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BEFORE THE LEAVES FALL.

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I wonder if oak and maple,
Willow and elm and all,
Are stirred at heart by the coming
Of the day their leaves must fall.
Do they think of the yellow whirlwind,
Or know of the crimson spray
That shall be when chill November
Bears all their leaves away?

Perhaps, beside the water,
The willow bends serene
As when her young leaves glistened
In a mist of golden green.
But the brave old oak is flushing
To a wine-red dark and deep,
And maple and elm are blushing
The blush of a child asleep.

"If die we must," the leaflets
Seem one by one to say,
"We will wear the colors of gladness
Until we pass away.
No eyes shall see us falter;
And before we lay it down,
We'll wear, in the sight of all the earth,
The year's most kingly crown."

So, trees of the stately forest
And trees by the trodden way,
You are kindling into glory
This soft autumnal day,