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ALICE MEYNELL

IN AUTUMN

The leaves are many under my feet,
And drift one way.
Their scent of death is weary and sweet.
A flight of them is in the grey
Where sky and forest meet.
The low winds moan for dead sweet years;
The birds sing all for pain,
Of a common thing, to weary ears,—
Only a summer’s fate of rain,
And a woman’s fate of tears.
I walk to love and life alone
Over these mournful places,
Across the summer overthrown,
The dead joys of these silent faces,
To claim my own.
I know his heart has beat to bright
Sweet loves gone by.
I know the leaves that die to-night
Once budded to the sky,
And I shall die from his delight.
O leaves, so quietly ending now,
You have heard cuckoos sing.
And I will grow upon my bough
If only for a Spring,
And fall when the rain is on my brow.
O tell me, tell me ere you die,
Is it worth the pain?
You bloomed so fair, you waved so high;
Now that the sad days wane,
Are you repenting where you lie?
I lie amongst you, and I kiss
Your fragrance mouldering.
O dead delights, is it such bliss,
That tuneful Spring?
Is love so sweet, that comes to this?
O dying blisses of the year,
I hear the young lambs bleat,
The clamouring birds i’ the copse I hear,

I hear the waving wheat,
Together laid on a dead-leaf bier.
Kiss me again as I kiss you;
Kiss me again;
For all your tuneful nights of dew,
In this your time of rain,
For all your kisses when Spring was new.
You will not, broken hearts; let be.
I pass across your death
To a golden summer you shall not see,
And in your dying breath
There is no benison for me.
There is an autumn yet to wane,
There are leaves yet to fall,
Which, when I kiss, may kiss again,
And, pitied, pity me all for all,
And love me in mist and rain.