

Memento

When I was young, before I knew the days and months apart, my dad would point to the lime tree outside our house and tell me to wait for the leaves to fall. From a great profusion of green, homing birds in the spring and offering shade in the summer, the lime tree would be reduced to bare branches by the end of each year. Around mid-November, all of its leaves would be gone. Then, and only then, my dad told me, was it my birthday. As a child, I would wait impatiently for my advent, watching the leaves turn to gold, drop to the ground, and gild our wintery street.

For me, the lime tree marked the shifting of the seasons, teaching me about life's changes before I knew much of anything at all. When I got older, I carried a piece of it away with me, in the form of a golden leaf tattoo. In quiet moments, I trace the lines the artist marked on my body, reminded of how times change, and of the joy and sorrow that brings.