Winter 1957

The Lover as a Tree in Autumn

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Modern Christmas . . .

A snow bird in a leafless tree
Noticed me as I walked below
For his song changed.
No longer the joy of birth
And the gift of the hour
Invaded the earth as a shining star.
Barren white with artificial glitter
Flooded holy night into man’s day.

And still the bird sang on
In a false note the carol of goodwill.

Now a red man stops me
And his twinkling eyes betray no calm
While children tug at the coat
Of their why.

I walk away with the echo of
The bird’s song still in my ears.

... Lola DeLong

The Lover as a Tree in Autumn . . .

Now that loss has become all probability
And ruin the burden of our grief,
I stand in decline like any autumn tree
To offer you the substance of a leaf.

Leaves mean that we are mortal;
All things must fail some way in breath.
My gift is a visible portrayal.
This leaf contains our current death.

Accept this leaf as I accept your smile;
Let both assume some secret shape of pain.
Know that leaves begin anew as flowers
To know that ruins may grow in love again.

... John Murphy