

## A Pumpkin Poem From Memory

By Salvatore Buttaci

my orange self will survive  
(under an assumed lack of  
identity) on these cold  
basement tiles I imagine  
precious stones that mentally  
I glide over like a skater  
In the throes of another season

I store autumn memories  
like riches the way a man's  
old watch stores time hidden away  
for safekeeping where a simple  
rewinding can start years ticking again  
but you ask how is it possible  
for a pumpkin to reminisce

right in the midst of your here and now  
not in the fields growing free  
in an orange row of autumn rinds  
not in the fields where bright miracles  
like so many orange beads  
tumble unstrung from  
a rosary of green vines

I am not what you think I am  
severed from nature, here on this floor  
I can think myself far from the glare  
of overhead lights and tricks of the knife  
And strong human-father hands lifting me  
to the work table to cut out my insides  
while some kid's eyes grow hot and wild

beyond unsaintly pranks a part  
of me is strong this All Saint's Eve  
He says Son watch me scrape out the pulp  
gash a crude mouth into a smile to  
scare away the boos of Halloween goblins  
but these poked-out eyes of mine  
only appear to be hollow and dead

where the candlelight flickers  
memory scenes shadow-dance

on the stone wall like voodoo visions  
they think carved out and empty-headed  
blinded with teeth a line of pyramids  
I am the insentient victim of the blade  
still I can imagine escaping anywhere

treat myself to happy memories  
trick this all away and go  
even to the heights of moon  
like the farmer his pumpkins  
I cultivate rich harvest dreams  
inside this makeshift head  
scarecrow wear to frighten birds

inside the light of this jack o'lantern  
I set captivity on fire and I am free  
how many of you instead  
with or without costume and mask  
go knocking on strange doors  
like mindless beggars  
giving yourselves away

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