

## Midwinter

The Cheshire Cat has two faces  
looking forwards and backwards.  
Grinning mischievously in front,  
she laughs us hysterically into stitches.  
Crying desperately behind us,  
she is hopeful that tender shoots  
will peek up through the snow,  
Gasping for spring air.

Under the ice,  
the fish are confused,  
slowly swimming as opposites.  
Going upstream and down  
following the tails in front,  
they pass the others by.

Below frozen ground are  
hints of new beginnings,  
Anticipations of new life,  
quiet scratchings of contemplation  
needed for growth.  
Fragile buds are nestled asleep,  
waiting in their pods.

The space between the naked oaks  
is mysterious in its openness and confinement.

Yesterday, the spaces were starkly desolate.  
God was elsewhere tending to the evergreens,  
leaving me alone to bleakly brood  
on whether spring will ever emerge,  
whether I will be one of the many acorns  
soon consumed by worms on rocky ground.

Yet today, the forest is fully alive in its emptiness,  
warmed by a covering blanket of fresh snow,  
Its brilliance overflowing my senses and soul  
with comforting voices of wisdom and assurance.  
And I know the way home.

The Cheshire Cat lurks in the shadows,  
her two faces haunting my heart.