

LAST REACH

poem by Wendell Smith



When I was 31 I wrote,
“If I am a leaf upon a bough
may the wind be strong that takes me down
that I may have a long and giddy dance
before I reach the ground.”

Now, that I’m almost 80,
I know, “No if about it,”
and yearn for perfect stillness
in bright Autumn sun
that warms ones core as coals
in a cast iron parlor stove
will warm the body on a January night,
so when I yield to gravity,
I will sail down the air with ease
to berth in a bed of other leaves.

Lately I’ve come to hope that berth
will be against the southern,
weathered wall of an abandoned barn
where I can rest roasty on bright days
protected from the chill winds
that come as the season bends
around the solstice
and one by one like leaves
we lose our friends.

Image: “Nature People #8” by Bruce McClain. “Last Reach” was written by Wendell Smith for *Rattle’s* Ekphrastic Challenge, December 2021, and selected as the Artist’s Choice.