**The Loveliest Place in Fall**

Eudora Seyfer

1 Early this morning, my neighbors left to go leaf-peeping in Vermont. I watched them load their car with suitcases, cameras, jackets, walking shoes, and a fat notebook stuffed with maps to help them find the most scenic roads on the long drive from Iowa to Vermont. I smiled and waved a cheerful goodbye as they drove away but, to be honest, I wasn’t feeling cheerful at all; I was feeling pangs of jealousy, wishing I could go to Vermont, too.

2 My problem: I remember the October my husband and I went to see the leaves in Vermont. The last of our five sons had just left for college and, feeling a little sad but strangely carefree, away we drove.

3 Starting in Vermont’s southwest corner, we drove slowly north, then looped south, covering the state in a leisurely sweep of beauty.

4 I’ll never forget the clear blue sky, the brilliant red maples, the country markets selling maple syrup, and the quaint New England villages. And I’ll forever remember our surprise when, driving on a country road in the Green Mountains, we happened upon a Robert Frost Memorial Trail. No one else was there so we walked the trail slowly, reading quotes from Frost’s poems posted on pedestals along the path.

5 There’s no doubt about it: October in Vermont is spectacular — and I wanted to go back. So as I waved goodbye to my neighbors, I was thinking, “Well, here I am. Just another ho-hum day in Iowa.”

6 But as long as I was up and dressed, I decided to spend the morning at our local farmers’ market. My trips are usually rushed, but that day I’d have time to look around.

7 As soon as I got out of the car, the aroma of apples filled the air. It looked as though every variety was for sale, as well as every species of potato and squash. There were red, green, and yellow bell peppers; tomatoes; hundreds of gourds and bright orange pumpkins; piles of ears of Indian corn; branches of bittersweet; and big pots of chrysanthemums. A young woman was selling pretty pillows embroidered with the words “Welcome Fall”.

8 I looked around. No Vermont maple syrup here — and no New Englanders with their charming accents, I thought. But I decided I’d buy a few of the plain old Iowa things as long as I was there. Back home, I paused out in front to put the big pot of golden mums beside the mailbox. A stranger slowed his car. “That looks beautiful,” he called.

9 “Thanks,” I called back. But I thought: If you think this is beautiful, you should see Vermont in October.

10 On the front porch, I piled the gourds and pumpkins in a wicker basket and hung a sheaf of Indian corn on the door. Inside, I arranged bittersweet in my grandmother’s old brown crock and put the “Welcome Fall” pillow on the sofa. Then I cored six apples, stuffed them with brown sugar, butter, and cinnamon, and put them in the oven to bake while I made a peanut-butter sandwich and took it outside to eat.

11 No delicious cheddar-cheese chowder at a quaint country inn for me. Just plain old peanut butter under a plain old Iowa oak.

12 When I walked out front to get the mail and looked back at the house, the ash tree was golden in the sunlight, and the gourds, pumpkins, and Indian corn looked nice on the porch. Still, everything looked so Midwestern, I thought.

13 My dog Sophie and I have a pact (sounds silly, but it’s true) about walking our nearby nature trail on lovely autumn days. So when she stared at me with her “it’s time to go for a walk” look, off we trudged, even though I’d wanted to go into the house to read.

14 Our trail wanders through a stand of tall native oak and shagbark hickory trees, meanders for a while beside a creek, and then skirts a cornfield. A crow cawed above, and dry leaves crackled under our feet. At the crest of a small hill, I paused to look across the fields.

15 “Oh, Sophie,” I said. “Look at that view!” Suddenly I felt a funny lump in my throat. “It’s absolutely beautiful. It looks just like a painting by Grant Wood.”

16 And that’s when I realized what I’d known all along but had forgotten while wallowing in wishing: Iowa may not have red sugar maple trees, country markets selling maple syrup, New England villages, and Robert Frost poetry. But Iowa has rolling hills, black fertile soil, red barns, fields of cornstalks with goldfinches darting among them, and giant oak trees that turn deep garnet in the fall.

17 Iowa’s October landscape is a patchwork of gold, brown, rust, green, and deep red pieced together in a pattern of quiet beauty. And Iowa has Grant Wood’s love-of-the-land paintings.

18 So that evening I carried a big log into the house and started a fire in the fireplace — the first of the season. And as I watched the roaring fire and listened to its popping and crackling, I knew that this had been a wonderful October day filled with wonderful Iowa joys — the joy of hanging a sheaf of Indian corn on the front door, of creating an arrangement of bittersweet with its bright orange berries, of fluffing a pretty new “Welcome Fall” pillow, of eating baked apples warm from the oven, and of walking with Sophie in the hazy autumn stillness.

19 My October day in Iowa was as lovely as an October day in Vermont — just different.

**秋天最可爱的地方**

尤多拉·赛弗

1 今天一大早，我的邻居出游去佛蒙特观赏秋叶。我看着他们往车上装旅行提箱、照相机、夹克衫、轻便鞋，还有一本夹着地图的厚笔记本，那些地图可以帮助他们在从爱荷华到佛蒙特的长途驱车行程中找到景色最美的路。他们开车离开时，我微笑着，高兴地挥手作别，但说实话，我一点儿也不高兴，只感到妒羡之情阵阵涌上心头，真希望自己也能去佛蒙特。

2 我的问题是：我还记得和老公去佛蒙特观赏秋叶的那个十月。我们有五个儿子，最小的一个当时刚刚离家上大学，我感到有些难过，但又有种奇怪的解脱感，我们就带着这样的心情启程了。

3 我们从佛蒙特的西南角出发，缓缓驱车向北，然后往南兜个大圈，悠闲地掠过佛蒙特州，遍览美景。

4 我永远不会忘记那湛蓝的天空、亮丽的红枫、出售枫糖浆的农贸市场和古色古香的新英格兰村庄。我还会永远记得，巧遇罗伯特·弗罗斯特纪念小道时的惊喜，当时我们正驱车行进在格林山脉中的一条乡间公路上。那儿没有别人，于是我们漫步小道，阅读沿途柱脚上贴着的引自弗罗斯特诗歌的诗句。

5 这一点毫无疑问：佛蒙特的十月景色绚丽——我想回去。所以，在我向邻居挥手作别时，我想的是：“好吧，我就待在这儿，不过又是爱荷华令人厌倦的一天。”

6 但一起床穿好衣服，我就决定上午去我们这儿的农贸市场逛逛。我的出行通常都是急匆匆的，但那天我有时间到处看看。

7 我一下车，苹果的芳香便扑鼻而来。除了有各个品种的薯和瓜，这里看起来好像什么东西都有得卖。有红的、绿的和黄的钟形甜椒，有西红柿，有数以百计的葫芦和鲜橙色的南瓜，有成堆的玉米穗，有美洲南蛇藤的枝条，还有大盆大盆的菊花。一位年轻的女子在卖漂亮的枕头，上面绣着“迎秋”的字样。

8 我环顾四周，这里没有佛蒙特的枫糖浆，我想也没有口音迷人的新英格兰人。但既然到这儿了，我决定还是买几样爱荷华普普通通的传统产品。回到家，我在门前停下，把买的那一大盆金菊放在邮箱边。一个陌生人放慢车速叫道：“真漂亮!”

9 “谢谢。”我回应道。不过我心想：如果你认为这漂亮，那你应当去看看十月的佛蒙特。

10 前廊上，我把葫芦和南瓜堆在柳条篮里，把一捆玉米挂在门上。屋内，我把美洲南蛇藤安置在祖母的棕色老瓦罐里，把“迎秋”的枕头放在沙发上。然后，我挖去六个苹果的核，塞进红糖、黄油和肉桂，把它们放进烤箱烘烤，同时我又做了一个花生酱三明治，把它带到外面去吃。

11 我没有机会在古雅的乡村客店品尝美味的切达干酪海鲜浓汤，有的只是在普通的爱荷华老橡树下吃普通的老式花生酱。

12 当我到前门外去拿信时，回头看了看我住的房子，白蜡树在阳光下呈现金色，前廊上的葫芦、南瓜和玉米看起来也很美。然而这一切在我看来还是那么富有中西部的特色。

13 我和我的狗索菲有个约定（听起来挺傻的，但这是真的），那就是在可爱的秋日到附近的林中小径去散步。于是，当她盯着我，摆出一副“是时候散步”的表情时，虽然我想进屋读书，但还是和她一起出门了。

14 我们沿着蜿蜒的小路，经过一片高高挺立的土生土长的橡树和山核桃树林，在一条小溪旁逗留片刻，然后绕过一片玉米地。一只乌鸦在天上飞鸣，干树叶在脚下嘎吱作响。在一座小丘的顶上，我止步眺望田野。

15 “噢，索菲，”我说，“瞧那景色！”突然，我觉得喉咙奇怪地哽住了。“太美了，简直就像格兰特·伍德的一幅画。”

16 就在那一刻，我认识到了自己一直了解却因沉湎于向往而忽略了的东西：爱荷华也许没有红色的枫树，没有出售枫糖浆的农贸市场，没有新英格兰村庄，也没有罗伯特·弗罗斯特的诗歌，但是爱荷华有绵延起伏的山丘，有肥沃的黑土，有红谷仓，有黄雀在其间疾飞的一片片玉米地，还有在秋天变成深红色的巨大橡树。

17 金、棕、锈红、碧绿与深红错综交织在爱荷华十月的风景中，相映成一派静美。爱荷华如同格兰特·伍德笔下一幅充溢着眷恋乡土之情的画作。

18 当晚，我携着一根敦实的原木回到屋中，在壁炉里生起火——这还是入秋以来的第一次。望着火苗摇曳耸动，耳听木头哔剥作响，享受着金秋十月这妙不可言的一天，俯拾皆是爱荷华之行带给我的愉悦——在前门挂上一捆玉米，用点缀着亮橙色果实的美洲南蛇藤插花，把漂亮的绣有“迎秋”字样的新枕头拍得松软，享用刚出炉的热腾腾的烤苹果，以及在薄雾朦胧的静谧秋日之中和索菲一道散步。

19 我在爱荷华度过的十月的这一天像在佛蒙特度过的十月的那一天一样可爱——只是可爱之处有所不同。

译文转自《英语世界》2010/10/16王炽文译注