



## **Catharsis: Soul's Seasonal Lament**

*In loving memory of Jenna and Rachel [22 Oct 2011].*

*There are no words to explain such loss, only words intended to comfort the hearts of those in disbelief. </3*

Jenifer DeBellis

The last auras of an early autumn  
blend into nothing more than a rusted  
patina palette. Leaves reduce down  
to a skeletal parchment of what was  
once vibrant as they fade (as flowers  
must also fade and fall away) from

glory to glorious glory. Sometimes  
seasons shift out of turn or the story  
jackknives, bobbing upon the edge of  
sustaining life and derailing unto death.

Now exposed—in undeniable detail—  
are bare, brittle branches that reach  
well beyond any healthy extension  
will endure indefinitely. For no one  
can predict the exact instant tragedy  
will transpire, halting time in its steps.

We are conscious in our knowledge  
that we are born of the dust and must  
return to the dust, just as we are aware  
there are no guarantees or bargains that  
will buy our way out of living to die.

If to live is to die and to die is to gain,  
does this sum explain life's meaning?

Awake, sleepwalking soul, to the sound  
of your name as it is called to life with  
the same purpose those trees break free  
this season's leaves so they may become  
the compost feed that fuels next season.  
Though some leaves will be released be-  
fore they wilt and fade and fall away of  
their own accord from the wrath of angry  
storms or freak twists and plucks of fate,  
they leave in their wake those who must  
carry on and fulfill their issue of service  
so in due time they too will be the very  
sustenance for the path of life to follow.

## Peep Show, a Tango

Jenifer DeBellis

Even before the invited spectators wriggle  
free from the safety of their second skin<sup>1</sup>;

before anxious feet shuffle single file  
down a hallway<sup>2</sup> built for queens and kings;

before the swarm of expectant excitement  
drives these voices above a beehive<sup>3</sup> vibe:

a release of testosterone pollinates<sup>4</sup> the air,  
tickling my senses, intoxicating my mood.

I close my eyes lest a single ounce of guilt  
infect the great reveal—the big striptease<sup>5</sup>.

Pull back the shutter<sup>6</sup>. As pure as the love  
that formed these curves, I'm yours tonight.

Spring has sprouted a leak that overflows  
with milk and honey in this Promise Land<sup>7</sup>,

diverting ravenous eyes away from the i-  
mpending storm. Enjoy now, atone<sup>8</sup> later.

<sup>1</sup>Transparent reptilian shells like wim-  
pled latex litter the threshold, bidding for  
a time.

<sup>2</sup>For the road is stretched far and wide  
while the predicated pathway is narrow.

<sup>3</sup>Through a convoluted maze this militant  
mindscape moves as one in its mission.

<sup>4</sup>This: the blush of vermilion petals  
fallen upon fertile earth, one seedling at  
a time.

<sup>5</sup>Welcome gentlemen; follow the curves  
that fashion these hands, these thighs.

<sup>6</sup>Peel back forbidden's veil; dim the fil-  
ter of understanding; freefall into ob-  
scurity.

<sup>7</sup>Here lies the tree of knowledge. Par-  
take of its fruit and behold this carnal  
harvest.

<sup>8</sup>Does not transgression's fine outweigh  
what can be upheld in a given lifetime?



Poem inspired  
by Giorgione's  
*Venus Sleeping*  
Image borrowed from  
[www.luminarium.org](http://www.luminarium.org)



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