



Ahhhhhhh.... Good readers, we can finally breathe a well-deserved sigh of relief. The autumnal equinox hastens toward us, the sun's angle cants slightly lower, and the feeding frenzy is over. At this very moment the last retired couple careens eastward over the Coast Range, their Airstream vectoring toward Arizona. A hearty Good Sam wave bids us adieu. The only T-shirts left are the gold lame' ones that say "University of Cannon Beach," never a popular item. A resident polices up the last plastic bag filled with dirty Pampers, chucked over the fence by some chuzzlewit and his wife from their speeding Camaro. The gesellschaft community once again becomes gemeinschaft.

On the third of September, the Tuesday after Labor Day, I slip down the street just after dawn. The village sleeps, blessedly, like a thing scourged and pillaged. The crowds of summer have rent and torn it. The bloat of wrappers, bottles, and fast food spew from trash receptacles and cascade on the street. Sidewalks and streets are rutted and buffed by the tramp of August passers-by.

At last the town rests.

By 8:00 a.m. a few locals collect on Osburn's porch to yarn, nurse a cup, and catch a welcome glimpse of the fall's first school bus. Noon finds the town in a positively festive mood, neighbors greeting neighbors after avoiding the downtown area during July and August like a township visited by Ebola. Even the shopkeepers, after cacheing away their summer booty, pause to exchange pleasantries. The place fairly burbles and chortles. Huzzah! They're gone! In the quiet village, the lion sleeps tonight.

Rain charms us by Friday afternoon, and all's right with the world. Even the most churlish coast trolls, myself among them, smirk as a modest wind-driven squall kicks in at dusk. In a week or two the geese will ghost by in the late-night sky. Chantrelles have been spotted.

Shoot. A few good friends with stories, some seasoned alder in the old wood stove. Howdy, Winter, take your shoes off and sit down here next to the fire!



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in touching the pen to sign a treaty,  
but I have always found it full of  
deceit. Standing Elk