

In the stand of birch, the north wind sniffs  
Not growling but prowling like a hunting dog  
Testing this one, touching that –  
Stalking like a mountain cat.  
Gliding over forgotten logs  
Sliding over forsaken bogs  
In his mouth, the breath of death  
In his eyes, the chill of death  
And yet  
There are those alive who will survive his touch.  
Partridge and quail  
Pipers and rail  
Birds and animals and fish and such  
Trees and plants  
Even ants  
And if it is not asking too much  
Hopefully, Man.

-George Vukelich

\* This poem appeared in Wisconsin Tales and Trails, Autumn 1967.