

Gwydion's Loss of Llew

When I came to the house
You were gone from the hall;
Your cup and knife-handle were cold to touch.
The leaf-red fire warmed no one's hands,
No harpstring trembled of your passing.
The bowstring was long lax.
No one sang in the house,
And when I set my ears into me wind of the hall,
All I could hear was,
I am cold . . . I am cold . . .
It is October.

In the hills it was the same.
I know you loved them,
The crisp, clear trees,
Each with its own colour,
Its own pattern twisted in the branches.
You have not seen them this year;
Though they are each as tall and straight as you,
Their numbers as great as your soul,
Yet you are not among them.

The wind tangles the net of branches
That holds it and cannot hold it,
The wind tangles the web
Of colour stroked with black,
Lashing it across the sky.
My feet catch on ground-fruit,
Roots, dropped branches, brittle leaves.
If you are up there among the leaves
I cannot felt
If you have become the many
If you are the one—

Then the wind blows the net open
And all I see is sky.
Oh, Llew, be not gone from me!
I- would renounce them,
Wind, leaf, and tree
If I could find you
In a place where nothing grows.

—Ellen Kushner