

Autumn's Last Huzzah

- Ginny Naughton

It's early in the morning. The sun has barely come up, the birds (that are still here) have barely begun singing, and there isn't a car on the road. Crumpled candy wrappers litter the sidewalks, and fake skeletons, spiders, and ghosts still hang in windows, far less scary now with the coming day. The day is November 1st, the day after Halloween.

Somewhere on this hazy morning, people get up. They stumble to their kitchen, fumble to make a coffee, grab one of the few candy bars the trick or treaters didn't take, and fall onto their couch or armchair or some other kind of seat. They flick on their television to a mindless show and turn the volume down as they begin to eat their "breakfast." After a punchline and laugh track the person wasn't awake enough to get, the mindless show cuts to a commercial break. Immediately, the volume magically turns up ten notches: "FIND THE PERFECT HOLIDAY GIFT NOW! TIME IS RUNNING OUT!" The television screams, flashing green and red colors across the screen. A day after Halloween, it has begun. Everyone has decided overnight that it's almost winter! Where did fall go? I haven't even gotten a seasonal fall drink yet! Is the end really here? Don't panic! If you're not ready to switch to jingle bells and reindeer sweaters, there are still plenty of ways for you to enjoy autumn while it's still here. The end is far from nigh!

Take a walk! Throw on a medium weight coat, maybe a hat or scarf or knit gloves (how fall-ish!), and go out for a stroll with a friend or pet. The bike path and Seaside are notorious for having full and colorful foliage, but Steer Swamp and Old Burial Hill have beautiful vistas as well.

Treat yourself to a seasonal snack. This can be a fall-flavored coffee from Dunkin' Donuts or Starbucks, a pumpkin muffin, a glass of cider, candy corn, or something warm and comforting.

Some apple orchards like Cider Hill Farm and Highland Farm are still open. Strap on a warm coat and get the squad out there. How you like them apples! Volunteer with My Brother's Table or the Marblehead Animal Shelter. Giving someone in need a warm meal, or an animal in need a warm hug, is a wonderful thing to do, and will set you in gear for Thanksgiving, too. Fill two or three large bags with pretty fallen leaves, take the bags home, and decorate every surface you can find with the dead leaves. Staple, tack, tape, and glue as necessary for maximum autumn effect. If someone scolds or otherwise chides you for this, accuse them of being a fall Scrooge and lacking fall spirit. Go out there, and live it up! Throw leaves in the air! We have months of snowy, dark winter ahead of us. Celebrate fall while Starbucks still has those gorgeously designed autumnal cups.