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Vilas Winter

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CLIFFORD WOOD

VILAS WINTER

Such sudden cold gives back the land its own
Integrity—a simple fact of stone.

The brevity of summer seems a lie,
An opulence arranged to falsify

The other hints that are here, but are not seen
In other seasons: here in the cold green

Shapes of pike, in the official words
That next year we may expect fewer birds;

In the well-known habits of the bears, and in
The spring ice-shove on the lakes: a thin

Reflection of a distant glacial snow
Still pressing downward—patient, slow—

Or an iceberg that obscures its old intent
By separating from its continent.

So, too, this parent rock, the Cambrian shield,
Where the planet sticks out through a shallow field

Allowing the streams to deepen its bright scars,
Proclaims no kinship with the cooling stars.

The hunter goes home early, may forget
His own and his land's great tendency, but let

Him come in winter; he sees it then
Such as it was and will be again.