

MAR 16 1978

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● The Anniversary. It snowed today, starting early. A Christmas kind of snow in the month of March. By mid-morning, the words no longer came. The writing freezing shut like the creeks outside. I built the fire up, swept the cabin clean, put a pot of chili on, melted pans of snow for tea.

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A year ago, the Old Man was still alive in that terrible hospital bed, shrunken, shrivelled, all the light leaving him like a dying fire that has nowhere to go because there is nothing left to burn. In that bed, a year ago, that small body was my father. My God. My God. Where did the rest of him go?

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It came to me then that some of him had gone into me. I even looked in the mirror seeing parts of him there for the first time. That is

your nose, I said out loud. Damn, that is really your nose. The whole day wound up going that way. Funny. Not really lazy. Funny day.

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Snowing. Chili cooking. I did not do much. Straightened up my little hutch. Dried out some socks and the shoe pacs. Got some gear organized. Just sort of hung out with the Old Man. I even lit a candle for him but it wasn't sad or anything. The candle was a green bayberry. It made everything smell like Christmas.

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● The Winter Kill. The snow was melting good today and the crows are coming to clean our woods. Beneath their wings, a littered world waits. The snowfield like some frozen surf releases dead things to the sun. Little bodies and bits of fur, dead these fifty days and more.

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The Old French called it Butte des Mort.

Hill of the Dead. We mourn them too.

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● The Leopold Pines. Aldo, Aldo. These trees are still called after you. They are the last, these aging few. There was some talk of a freeway coming through. Otherwise, we shovel the same old load. There are broken bottles along the road and the runover body of a toad. And there's talk they cracked the genetic code.

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● The First Goose Flight North. Finally, finally!

God go with you, strong wings.

Old Wind, hear out these words.

The brave birds are my brothers and sisters. Since I last saw them, I have learned one thing after all.

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*If the birds believed
they could not fly
then the birds
would fall.*