

Nature's Ordinary

Though the sky is low and gray, the afternoon waning
The fresh falling snow lures me out.
The dog is my companion, and together we tromp across the winter fields
And through a woodlot seldom visited.

At the edge of the wood
Where a ragged stonewall marks the boundary of an equally ragged field
I pause at the sound of a raven.
It is distant, but raspy and clear
Calling from somewhere up above the forested slope.

I linger for a moment in this nondescript parcel of retired farmland
And I take in the wonder of nature's ordinary

Snow falls heavy and wet out of a soft hanging mist.
The raven calls yet again, his throaty cough suspended within it.
Naked birches, ashes and maples fade away like stark, withered soldiers,
Countless and beautiful in their spare winter readiness.

The dog stops her roaming and sits still by my side
Wondering why here, why this pause.
I stand still, listening to the gentle sputter of snow falling.
And I marvel at the unadorned and staggering beauty that plays out around me.

Were I not there, at that moment
To witness such simple splendor
That beauty would play out and be no less splendid.
I am but the fortunate passerby, glimpsing a precious fragment
Of a story that plays out every day, every season, in that woodlot.
Whether or not I am fortunate enough to be present.
To notice.

And I wonder
Was I wise enough to linger and appreciate your beauty, your splendor
Your gifts, unasked for and unearned
That played out every day, every season
Whether or not I, or anyone else, was fortunate enough to be present?
To notice.