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Poem

Ann Louise Bowman

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FOUR POEMS

ALIEN

He saw the wind diffuse soft dust,
 Subduing color to its glintless beige;
 He watched the creek edge through the crust
 Of cracked gray earth which was its winter bed;
 He touched stalks brittle with the drouth,
 And, propped against an unkempt, barren tree,
 Savoured the hinting salt upon his mouth,
 Heard sea, spread thin on sand, reclaimed by sea.

SUNDAY

He gave no reasons for the hours he spent
 Alone but seated where his hand could reach
 To rest on mine. The message which I meant
 For him he gave to me; all words must slow
 That still, compassionate tongue our hands could speak—
 For though our minds held tumult, yet his touch
 Gave comfort which I had not dared to seek,
 And for the peace I took he gave me thanks.

TO A DISCHARGED SOLDIER

Come! The sunshine seeks you, calls you back.
 You neither won nor lost—the game goes on.
 Must you, possessor of the highest stakes,
 In shame yet say, "They were not fairly won,
 I took the prize before the play was out"?
 It is not so. You but reclaimed your own.

POEM

By fantasy half caught
 Our minds are slow
 To turn to staid thought.

Linked are thy heart and mine:
Yet should we know
Release our wills assign?

Allegiance when denied
Will merely grow:
Thus is restraint defied.

ANN LOUISE BOWMAN

WOLVES ON THE EARTH

Now for an autumn when wolves run hourly
out of the forest, out of the hollows:
a wolf from the shade comes forth with darkness
under his belly, the lord of sorrow.

The slow trees wait in the smoking valleys
dressed for death; their roots remember
strange winter swords thrust in among them,
cold and stained with the earth's surrender.

The men of the earth put off their summer,
their ripeness and their swelling laughter;
they anger in their laden valleys,
and the wolves run out for the start of slaughter.

Almost God they were at the harvest:
juices ran on their hands, the morning
stored their hearts, and their feet trod under
tenderly the warm seeds falling.

Into the wilderness, into the winter,
stripped for death the changelings hurtle.
Split them a grave in the shaven acre,
cut them a sign on the earth in autumn.

ROSAMUND DARGAN THOMSON