

Pleasant Debt

by Andrew Rudin

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Nearing November, as the air becomes cool, my heart warms with the anticipation of Thanksgiving. I feel no pressure of giving or receiving gifts, no pressure from advertisers, no Santa or Minora, no music dedicated to the occasion. Just the occasion itself creates my anticipation.

Eventually, I will sit around a table with family and friends to enjoy one of the most special meals of the year, one that takes the longest time and care to prepare. As that time nears, the colors of fall, the crispness of the air begin to coach me about humility. I feel the power of seasons and the frailty of people.

My earliest memory of Thanksgiving was at my grandmother's home in Rutland, Vermont. Her kitchen was the center of the universe, the source of the smells of fresh Swedish bread, of stuffing and turkey. There was a glow from the kitchen, not only from the light, the warmth of the wood stove, but also from the laughter. Grandma's huge grey cat would make the rounds from lap to lap and hand to hand, making sure that everyone felt the warmth.

In my heart, giving thanks transcends everything. I know that some of us may not profess a belief in god, but each of us is nonetheless overwhelmed by the moonlight and shadows, the glory of a waterfall, the brilliance of a flower or the love shared with friends. These gifts come without cost or inconvenience. They are merely here for all of us to enjoy. How can I thank for a flower?

We get ready now. We all have made some kind of harvest in the lush summer, but we sense the change of seasons. We gather together. Some may try to say thanks, some may not. However it happens, for this special time, deep inside we acknowledge a blessing, a gift that can only be received, an acceptance of a mysterious debt that needs no payment other than enjoyment.

Whatever it is, wherever it comes from, and with whatever value each of us grants it, I give so much thanks for Thanksgiving.