



Black Spider, Carley Knapp, Photograph



Nutty Flower, Tonya Sippy, Photograph

Sense

When I draw breath in October, I smell cold, earth, and sobriety.

Most would say warm pumpkin, heady cinnamon, or even musky smoke from a bonfire roaring in the crisp chill. It is not that I don't smell these things as well, but to smell these certain things, one must feel them. To breathe sawdusty soot and burnt marshmallow is to sense a familiar presence at one's back, or to experience the intimacy of gentle hands on one's shoulders. The tickle of apple and cinnamon in one's nose will recall to the skin the worn-

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caress of oven mitts, and the delicate crackle of a pie crust when first broken. The thick and fragrant slime of pumpkin brings to mind the salty spice of toasted

The thick and fragrant slime of pumpkin brings to mind the salty spice of toasted seeds

seeds and the flickering light of a tiny candle inhabiting the emptiness behind a jaggedly-carved face.

To inhale cold and earth is to inhale acuity; to take

into oneself the settled blanket of nature's cleanser and revel in it. There is no recollection of musical laughter in the icy edge, or a steaming feast of scratch-made tradition that comes to mind when damp earth reaches the nostrils. It is a peace found in the absence of sentimentality. What better way to accomplish mental clarity than to inhale without feeling, without memory, and without connotation?

