



**7th ANNUAL
POEM
TOWN
BRADFORD**

Where Is the Rock?

November, 2023

Umber oak and sailcloth beech leaves
shine splendidly as last month's flaring
maple, poplar, and especially sumac.
Full moon tonight, and through the clearing

we'll look cross-river to the looming White Mountains,
plain as day, as the idiom goes.
All this should prompt me to hymn, not dirge.
It should just be a matter of making it so.

Amid violence and vitriol, I need a rock,
something solid to cling and see myself through.
I crave it, because what I observe
are shadows and gore and awful news.

Well, no. Quite clearly I see other things.
Outside, on this frosty November day,
late clusters of crabapples blazing despite
two porcupines' nightly pruning raids.

Even the stones along our lane
will catch a moony glow tonight.
They'll flash like minnows in a still pool of water.
I'm a lucky man. I love my wife

beyond words, and siblings, children, grandchildren.
Blessedly, my brother's alive
after his recent heart operation.
Now a cow's valve flaps inside.

Lord in heaven, I should bake a cake!
Let us now praise modern medicine.
A cow was killed to provide a valve.
It feels so difficult to envision.

Halleluiah. Halleluiah- and yet
accounts from Palestine today
infused the very mulch of our woods.
North Africa- not so far away.

I consider beauty as I fix my fat lunch.
I've spent little time with the downright atrocious.
So I plead guilty, expect no appeal.
I should simply cancel all I just spoke for.

At least that's how I can feel.

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