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Mindful, Mindless, October Date

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MICHAEL LEE JOHNSON

mindful mindless october date

Mindful of my lover
running late, as common
as tying my shoestrings;
I'm battered as an armadillo shell;
I put my rubber band around my emotional
body, hold tight, armor my manliness,
walk like a stud
in darkness.
I'm sealed with dismay.
Though everything in October has a bright side,
a shade of orange, a hint of witches and goblins.
In the leaves between my naked feet
and toes, I pace my walk feverishly,
trying to avoid adjectives
and soured screams,
in the parking lot.

I count them-
color charts, fragments, bites, anything of matter:
hickory leaves golden, sassafras greens and yellows,
maples of scarlet, shades of pink, even purple.
The landscape is turning turf brown.
Barefooted I break into tears, the year-fragmented.
I'm male discolored in this relationship,
tested and declared void of my testosterone
no sexual rectification or recharging
of my batteries.
I lie limp, native within myself, my circumstance-
mindful of my lover running late.

She finally arrives; I quickly transition myself.