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Jon Remmerde
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Gather the Young At Dusk

The thermometer hits six
on its way to below oh.
I go to gather the younger ones
lest night in full darkness
finds us scattered.

Warm as wild things in winter fur
guests and offspring find their own ways
back to the warm house
but oh, while looking for them,
I saw the stream run black into winter,
giant granite rocks majestic at dusk,
against colors frozen in the western sky.
Winter wind asked secret questions
and the lake now is ice.
Patterns of cracks across the surface
divide the ice into cold seasons
and draw a map of countries
I've never visited
but must, some day soon.

Deeply cold isolation
and silence soaks into me
as I stand braced against abrupt bluff.
Dark descends from the mountain sky.
New wind rises and suggests I move.
I travel the long dirt road from isolation
back to where laughter
and tales of the day's adventures
light our warm house
against winter night.