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Wolves on the Earth

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Linked are thy heart and mine:
 Yet should we know
 Release our wills assign?

Allegiance when denied
 Will merely grow:
 Thus is restraint defied.

ANN LOUISE BOWMAN

WOLVES ON THE EARTH

Now for an autumn when wolves run hourly
 out of the forest, out of the hollows:
 a wolf from the shade comes forth with darkness
 under his belly, the lord of sorrow.

The slow trees wait in the smoking valleys
 dressed for death; their roots remember
 strange winter swords thrust in among them,
 cold and stained with the earth's surrender.

The men of the earth put off their summer,
 their ripeness and their swelling laughter;
 they anger in their laden valleys,
 and the wolves run out for the start of slaughter.

Almost God they were at the harvest:
 juices ran on their hands, the morning
 stored their hearts, and their feet trod under
 tenderly the warm seeds falling.

Into the wilderness, into the winter,
 stripped for death the changelings hurtle.
 Split them a grave in the shaven acre,
 cut them a sign on the earth in autumn.

ROSAMUND DARGAN THOMSON