



**I**N THE TWENTY-ONE YEARS WE HAVE DWELT ON OUR LAND we have never been so dry. Perhaps those who live in naturally temperate climates—such as that of our former dwelling in Southern California—routinely shrug off such concerns. Those who are accustomed to watering everything during *every* summer may not grasp the seriousness of our plight. Here even commercial farmers, raising the traditional field corn and soybeans, depend wholly upon weather for necessary moisture. Not one of them irrigates; not one of them manually waters with sprayers or sprinklers. Rain must fall from the sky, not flow from the tap.

And when one lives out in the country, and one's "lawn" is three-and-a-half to four acres—all irregular terrain with many bushes and trees—one does not just set out a sprinkler to water the grass. One doesn't water the lawn, and it turns brown and brittle and parched, and walking across it sounds like walking on corn flakes.

We have never seen the rain so constipated. A virtually permanent high-pressure dome has perched over the central portion of Iowa all summer. This means that whenever any rain does head our way, it is immediately squelched. We have watched it on radar; the approaching storm may be packing plenty of punch and moisture, but as it enters Madison County, whatever is there just vanishes into thin air. And we stay thirsty.

So all this long, dry summer we have periodically strung out 360 feet of hose to water our vegetable garden and a few very young, fragile trees. But everything else has been left to fend for itself.

Needless to say, we are now surrounded by older, fully mature trees with leaves that have been withered and curled from the drought for some time. And since the trees and bushes would rather go dormant instead of continuing to struggle to survive, our autumn has arrived early. The old oaks and maples are rapidly changing their clothes, then quickly shedding them, before saying night-night for their hibernation during the approaching winter.



Splendor and majesty are before Him,  
Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary.

*Psalms 96:6*

In spite of this year's severe heat and drought—or perhaps because of those intemperate conditions—our small corner of the world is now resplendent with autumn colors.

Nothing is quite so remarkable as the change that takes place in the autumn. Where not so long ago we were surrounded by bushes and trees in their monotonous summer greens, we are now living in a world of jumbled hues of orange and gold and rust. Where just days ago the lawn around the house was a well-

vacuumed carpet of desiccated grass, it is now virtually covered over with fallen dried leaves.

Stepping past my bathroom the other day, I realized that the tiles on my bathroom floor were bathed in a warm orange color, so strikingly different from what had been there before. Odd, I thought, but then quickly understood that the change in the light had been caused by the recent change in the color of the leaves outside the bathroom window.

It has so far been a beautiful if premature autumn, with a brilliant chorus of bright yellows and reds, oranges and tans, as the trees have moved quickly through the transition to the duller, dead brown of winter. With things so dry, we thought we might have the colors stolen from us this year, but, if anything, the lack of moisture has made for ever more brilliant shades painted across the hillsides.

Around the pond is a symphony of color that seemingly only moments before had been a monotone green. Moved by the strong fall winds shooting down across the plains from Canada, the leaves whisper the approaching blast of winter, when all

things will go dormant, and there will be only two choices for color: white or brown.

But right now the world is painted in the full spectrum of earth tones, from the splashy, flamboyant red of the maple, to the warm, subtle rust of the oak. And the light reflected from this rich palette pours through the windows, bathing the interior of the home in the warm hues of autumn.



Your eyes will see the King in His beauty;  
They will behold a far-distant land.

*Isaiah 33:17*

Even in a year of drought and deprivation, God's beauty still shines through. He will not be deprived of His glory, His splendor.

Nothing of this earth—not the destruction of storms, inundation, or withering drought—can stop the exaltation of the Lord by His creation. And the persistence of His glory confirms that we are never without Him.

And that He is still on His throne.



*Full of glory, full of wonders,  
Majesty Divine!  
'Mid Thine everlasting thunders  
How Thy lightnings shine!  
Shoreless Ocean! who shall sound Thee?  
Thine own eternity is round Thee,  
Majesty Divine!*

*Timeless, spaceless, single, lonely,  
Yet sublimely Three,  
Thou art grandly, always, only  
God in Unity!  
Lone in grandeur, lone in glory,  
Who shall tell Thy wondrous story,  
Awful Trinity?*

*Speechlessly, without beginning,  
Sun that never rose!  
Vast, adorable, and winning,  
Day that hath no close!  
Bliss from Thine own glory tasting,  
Everliving, everlasting,  
Life that never grows!*

*Thine own Self for ever filling  
With self-kindled flame,  
In Thyself Thou art distilling  
Unctions without name!  
Without worshipping of creatures  
Without veiling of Thy features,  
God always the same!*

*In Thy praise of Self untiring  
Thy perfections shine;  
Self-sufficient, self-admiring,—  
Such life must be Thine;—  
Glorifying Self, yet blameless  
With a sanctity all shameless  
It is so divine!*

*'Mid Thine uncreated morning,  
Like a trembling star  
I behold creation's dawning  
Glimmering from afar;  
Nothing giving, nothing taking,  
Nothing changing, nothing breaking,  
Waiting at time's bar!*

*I with life and love diurnal  
See myself in Thee,  
All embalmed in love eternal,  
Floating in Thy sea:  
'Mid Thine uncreated whiteness  
I behold Thy glory's brightness  
Feed itself on me.*

*Splendours upon splendours beaming  
Change and intertwine;  
Glories over glories streaming  
All translucent shine!  
Blessings, praises adorations  
Greet Thee from the trembling nations  
Majesty Divine!*

*Frederick William Faber*



One thing I have asked from the Lord,  
that I shall seek:  
That I may dwell in the house of the  
Lord all the days of my life,  
To behold the beauty of the Lord  
And to meditate in His temple.

*Psalms 27:4*