

Syston and District

u3a

learn, laugh, live

OCT
2025

Vitality!

Official newsletter of the Syston and District u3a

CHARITY No 1180152

FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Hi Everyone,

As you will have noticed autumn is quickly approaching and it may be time to look for a new group to join. You can find a list of the groups to join on our website or Facebook page. Over the summer we have been to 3 fetes, and I would like to thank all those who have helped set up the gazebo and helped at the event. Hopefully, we have helped some people realise that there are plenty of opportunities for them to join us at the u3a.

I think you will be pleased to hear that the committee have already started to organise the Christmas Members meeting and we have decided to have the same as last year. The difference this year is we are combining Christmas with our 10th Anniversary, so we have managed to get a little more money from the Treasurer.

Clive

WE WANT TO LET YOU KNOW

IT'S MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS TIME

By the time you read this, a membership renewal reminder email may well have already landed in your inbox or be in the post if you don't use email. These are scheduled to go out on 1st October. Our membership year runs from that date, so if you haven't renewed now's the time to do so.

If you have paid in the last few days and have still received a reminder, please bear in mind that our team have to process the details. Our systems can't do that automatically.

Whilst it was decided that due to increased bank charges the u3a would have to ask members paying by cheque to cover those charges (50p). You can pay at a monthly general meeting using your card with our card reader at no extra cost. If you use online banking, you can also pay without any additional charge.

If you have any queries, do contact our membership secretary Chris Gale email: sadu3amembers@gmail.com

GROUP NEWS

NEW GROUP IDEAS

If you have any ideas for a new group, please contact Barbara Sargeant our groups co-ordinator sadu3agroups@gmail.com or speak to her at one of our monthly general meetings. Alternatively contact her assistant Angie Baker email sadu3agroupsasst@gmail.com Acting as a group organiser doesn't have to be onerous, it doesn't have to be down to just one person, and it doesn't mean you have to organise everything the group does.

Is the group you want to join currently full? How about starting a second group? Barbara and Angie are happy to provide support and guidance on how to get going.

POSSIBLE GROUP REVIVAL – LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

Some of you may recall that our Local History Group has been dormant for a while. In recent months, a couple of people expressed interest in becoming the Group Organiser, but those offers haven't come to fruition — so I'm now stepping in to try and get things moving again.

I wasn't a member of the previous group myself, as it was full at the time, and I only have limited knowledge of how it operated — though I understand there were some outings and talks. That said, any revival doesn't need to follow the same format. Personally, I wouldn't be able to organise outings, but if there's an interest in getting out and about, and if someone else is keen to handle that aspect, I'd be very happy to collaborate.

If you were part of the original group, I'd really appreciate hearing what topics were covered previously — it would be helpful to build on what's already been explored. Equally, I'd love to know what areas of local history people would be interested in discussing going forward.

If you'd be interested in attending a preliminary meeting to explore the possibilities and shape how the group might look, please get in touch by email at sadu3aed@gmail.com or call 0116 2609012 (do note I have call screening, so you'll need to announce who you are when calling).

If enough people express interest, I'll happily take things forward.

UPDATE – I have had a little more interest, almost enough to make the group viable. Please do let me know if you are interested.

Julie Johnson

NEW CROSS STITCH GROUP

Good news, the cross-stitch group will start in November!

Gwyn is a talented cross stitcher who would love to share her skill and knowledge with others.

She is hoping to start her group on **FRIDAY 7th NOVEMBER 10am** at the Syston Community Centre.

If you would like to join her, please email me and we can set it up.

ALL ABILITIES WELCOME

At the moment there are 3 places left if anyone is interested. Gwyn can be contacted by email at gwyndle@hotmail.co.uk

SUNDAYS FOR SOLOS GROUP



Another great day out for the "Sundays for Solos" group!

This time, we visited Stoneywell, the beautiful "Arts and Crafts" cottage set within gardens and woodland , near Markfield. It was created by the Arts and Crafts architect, Ernest Gimson, as a summer home for his brother and family and remained in the family's ownership till 2012, when they sold it to the National Trust.

We had tours of both the garden and the house and feel that we would like to return in the Spring when the rhododendrons are in flower.

WHERE HAS ALL THE GROUP NEWS GONE?

A very disappointing month for group news. I appreciate that it will likely have been a quieter month, but if I don't receive articles, I can't publish them!

EVENTS – PAST, PRESENT & PLANNED

Do you have an idea for an event?

If you can think of an event that our members may like to do, please tell Angie Baker, our new Events Coordinator at sadu3aevents@gmail.com

Perhaps you may even be willing to organize it? In which case the Coordinator can help you with everything you need to know.

Once the Coordinator has created the Event on our Computer System (Simple Membership). It will be easy for you to email all those interested, as all the relevant information is already recorded on the system.

Please just give it some thought, and let's make our u3a fun for everyone.

BOLLYWOOD DANCE SESSION.

Well, here we all are having a go at Bollywood dancing!

23 members shaking and jiggling to some Bollywood music.

Jayna, the instructor showed us some moves then set them to music.

Apparently, the moves tell a love story.

Firstly, to attract "him" she points in his direction then shakes her bangles on her wrists, and points to the bells on her ankles, then does a few cheeky wiggles.

Anyway, that's what it should look like! I'm not sure any of our moves would win "him" over.

We may try some more in the Spring. Watch this space.



TREASURE HUNT

Not strictly a u3a event as partners, friends and relatives of members could take part. But this has become part of our u3a calendar. Thanks to Dave and Lyn for organising it.

On Sunday, 26 people had a Sunday Lunch at the Crown in Anstey and then we were joined by another 7 people at 1:30. Teams of 4 were set off at 3-minute intervals. Around 3pm they started arriving back, so Lyn & I set about marking the clue sheets. Overall, it turned out to be a very close contest, and hampers of goodies were handed out to the first 3 teams. A big bonus was NO rain!



WHAT'S ON NEXT

GENERAL MEETINGS

In the Brookside Room at the Community Centre – talks usually start 10.30am
Tea/coffee and mingling from 10.00am

Please note that due to unforeseen circumstances there have been some changes to the scheduled talks.

October 9th, 2025



Thomas Cook Travel Industry Entrepreneur

Thomas Cook (22 November 1808 – 18 July 1892) was the founder of the travel agency Thomas Cook & Son - come along and find out more about him.

November 12th, 2025

The Magic of Plants

Joanna Richart returns with "A journey into the magical and medicinal world of wild plants and fungi."

Explore the dual nature of plants and mushrooms rooted in folklore and Druid traditions. We'll look at species with both healing and mind-altering properties—some poisonous in part, yet edible in others. Expect mentions of psychedelic fungi used by the Incas, plants linked to witches' spells, and curious names like witch's butter, witch's broom, and witch's hair. Open your mind—we're stepping into a world of traditional beliefs, spell-craft, and the blurred lines between remedy and poison.



December 10th 2025

Christmas Social and 10th Anniversary Celebrations



Our own Ukelele Band and Singers will be on hand to entertain you in the Old Schoolroom, whilst you can eat, drink and chat in the Brookside Room.

Come to this double celebration of Christmas and our u3a 10th Anniversary. Yes, it really is 10 years since the Syston & District u3a was formed. Whilst the format is similar to last years Christmas social, the food and drink will mark this as a an even more special occasion.

NATIONAL U3A ITEMS

u3a TALKS



Flight Inspiration Aviation Meeting: October

Early Aviation in the Channel Islands

Following the Wright brothers' 1903 flight, aviation reached the Channel Islands, evolving from wartime patrols to civil air services. Challenges included weather, accidents, and financial struggles. Early flying boats gave way to land planes and airports by 1935. WWII halted services, resuming after liberation with a royal visit

Tuesday 7 October at 10am

Free – online via Zoom



Blacklisted! Corporate Crime and State Conspiracies

Jack Fawbert examines shortcomings in criminological theory by looking at the long history of the invisible crime of corporate blacklisting and the accompanying long-running public enquiry.

Tuesday 14 October at 10am

Free – online via Zoom



The Historic Towns Trust – London on the Eve of the Great Fire Preview

Join us for an outline of the Trust's history and current and future projects including an atlas of London on the eve of the Great Fire.

Friday 31 October at 2pm

Free – online via Zoom

Book [here](#)

Book [here](#)

Book [here](#)

If none of the trio of talks on the previous page appeals, you can find other options [here](#)



NEW VICE-CHAIR ELECTED

We are delighted to announce that Sheila Crawley, a member of Ashbourne u3a, has been elected as Vice Chair of the Third Age Trust.

With a strong background in marketing and communications, Sheila will bring her skills in consumer insight, brand and communications strategy to the Board.

As a u3a member, she has been Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary of Ashbourne u3a, as well as a Trust Volunteer,

sitting on the East Midlands Regional Support Group and facilitating the Derbyshire Network.

In her supporting statement, Sheila shared her hopes for the u3a movement: "I'm passionate about u3a, it has a great social purpose. My hope is that many more people of all backgrounds understand what u3a is and how transformational it can be.

We need to embrace change but simultaneously take care to hold on to our core values that existing members respond to. A movement that innovates with care, using digital tools to reduce isolation and increase participation is a very powerful force."

Allan Walmsley, Chair of the Third Age Trust said: "I'm delighted to welcome Sheila to the Board and knowing a little about her background I'm sure that she will be able to make a significant contribution to the Board's activities. We are in the middle of enormous changes and having a new face with a fresh outlook can only help the quality of decision-making".

Sheila will take up her new role at [this year's AGM](#) on 15 October.

NOT u3a BUT YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED

HALLOWEEN FARM

October 27 @ 10:00 am - November 2 @ 5:00 pm

HALLOWEEN FARM RETURNS FOR 2025 WITH A FULL AMERICAN ADVENTURE

The UK's #1 Family Halloween Experience launches at Cattows Farm, Leicestershire – Saturday 27th September to Sunday 2nd November 2025.

This autumn, the UK's most exciting family Halloween attraction is back and bigger, brighter and bolder than ever before. Halloween Farm: An American Adventure will transform Cattows Farm, Leicestershire, into an immersive, family friendly Halloween festival with live shows, themed zones, and over 1 million pumpkins waiting to be picked, posed with and taken home.

Running from Saturday 27th September to Sunday 2nd November 2025, Halloween Farm brings together the very best of American entertainment with a uniquely British twist. Offering families the chance to step into a world of cowboys, fairgrounds, music, dinosaurs, animals, pumpkins, and spooky surprises.

Entry starts from just £3 per person, which includes free parking, access to the Magical Pumpkin Patch and several free attractions. Adventure Passes and VIP passes are also available.

Sat
4

October 4 @ 10:00 am - October 5 @ 4:00 pm

East Midlands Food Festival 2025

Stockyard Melton Mowbray Salford Road, Melton Mowbray, United Kingdom

It's time for the annual East Midlands Food Festival! The Food Festival has been going for 21 years and is a showcase of food from across the East Midlands and beyond. With around 200 stalls from the East Midlands and beyond, a Food Theatre with professional chefs, a Kids Food Zone and street food dishes from around the world, the festival is a wonderful day out for the whole family. Famed for its artisan producers of cheese, pies, charcuterie, chocolate and all sorts of goodies, the festival is one of the largest UK regional food festivals. [more here](#)



SATURDAY HERITAGE FAIR

11th October

Leicester Adult Education College, 2 Wellington Street, Leicester, LE1 6HL

[Visit Website](#)

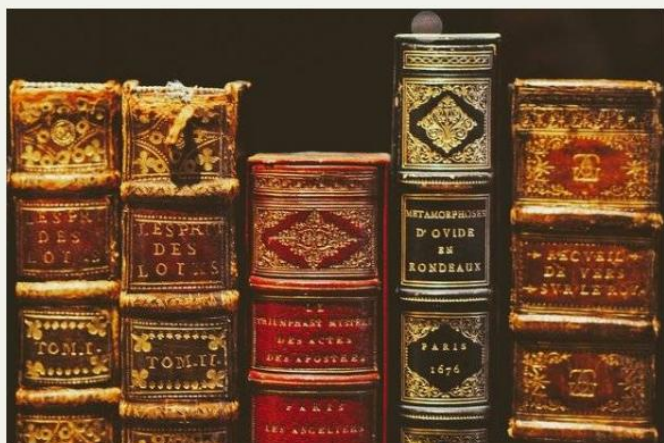


THE GREAT LEICESTER GHOST HUNT

20th October - 2nd November

Visit Leicester Information Centre, 4A St Martins, Leicester, LE1 5DB

[Visit Website](#)



WITCHCRAFT IN LEICESTERSHIRE

30th October

The 1620s House And Garden, Manor Road, Coalville, LE67 2FW

[Website & Booking Here](#)



Thru the Decades Age UK Charity Party Night

📅 Sat, 18 Oct, 2025 at 07:00 pm

📍 Syston Conservative Club

61 High Street, Leicester, LE7 1, United Kingdom

About the event

Thru the Decades Age UK Charity Party Night featuring the Syston Swing Band

The best of our party tunes all in one gig!!!

Tunes from 30s to 00's to get you on the Dance Floor.

All profits to Age UK Leicestershire and Rutland <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/syston-swing-band>

FROM OUR MEMBERS

The Story Behind British Summer Time: From Petts Wood to Parliament

Each autumn, as we “fall back” to Greenwich Mean Time, many of us wonder: why do we change the clocks at all? The answer lies in a curious blend of Edwardian horse rides, wartime urgency, and a builder’s crusade to “wake the sluggards.”

A Kentish Builder’s Bright Idea

British Summer Time (BST) was first proposed by William Willett, a builder from Kent, who noticed during an early morning ride through Petts Wood that most households still had their blinds drawn—even though daylight had arrived. Frustrated by this wasted light, Willett published a pamphlet in 1907 titled *The Waste of Daylight*, proposing a seasonal clock change to better align waking hours with natural light.

His original plan was ambitious: move the clocks forward by 80 minutes in four 20-minute steps each Sunday in April, then reverse the process in September. Willett believed this would improve public health, boost productivity, and reduce lighting costs. Though he gained support from MP Robert Pearce, Parliament didn’t act on the idea during Willett’s lifetime. He died in 1915, never seeing his vision realised.

War Makes the Case

The turning point came during World War I. With coal conservation a national priority, Germany introduced daylight saving in April 1916. Britain followed suit shortly after, passing the Summer Time Act on 17 May 1916. The first official BST began on 21 May and ended on 1 October that year.

During World War II, Britain even adopted *British Double Summer Time* (BDST), pushing clocks two hours ahead of GMT to maximise evening daylight. This was repeated in 1947 during post-war austerity.

The Great Time Trial: 1968–1971

Between 1968 and 1971, the UK conducted a bold experiment: it stayed on BST all year round, effectively adopting GMT+1 even through the winter. This was known as *British Standard Time*. The idea was to reduce road accidents and improve productivity by keeping evenings lighter.

However, the darker mornings—especially in Scotland and northern England—sparked widespread concern. Many schoolchildren were setting off for classes in the gloom, navigating icy pavements and fog before sunrise. Parents, teachers, and local councils voiced safety fears, and the emotional weight of those shadowy starts lingered in public memory.

The trial lasted three years before the UK reverted to the familiar seasonal clock changes in 1972. For those who lived through it, the memory of winter sunrises at 9am remains vivid—and for some, unsettling.

BST Today

BST now begins on the last Sunday in March and ends on the last Sunday in October. The UK retained this schedule even after leaving the EU, aligning with Central European Summer Time for consistency.

A Legacy in Light

Willett's legacy lives on—not just in our clocks, but in a memorial sundial in Petts Wood, permanently set to Daylight Saving Time. His campaign reminds us that even small shifts in routine can ripple through history, illuminating lives in unexpected ways.

DECLUTTER DEN

Are you determined to declutter and get rid of things that you haven't used in an age this year? Look no further than Declutter Den.



If you have something that you are prepared to give away – **strictly no items for sale!** Let me know and I'll put it in declutter den and hopefully we can help each other free up some space, whilst giving others something they have a use for, even if we don't.

Email: sadu3aed@gmail.com

Windows 10: Reminder and Update — Plus a Reassuring Word About Windows 11

This is a follow-up to our earlier note about Microsoft ending support for Windows 10. Things have moved on since then, and here's the latest:

- **End of Support Date:** Microsoft will officially stop supporting Windows 10 on **October 14, 2025**. Your computer won't stop working, but it will no longer receive security updates or technical fixes.
- **Free Extended Support in the UK and Europe:** Microsoft has now confirmed that **everyone in the UK and Europe will receive one extra year of security updates for free**, regardless of how their computer is set up.
- **Further Support Available (at a cost):** After the free year ends in October 2026, Microsoft will offer **two more years of paid support**, taking us through to October 2028. Pricing hasn't been announced yet.
- **Upgrading to Windows 11 — Not as Scary as It Sounds:** If your computer qualifies, upgrading to Windows 11 is free. And while the name might suggest something radically new, the truth is more reassuring: **Windows 11 looks and feels very similar to Windows 10**. Most familiar features — the desktop, the taskbar, your files and folders — are still there, just with a slightly cleaner look. If you can use Windows 10, you'll feel at home in Windows 11.

A personal note: I made the switch myself and found it painless. While a few things weren't exactly where they used to be, it didn't take long to settle in — and I was able to get back to work without fuss. Ed

- **What If Your PC Says “No” to Windows 11?:** Microsoft's upgrade checker may say your machine isn't eligible — but in some cases, that's not the full story. With a bit of technical help, it's possible to install Windows 11 on some older machines. This isn't officially supported, but if you have a tech-savvy relative or friend, it might be worth exploring before buying a new computer.
- **Other Options:** If upgrading isn't right for you, there are alternatives like Linux Mint or ChromeOS Flex that run well on older hardware. These systems are free, secure, and designed to keep things simple — though they do come with a few trade-offs.

As always, we recommend backing up your files before making any changes. If you're unsure what to do, a trusted helper or online guide can make the process smoother. And remember: there's no need to rush. Your computer will still work after October 2025, but a little planning now can help you stay safe and confident in the years ahead.

Bus Pass Eligibility: No Change for Leicestershire

From **1 October 2025**, national rules for older persons' bus passes in England will formally align with the *State Pension Age*. This has prompted some concern—but for Leicestershire residents, it's important to note that **no change is expected**.

Leicestershire has *already* required applicants to be of State Pension Age to qualify for a free bus pass. So, while the national update may affect those in other regions, it simply confirms what's long been standard here.

◇ **Who's affected?**

Members under pension age who are no longer working full-time may still need to wait before applying, unless eligible under disability criteria.

◇ **What's unchanged?**

Free off-peak travel remains available from 9:30am on weekdays and all day on weekends and bank holidays, across England.

◇ **More information:**

You can check eligibility, application details, on the [Leicestershire County Council website](#).

UNCERTAIN OCTOBER

October is a month when nature is uncertain whether to cling on to Summer, or yield to the inevitable approach of Winter. Darkness delays the daylight a little more each day. When it comes, it may seem like Summer is still with us, sun streaming through our curtains, only for us to find a chill in the air that belies the fact. Yet, on other days, an eerie mist hangs low across the fields, hinting at the coming Winter fogs. Then there are those days when confusion reigns and both sun and mist combine to start the morning.

The trees and shrubs can't decide whether to hold on to their leaves or give them up to carpet the ground and replenish the earth. Some leaves cling with quiet resolve, others drift down in spirals, as if rehearsing for a final performance. The hedgerows, once thick with summer's chatter, now rustle with a more contemplative tone. Birds call less frequently, and when they do, it's with a kind of wistful clarity—notes that seem to echo longer in the thinning air.

Across the allotments and gardens, the last of the runner beans hang like forgotten decorations, and the soil begins to settle into its winter posture. Tools are cleaned and stored, not with finality, but with a sense of pause. Compost bins brim with the season's cast-offs—apple peelings, faded blooms, and the remains of summer's ambition. There's a quiet dignity in this retreat, a sense that rest is not failure, but preparation.

Footpaths soften underfoot, cushioned by leaf-fall and damp earth. The countryside takes on a palette of muted richness—ochres, umbers, and the occasional flash of crimson. Even the sky seems to deepen, its blues more solemn, its greys more expressive. On some days, the light slants just so, catching the edges of things—a gatepost, a bicycle wheel, a cat's whiskers—turning them briefly golden.

Indoors, we begin to adapt. Windows are cleaned not for the view, but for the light. Blankets reappear on chairs, and the kettle earns its keep. Books are chosen with more care, and letters—those rare, precious things—are written with a slower hand. The rhythm of the home shifts subtly, leaning into comfort without quite surrendering to hibernation.

October is a month of thresholds. Not the bold arrival of spring, nor the stark retreat of January, but something more nuanced. It is the moment before the frost, the breath before the fire is lit. It asks us to notice—to pause at the gate, to linger at the window, to walk a little slower through the lanes. It reminds us that change need not be abrupt. It can be layered, gentle, and full of grace.

And so we move through it, coat in hand, unsure whether to button up or bask. We watch the light change hour by hour, and find comfort in the rhythm of uncertainty. For in October, nature teaches us that transition is not a loss, but a quiet gathering of what matters most.

POETRY CORNER

October

Poet: Edgar A Guest



Days are gettin' shorter an' the air a keener snap,
Apples now are droppin' into Mother Nature's lap;
The mist at dusk is risin' over valley, marsh an' fen
An' it's just as plain as sunshine, winter's comin' on again.

The turkeys now are struttin' round the old farmhouse once more;
They are done with all their nestin', and their hatchin' days are o'er;
Now the farmer's cuttin' fodder for the silo towerin' high
An' he's frettin' an' complainin' 'cause the corn's a bit too dry.

But the air is mighty peaceful an' the scene is good to see,
An' there's somethin' in October that stirs deep inside o' me;
An' I just can't help believin' in a God above us, when
Everything is ripe for harvest and the frost is back again.

In The Month Of October

Poet: Catherine Pulsifer

In the month of October, a season's tale unfolds,
As nature's palette shifts, vibrant colors behold.
The weather turns cooler, a crispness fills the air,
Leaves cascade like confetti, a dance without a care.

Children's hearts flutter, counting days with glee,
Anticipating Halloween, a night of mystery.
The sun's rays wane, as twilight gently sweeps,
Shorter hours of daylight, as the world slowly sleeps.

October's charm enchants, a magical embrace,
A symphony of change, in this transient space.
With each passing day, a glimpse of nature's art,
October's beauty whispers, etching memories in the heart.



October

By Robert Frost

O hushed October morning mild,
Thy leaves have ripened to the fall;
Tomorrow's wind, if it be wild,
Should waste them all.
The crows above the forest call;
Tomorrow they may form and go.
O hushed October morning mild,
Begin the hours of this day slow.
Make the day seem to us less brief.
Hearts not averse to being beguiled,
Beguile us in the way you know.
Release one leaf at break of day;
At noon release another leaf;
One from our trees, one far away.
Retard the sun with gentle mist;
Enchant the land with amethyst.
Slow, slow!
For the grapes' sake, if they were all,
Whose leaves already are burnt with frost,
Whose clustered fruit must else be lost—
For the grapes' sake along the wall.

And finally.....

Dear Autumn...

Dear Autumn,
I've lost three umbrellas, two gloves,
and my dignity trying to look
graceful in wind.
Any tips?
— *Blown Away in Barkby*

Dear Blown Away,
Try a sturdy hat, a low centre of
gravity, and the acceptance that
squirrels are judging you.
Also, walk like you're carrying a
tray of soup.
Yours,
Autumn (and the squirrels watching from the fence)



Dear Autumn,
I tried to embrace the season. I bought a
pumpkin.
Now it's judging me from the
windowsill.
What do I do?
— *Gourd and Confused in Gaddesby*

Dear Gourd and Confused,
Carve a smile into it.
If it still looks smug, make soup.
Yours,

Autumn (and the squirrel who's already claimed the seeds)

Dear Autumn,
I raked the leaves. The wind
laughed.
I raked again. The wind invited its
friends.
Is this personal?
— *Leafed Out in Leicester*

Dear Leafed Out,
Yes. You raked too early.
The wind prefers a natural look.
Consider it a collaboration.
Yours,
Autumn (and the robin perched on your rake)



Dear Autumn,
I put on my coat. It was too warm.
I took it off. It was too cold.
I carried it. It rained.
Is this a test?
— *Layered and Lost in Lowesby*

Dear Layered and Lost,
Yes. Autumn is a transitional drama.
The coat is not for warmth—it's a
prop.
Carry it with conviction.
Yours,

Autumn (and the Barkby squirrel who's now wearing your scarf)

Editor's note: All correspondence with Autumn is entirely fictional. The Barkby squirrel enclave (not to be confused with a mere scurry) is real and continues its seasonal audits. Clipboards remain in use.

POEM IN AUTUMN

by MAY SARTON

Now over everything the autumn light is thrown
And every line is sharp and every leaf is clear,
Now without density or weight the airy sun
Sits in the flaming boughs, an innocent fire
That shines but does not burn nor wither.
The leaves, light-penetrated, change their essence,
Take on the gold transparence of the weather,
Are touched by death, then by light's holy presence.

So we, first touched by death, were changed in essence,
As if grief grew transparent and turned to airy gold
And we were given days of special radiance,
Light-brimmed, light-shaken, and with love so filled
It seemed the heartbeat of the world was in our blood,
And when we stood together, love was everywhere,
And no exchange was needed, if exchange we could
The blessedness of sunlight poised on air.