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## Halloween Party

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# Halloween Party

by Carol Hamilton

The woods must have had,  
for when I returned today,  
it had taken off its garish  
costumes and everything was  
changed. After long drought,  
hard cold, then rain at last, and  
during my few days' absence,  
some frost drained the corn,  
the canes, the weeds of color.  
Behind a neighborhood fence  
the maize in the garden patch  
stood stiff and aslant.  
The weeds had pallid heads  
glistening in easterly slant light  
through moist haze. The air,  
damp and redolent of wood  
and wet straw-like things,  
was soft, and the greens still  
daring day, the red splash of sumac,  
the orange-red sandstone  
muttered with blowsy lips.  
Death danced through here,  
they all tell me, and she will be back.  
But tell the hostess to gather  
the spent party favors.  
Even with these used-up scraps,  
she might make a scarecrow,  
one with a smiling face.

