

“Sonic Blanket”

Winter night, cloud cover
low pressure, no light

but the blanket is there
hovering
stitched with vapor,
snow and sound,

the wheel of the year
slowly turning,
Winter Maker Moon
walking the sky.

Come closer,
it’s storytelling season

in the cold and dark
where the rivers meet,
confluence of bodies, breath and wind,

the owl in the pine grove
below the stone tower
reporting our loneliness,

pricking her ear feathers, attuned
to the scratching
of mammals in snow.

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I want to sleep like the dog sleeps,
free from fear
and the illusion of separateness.

I can’t touch you
or hold you
but we can walk together
under the blanket,

we can lay down together
six feet apart

in the same field.
We can sing the same song
under the blanket—

song of sheltering,
song of yearning,
counting the weeks,
counting the moons.

How many words for snow and sleet?
How many nights of freezing rain?
How much space to keep between us?

Remember sunlight, remember
hugging, remember the soil
deep beneath the snowpack.

Listen for the thaw,
the veins of spring running,
cold sap flowing,

buckets slopping over, peepers
chorusing in swamps and ponds.

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The moon waxes,
the moon wanes,
the earth softens,
we can touch again.

We bend down to the beds
and nest the first seeds,
trees unfurling, birds returning,

long days arcing to the zenith
at the still point of summer twilight.

Listen for the animal
movements in the forest,
ditches and fields teeming green.

The loon opens her throat
and wails into the heat wave,

the canopy shivers
and whispers lush dreams.

Even in darkness
there’s the light of memory—
fruit ripens and drops,
the moon waxes and wanes.

Things fall apart
and come together
then fall apart again.

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Hard frost—
the trees turn crimson, letting go
everything they no longer need.

Our dreams rustle and gust
and spiral beneath the blanket.

The constellations wheel by.

We’re sliding down
the curve of the season
in the strange quiet when the crickets cease.

I want to sleep like the dog sleeps,
free from shame
and the ache of isolation.

Light the fires,
sing a lullaby,
slip with me under the blanket,

a quilt of snow feathers
perpetually falling,
comforter of children, sleepers and mourners—

you are not alone,
you are not invisible,
you are nestled deep
in the cradle of winter,

you are rocked in the radio waves
emanating from the ether,
a humming quilt

slung over our town
in the confluence of cold
where the rivers meet.

We are hearing
without seeing,
we are receiving,

we are listening to messages
from the closest stars

voices from the other world
calling us to continue.

Sit with me now under the blanket,
the long night stitched
with sparks and wind,

open your ears
and receive the vibration.

It is yours.
It is ours.
It is here.

- Diana Whitney, 2021