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Spider in the Snow

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Spider in the Snow

Scarlet Mebane

I saw a spider in the snow,
A pinprick in the white;
A spindly-legged ink drop seed
Of nature's final fight.

With one leg gone, he struggled on,
Alone and tethered none,
While elements of bitter cold
And ice, converged as one,

Worked there to snuff his dimming light,
As o'er the snow he trekked,
A rugged crystal path in wait
To be of death, bespeck'd.

But on he traveled, stiff and worn
Like twig stuck in the snow,
With shaking limbs, along he pressed
Against his bitter foe.

I watched his journey, safe above
Upon my two warm feet,
By chance I should run into him,
By luck our fates should meet;

And yet I knew, I'd pass him by,
Without a hand of aid,
For of his spindly legs, though weak,
I lingered still afraid.

I feared to place him in my hood,
Or in my pocket lined,
For then he might regain his strength
And crawl out unconfined;

Creep in my coat and up my sleeve—
This I could not abide!
So with a pitying look, I stared,
And then would onward glide,

Without so much as terse goodbye
My guilt wore off ere long,
To've left the spider in the snow

To sing his twilight song:

“A god has scorned me from the sky,
And fled my final day;
So when I take my dying breath,
I’ll keep my prayers at bay.”