

AUTUMN COUNSEL

G. JOHNSON

Not always bend the bow,
Nor ever stretch the string:
Effort is idle show,
Wasteful is niggarding,
Unless at times you can
Demand your due, as man,
Of life in fullest flow
And revel in the hoard
Your sinewy wit has stored.

Autumn is here to show,
For all her reaping cares
And toil for ricks a-row,
How foresight that prepares
Is less, not more, than living
And enjoyment of achieving.
She sits with folded knees
And wisely takes her ease.

By pyramids of pears
And ruddy hills of apples,
She carols idle airs
And soaks in sunny dapples;
She fears no winds destroying,
She does not pine for Spring:
The Present is her enjoying,
While cider-presses wring.

What is this life's ado,
If for a day or two,
Like squirrel, rook, or cony,
Or connoisseur and crony,
I cannot take my ease,
And drink life to the lees
From wealth I have got around me,
From books my savings bound me,
Old poems and old wine,
Old music, old oak-shine
My effort has made mine?