Energy

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A stillborn electricity hung in the pressured grey skey; it found its expression visually in the radiance of the bright orange leaves. The pressure system imbued the air with a crisp stillness that belied the unease it carved in Stanley’s breast. His heart thumped in skippy unison with his long strides as he ran past the fence that his father had built dissipated into the skyline. The anticipation of the day before had been balmy, as the hurricanes battering the southern edges of the continent had swept warm air to up the coast to the northern reaches of the landmass. A dewy mist obscured periodic gesticulations of sun; the warmth had flooded Stanley with eerie pangs of summer-lost. He had momentarily escaped the angst brought on by the pressure system; the system pounded tenderly with the obscurant haze of the grey sky for prominence in the skyline. The anticipation of survival gripping Stanley blew the leaves around him, and ruffled his green wool coat as he strode determinately westward. A dull orange sun melted into the tops of the trees ahead of him, struggling to survive winter. His cheeks glowed warmly, pressing up from his jowls, with the excited joy of fulfilling the challenge ahead.

The challenge confined itself to the realm of labor—the harvest needed to be reaped; the early spring crop needed to be sewed, but not before the soil of the fallow quadrant had been turned over; a percentage of the late autumn harvest needed to be bundled for exchange and carefully discharged on the market; another percentage of the harvest needed to be treated and packaged for storage and later consumption in the cold months; the four trees struck dead by lightning amidst that August's downpours needed to be felled and cut into firewood; his finances had to be calculated so that, in relation to the cost of his children's school tuition, he would know how much to charge for his grain on the market.

The sense of survival gripping Stanley blurred the leaves falling from the trees about him. His eyes blurred with the heartfelt intensity of the clarity with which the coming coldsnap propelled his attention unavoidably towards care for all the necessities required to survive winter. His cheeks glowed with the excitement of fulfilling the challenge ahead.

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POETRY

The Optimist

Brisk breezes expel late summer's oppressive air—
God's change of spirit, I suppose. The days
darken much sooner and lightened leaves of trees
drift downward until they're met by fallen friends.

Bare birch branches reveal a single sparrow
unfazed by the onset of winter's chill—his eyes
fixed on the migrant flocks flying toward the light,
chasing the comfort of God's eternal warmth.

No, not the sparrow, though. For he knows where
to find the Lord's light even when it does not shine.

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Old Pine

She stared at a pine tree long ago and heard
him whisper tales of winter—a story that
no one else was awake to see. The burdened boughs
bent down to catch her ear—not able to hold
the load that weighed on his hardened heart for years.

He remembered those who passed him by—the hunters
the hunted—leaving footprints in the frost
that formed the night before. The sun would rise
and erase the trace of life on brittle ground,
while wind broke the silence of the vacant woods.

Surrounded by those not fit to last, he finished
his tale of winters past. The snow collapsed
from atop the tree and needles fell amid
the icy dust. The branches lifted—free—
an exhale of relief that faded into stillness.

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