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Virgina Woods

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Virginia Woods*
(On hearing an American praise a Dictator)

By KATHERINE GARRISON CHAPIN

The oak is flamed to darker red.
The ash and maple dry in the frost,
drop twisted leaves in the mountain grass.

Autumn, too swiftly come, has withered
proud leaf to press a prouder brow.
Winter will strip the classic bough
and send dry seeds to a deep bed.

Winter will not defame the dead.

It is not winter, stalking lost
above these hills, it is not frost
that robs the virtue from this earth.

The searing that gives the lie
to you, Virginia earth, to you
wide-browed who walked among these trees,
framing our liberties,—

Shrivels the land with bleaker dearth
than cold and blackens on this sky
a darker shame.

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