

Erin McLean



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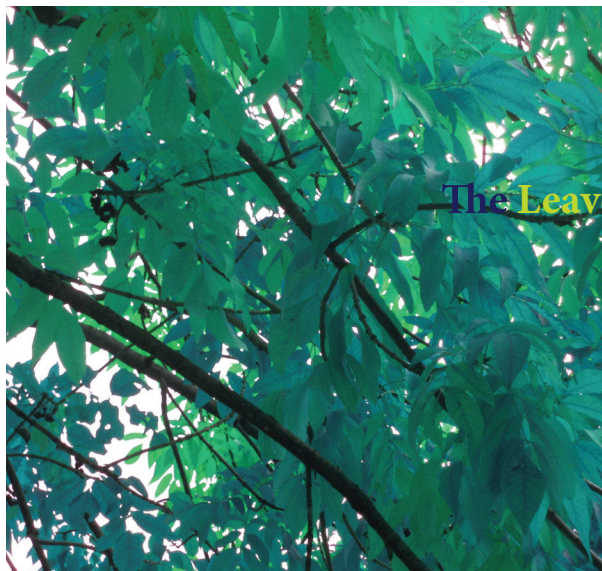
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The Leaves Had Fallen, Where Was Spring?

BY KELLY SMITH

T cancer diagnoses had come on like rain—a downpour of grief. My already struggling relationship quickly unraveled. My job suffered because I was spending my time on the Internet searching for a cure. When I wasn't tracking down every possible remedy, I was weeping.

"Michael said again," my 5-year-old daughter would say with a sigh.

But recently I was determined. Always having been healthy, I decided first to try alternative medicine. I had a hope that being so ill was a message that there was a purpose for it, but I didn't know what.

Michael, a former boyfriend, understood. We met at 22 and became lovers in our 30s. Now, in our 40s, we had 100 miles apart and had been in touch for years, but I had through the grapevine that he had leukemia, so we started e-mailing.

I was doing all these crazy alternative treatments: acupuncture to relieve my pain, meditation to calm my mind, eating for the blood type, and so on. After attending cancer survivor's camp, he wrote: "It seems a lot of people believe that cancer was the last thing they ever happened. I will love and cherish you again."

To cheer him up, I wrote, "There I am, my Philadelphia boyfriend has leukemia and you're still here."

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