Cultural Daily

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When autumn leaves begin to fall

Maurice Amiel · Wednesday, October 23rd, 2019

"Il y avait quelque chose dans l'air, ce matin-là. Ça ne s'explique pas. (…) Ça vient (…) quelquefois à la fin de l'automne. (There was something in the air, that morning. Unexplainable (…) It comes (…) sometimes toward the end of autumn.)"

— Philippe Delerm (Translation by M. Amiel)

It took a heavy rain, whipped by a strong wind, to strip my tree of its last autumn leaves. The neighboring trees screened by it, as shown in the feature image, kept theirs … and, of course, the ground at this street corner is carpeted with them.

This morning the light is suffused and soft, adding to the delicate tone of the image the sharp delineation of bare tree branches.

If you remember the tune you may find in the feature image a visual equivalent of its sweet sadness, so characteristic of fall season.

Quite a different scene and mood, under a low mid-afternoon sun grazing the top of buildings of this main street scene, while the foreground basks, under that particular autumn light, in crisp geometric delineation.

main street late afternoon

If the trees have kept their leaves in their fall color pageantry, the outdoor tables of this bakery are now empty but for one orphan and empty expresso cup. The deserted outdoor tables and the coats worn by the passers-by are now harbingers of the forthcoming "indoor" season.

Not yet, seems to say this shopping-bag-and-coffee-cup loaded lady, about to sit down with her daughter who is off the photograph frame, to the right.

bakery outdoor terrace

What caught my eye of course was the momentary co-presence of the double arrow logo of the city public transit system, painted on the bus passing by, and the lady's colorful shopping bags.

Paying attention to details reveals the oddity of a potted exotic plant, probably on its way out, and the foresight of the lady's woolen attire, most likely on its way in.

Both photographs reveal something of the transitional aspect of autumn, as leaves begin to fall and as the temperature does the same … as people bundle up and outdoor coffee terraces are deserted … and as forms and colors take on a certain fullness in the season's suffused light.

Bibliography

Delerm, P. *Paris l'instant,* Fayard, 2002 (with photographs by Martine Delerm)

Credit all photographs to Maurice Amiel

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