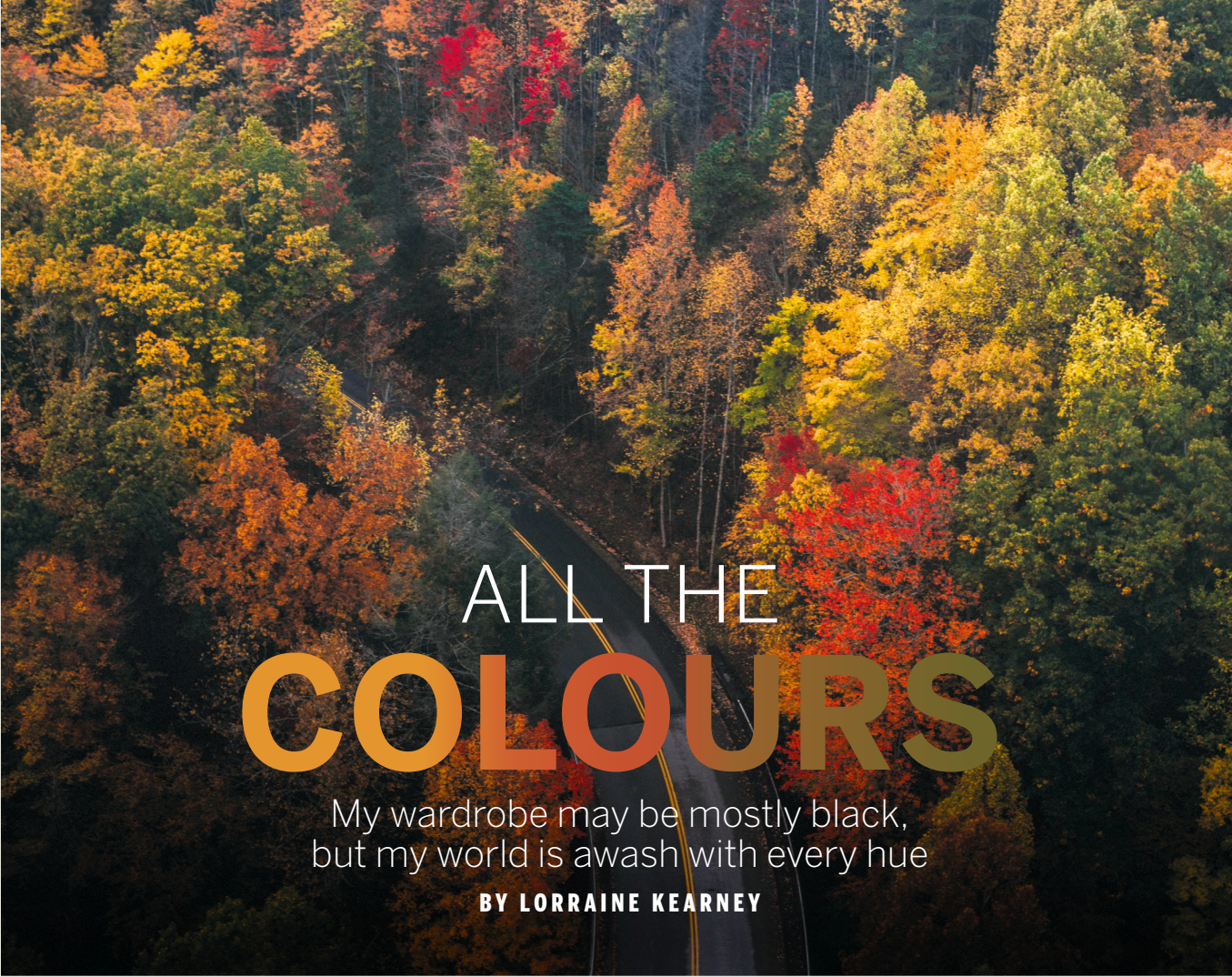




ALL THE COLOURS

My wardrobe may be mostly black,
but my world is awash with every hue

BY LORRAINE KEARNEY

For me, life is all about colour. My old Victorian house is painted aqua, each room inside a different hue. My bedroom is shades of blue, from peacock to sky; the living room is a mad mix of bright orange and turquoise.

It sounds doubtful, but it works. As expected, many visitors of a drabber outlook are shocked, horrified even. Aren't houses supposed to be white, sand, camel, beige? But really, that's a silly idea. Take a walk outside. Do you see a sad, beige world? Not me.

I see so much exciting colour I don't know where to look first. Green and grey and purple mountains, impossibly blue seas, sparkling stars, flowers and plants of wondrous colour that can never be replicated by humans. And then there are the birds and insects. A golden

orb spider can enchant me for hours, with its reds and yellows, spinning its silver web. When I moved into my house in Durban I was visited by a large, bright blue butterfly that happily flapped through the rooms just after moving-in day. It felt to me that I was being welcomed home.

I can spend days quietly watching the glittering malachite sunbirds that flit around my Cape Town garden and sup on the nectar of the orange and yellow *Leonotis leonurus*. And the orange-breasted sunbirds, too. Heavens, even the loathed hadedas are beautiful, with their iridescent purples and pinks shimmering in the golden sunlight.

I recall clear as a bell the first time I saw a crimson-breasted shrike when I was

driving into the scrubby Northern Cape. And a malachite kingfisher with its extraordinary plumage on the banks of the Zambezi.

Flowers are my other love. Yellow clivias, blue plumbagos, orange Cape honeysuckle, delicate pastel hydrangeas, pink and purple hellebores; the list is endless.

It makes spring one of my favourite seasons. Summer has those same qualities, too. Autumn, not so much.

In this corner of the world, autumn is not really a thing. We slide from summer to winter superfast, with just a pit stop in autumn. In a flash the leaves go from green and alive to brown and dead, with nothing more than a passing nod at red and gold. We lose out on a whole world of breathtaking colour.

And that's why I am saving my pennies this year. I have a plan to cruise the Kancamagus Highway through New Hampshire in September. To watch lush green turn to bright orange, gold and deep red. I'll drink spiced lattes and hot cider in New England, where you'll find some of the best autumn foliage.

I'll kayak through coastal Maine and watch the oaks and maples change colour. It's also less crowded in autumn, so one can really savour the spectacular views without interference. In the first fortnight of October, you may find me in the Adirondacks in New York, where there are more than 12 000 km² of red, yellow and orange leaves for your viewing pleasure. It's a bucket list, even if they call it fall.