

LIFE, LOVE, AND DEATH NEAR THE TETONS

Winter Love Note

I tromped a snowshoe love note in a mountain meadow.

The note, as imperfect as I am, connected from no beginning to no end
and crossed a rabbit's trail.

It will melt and run by our house in the river that connects us to these mountains.

The molecules will separate, but you'll notice them bumping over the trout.
And in a waterfall, you may hear what I made the snowshoes say.

A Rare Congregational Member

I like an aspen grove below pine line
on the morning side of a small mountain
where wild clematis seeks the sun early
then folds purple blossom in solemn prayer.

Eyes of the forest, lost-limb quake scars,
witness to God these wildflower sacraments--
and that I ate and drank and worshiped there.

Unknown Priest

I followed a Western-wood peewee
to where peace and liveliness coincide.
A corner where periwinkle grows to hide
and my friend can eat in spring greenery.

His referee-whistle shrill stopped me short:

"It's not secret, but sacred," he explained.
With kind heart, he invited me along--
in reverence we escaped the world's throng
and he ordained me.

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Who Called the Owl's Name

The gale must have pressed her into the electric lines;
She fell on the front grass.

Now, two feet deep looking for the sky,
the snowy owl lies next to our golden retriever.
It seemed without honor to put the carcass in communal trash
though the garbage truck was coming down the block
and we could soon forget.

Instead, we determined a sacred owl burial.
Now the yard seems wiser,
and so are we.

Autumn Dance Championships

Of all the colored slices that danced from limb to earth
a weeping willow leaf won grand champion.

Springing from tree, the narrow tumbler went prone
and rolled like an old-time mower blade
chopping the air
beatboxing the fastest spin Indian summer had ever judged,
gliding over warm and cool currents
until a mile of October sky had been clipped.