

Kalidasa and Keats to Autumn



The autumn comes, a maiden fair
In slenderness and grace,
With nodding rice-stems in her hair
And lilies in her face.
In flowers of grasses she is clad;
And as she moves along,
Birds greet her with their cooing glad
Like bracelets' tinkling song.
A diadem adorns the night
Of multitudinous stars;
Her silken robe is white moonlight,
Set free from cloudy bars;
And on her face (the radiant moon)
Bewitching smiles are shown:
She seems a slender maid, who soon
Will be a woman grown.
Over the rice-fields, laden plants
Are shivering to the breeze;
While in his brisk caresses dance
The blossomed-burdened trees;
He ruffles every lily-pond
Where blossoms kiss and part,
And stirs with lover's fancies fond
The young man's eager heart.¹

KALIDASA

¹ Translated by A.W. Ryder (1877–1938), Professor of Sanskrit at the University of California, Berkeley.

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness!
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease;
For Summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers:
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozy hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
Think not of them, — thou hast thy music too,
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river-sallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
The redbreast whistles from a garden croft;
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

JOHN KEATS

