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The Sky Upon Us James A. Zoller

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James A. Zoller

THE SKY UPON US

(for Stefan, 8)

We don't think like this when the sky is upon us, snow thick in the air from clouds almost within reach. Then, we think of the falling, snow riding the wind over and through the trees, blinding us, or snow drifting from the sky in deep deep quiet as if snowfall had meaning if only we could stop, if only we could hear those minutely crashing forms.

But this morning the snow is on the ground and the sky grows deeper blue by the minute and the sun, dropping black shadows from tree and hill, strikes brilliantly across the snowscape.

We blink and haul our tube to the top of the hill, blink at the bright sun on the single packed trail to the bottom, sit one atop the other on the tube, slide quickly in the hard groove.

Together we sail over the ice, over bumps and pits, gain speed as any falling object, learn gravity, minutely aware of distance time inertia, mouths open with astonishment, voices torn out and lost to the wind, sail through the run, sail into deep snow beyond, plowing, gliding, spraying cold powder about until the tube stops and we fly apart, tumble, collide.

How different this all is: this cold horizontal world, the bite of cold snow on our faces, sky like deep immaculate water, the shocks our bodies absorb and mine remembers. I roll myself over, struggle against soft snow to gain my feet; the sky blazes the snow dazzles, you scamper toward the steep path just as laughter and shouts collide in my ears and lungs, catching up.