not warm? How will I respond? How will I react, voluntarily and involuntarily?

And so he no longer smiles at life. He worries about his life. He worries about what his state of mind will be like in 365 days and in 730 days and in 1095 days. He never considered dread to be an aspect of his life. Dread never was an aspect of his life. But today, with leaves stuck to the sole of his shoes and a blinding sun forcing itself past a heavy set of branches, the man worries about tomorrow.