
A Leaf Dances

**A poem from the *Cathedral Times* by
the Very Reverend Samuel G. Candler,
Dean of the Cathedral of St. Philip**

(The following is a poem I wrote some years ago, during this Winter time of the year, when stray leaves fall and yet when we also get a glimpse that Spring and new life are being formed.)

When the scorched leaf falls, she dances a curious descent
Among the earnest limbs and her hearty companions
Still looking for sunlight and the longest day.
Ballet-spinning and upward-twirling in the breeze,
She finds chutes and eddies as the water
Finds channels
In the river rocks.
Together they flow, downward, to the great force
Of the earth, but not directly.

Logic does not move the particles of life
In a straight line as if they were mere
Digits or pulses of on and off.
There is rather a still unseen wave
Vibrating from primal history,
Echoing in the universe,
Which shifts us
And the leaves and the water
Into patterns which defy our mind.

We will fall, yes, we will flow,
But we will do so
With a dance
Glancing this way and that,
Then radiating hidden glory and color,
There all along,
And revealed only close to death.

It is not death, we sing,
It is not despair, we chortle,
As we ride the river's waves
And find secret passages among the oaks.

It is a turning, turning, turning
Of sweet sunlight into cracked beauty
Into the air
And into the dirt. It is a turning
Of the soil into spring, a turning
Of the water into the sea, a turning
To say one last good-bye
Until I wake.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sam Candler". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

The Very Reverend Samuel G. Candler
Dean of the Cathedral of St. Philip