

**I first fell in love with this lovely lady, who resides at the edge of my front yard, on a dreary, rainy day, much like today, in late fall 2009. Unfortunately, I have lost her portrait from that time. Just as she inspired thoughtful prose back then, each fall she strokes my heart strings again. Of course she is always at the autumn dance, but she stays in the background as my hickories flaunt their aureolin, gold and bronze and finally my radiant scarlet oaks fade in anticipation of winter. It is then that she steps out from the shadows and all who see her are compelled to comment on her beauty. She has stayed in the shadows of the big oaks from last winter until now - quiet, unnoticed and unnoticeable as she garnered her loveliness to captivate my eyes and my heart and invite my gentle touch.**

**Gene W. Wood  
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