

Winter Begins

**December lands begin to drowse
In the gathering dusk of the year.
They sip the rain, winter's wine.
Time for another rest is here.**

**Blanket of leaves, grasses and herbs,
Newly fallen, lies soft upon the scape.
Soon from the boughs of trees and shrubs
Winter's ice and snow will drape.**

**While the ground in quiet slumber lies,
Above its quilt a drama's in play.
The struggle to live goes on,
Life's dynamics, night and day.**

**Stalwart trees brave storm winds;
Burdened with ice and snow they heave.
Most will stay, but some will fall,
As "Dust unto dust", some take their leave.**

**A small creature from its nook
Ventures forth on the moonlit snow.
Death swoops down on arching wings.
So an owl to the future might go.**

**From a hill a coyote yelps
A summon to others of its kind.
Come hunt with me before night's end,
Working as one, our prey we must find.**

**A rabbit nibbling bark of sumac,
Or herbs near the edge of a field,
Stays near a hole for quick retreat,
Lest for unwariness his life he'll yield.**

**But nature has provided for the prey
An insurance against species destruction:
Breed often through most of the year,
The force of rampant reproduction.**

**For the fury of winter storms
The robust land is a stage
Lives will end and lives will begin
A drama continuing age to age.**

**The soil lies quiet; its breath is still.
But life is there waiting to awaken
Birth and death the beats of time
The tempo enduring, unshaken.**

Gene W. Wood

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