

The Trees

There once was a time, claimed Celtic bards,
When all trees forever remained green.
From the darkest forests to common yards,
And all of the gardens in between.

Even in the harshest ice and snow,
Not one single leaf turned brown,
To flutter upon the winds that blow
And fall to its death upon the ground.

In those days, every tree had a soul
And waved their limbs proudly in the air.
In every meadow, pasture, and knoll
Not a single tree stood alone was bare.

Late one September, when it becomes cold,
A flock of redwings halted their flight
To rest on branches so lofty and old,
Before their migration into the night.

On the next morning, as the sun arose,
One such redwing remained behind.
With a broken wing, it was indisposed
To find shelter among the oaks and pine.

Leaping and fluttering from tree to tree,
Seeking shelter from the rain and cold,
None of the wood gave sanctuary
To permit this wounded bird to take hold.

The birch and the oak swayed in the wind
Taking no heed of the bird's request.
Even the sad willow kept it pinned
From using her mournful twigs for a nest.

Searching from below and looking high,
The bird discovered a spruce, fir, and pine.
She hopped and flapped up into the sky,
Branch by branch along the tree line.

At last, the bird reached the tallest spruce
Which warmly received her just in time.
The scotch pine offered its needles for use
To shelter the redwing in its natural twine.

The fir tree hid her from a great height
Shielding her from the morning sun's rays.
Even the juniper, with its berries now ripe,
Fed the bird until it would see better days.

For the trees that showed no mercy or aid,
Whenever the winds howl at the first frost,
The green in their leaves will begin to fade
And fall down to the ground, forever lost.