

Nature Notes on Fall

by Bonnie L. MacFarlane

Leaves drifting by my window: some floating, some swirling, and some dancing by. The colors are red, yellow, green, brown, and red. A gentle breeze is blowing West to East.

Nature's paintbrush has thrilled me again. The leaves on the canal water look like a circular quilted pattern of various shades of yellows. The water is like a mirror reflecting the trees above and the leaves below. There's a brilliant red and orange maple tree set against the snowy mountains and light blue sky. Five diehard flowers remain in a garden along the Highline Canal: a dark red rose, a vibrant blue delphinium, a white daisy, a red geranium, and a pink snapdragon.

As I walk along the Highline Canal this October morning, I know that I'm not alone. I hear the "peep, peep, peep" of the chickadees, and the scolding of the magpies. Lots of crackling branches reveal two raccoons peeking out from branches from across the canal. Their eyes remind me of my own when my mascara runs, or of the black smudges football players wear under their eyes. I hear a loud "Kree!" one third of the way up a cottonwood tree. I identify this bird as a Swainson's hawk, the dark-morph adult brown hawk. A squirrel heads up the tree only to be batted away by the hawk's large right wing. The squirrel tries again only to be scolded and shoed down the tree again.

Now I'm at home again, sitting by a window with my cat and dog, watching the leaves drift by. I'm sipping herbal tea and piano music is playing in the background. The only thing that could add to this perfect picture would be a lighted fireplace.