



These Woods

These woods are battered like me,
by storms, disease, and gravity.
I walk them sadly
in the autumn of my years.

These woods I came to years ago,
a man of youth, and strength, and dreams.
I trimmed, I felled, I measured.
An airy cathedral of branch and leaf
emerged from disorder
and darkness.

Now, all lies in ruin.

The soft Sistine light, banished.

Time and weather have had their days.
The crown is gone,
the great trunks are shattered,
and the forest floor is a littered heap
of the broken limbs
of old masters.

The sun now peers
like a petulant child,
through the ruin
of my leaf-painted Leonardo,
calm after a tantrum,
curious of the damage done.

But is nature ever ruined?

Now I plant a seedling
I'll never live to see
become a stately old tree,
and the only ruin on the land
is me.

DAVID W. RICKER
Orford, NH



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