

Wintering
***Shanta Acharya**

All through the summer you stood there like a carnival-float,
displaying your pageantry of leaves, brightly coloured fruits.

You fed the birds, kept the children entertained – the wind in
your leaves singing stories as they played in our garden.
Irrepressible the excitement of horse-chestnuts in bloom.

In the silver light of the moon you woke me with your rustling,
your shimmering leaves as I lay listless in bed, the philandering
wind caressing as I slept with my window wide open.

In autumn you turned the knife deep in my heart with your
flaming colours. I saw no remorse in your celebration –
no damaged tissues or broken branches, no sign of exhaustion
as you flirted with the hours endlessly, ignoring my solitude.

Why stretch your bare arms in winter's deep embrace,
strong and swarthy, raised towards the sky like a spoilt child
crying, a devotee engaged in some eclectic prayer?

What use is grief or prayers for your loss of leaves and flowers?
What grace do you imagine in the ebb and flow of sap, in your
gnarled, forked branches dreaming of forests of sequoia?

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