

# Wintergreen



## Sean Arthur Joyce

*For Anne, on your 50th 'year to heaven', November 23, 2007*

In the winter kingdom, leaves crackle  
underfoot, and we walk the thin  
margin between worlds. Ponds birth  
diamonds of ice and the wind slaps our faces  
as if to say, *"Do I have your attention now?"*

And you. Even through the fog  
casting its drowse over our eyes,  
you could see summer's immortal tracery  
of green veins and shade, and all  
the little lives, muttering inside  
fur and feather.

You found yourself newly alive  
in the bliss light of seashore in France—  
Mother Wren even at age four,  
Sophie safely inside your wing  
and grinning together to beat  
the heavenly band.

When did summer become  
a fragile daydream on the craggy,  
monstrous back of winter?  
What bitter fairy cast this pall  
over the Earth? What chant  
or prayer can raise these dead to life?

We spend a lifetime rising to the surface,  
whales blue with sleep, only to slide  
back into it at the end. Meanwhile  
it is what we do that makes us who we are,  
steers us through the ice-gale  
'til stars line up again

and spring ushers in a new era  
of light. Simple kindness  
kindles the spirit bowl with white gold—  
little old ladies in print dresses  
prim among the teacups and mirror calm

as cottage country lakes. A sister's  
bliss goofy grin—big enough  
to take in all the strays  
and busted-wing robins in the world.

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