

Anne Britting Oleson – Two Poems

Dawn, 17 Below

The frozen breath of winter's air
has crystallized along the bare black branches.

You see this as you drive through
some stylized black-and-white photo:

January, Stetson Pond.

It's the between-hour,
just before dawn, the clear day after
the day of the snowstorm.

Nothing moves save you
in your small black car, plowing
into the stark wooded landscape
as though into a perspective drawing.

The packed white snow
beneath your wheels muffles
even the sound of tires.

Somehow the deadening of sight
and sound erases all sense
of motion: you're trapped, here
in the forest, in winter,
and everything is still, silent,
until suddenly, disturbed,
a flock of black-capped chickadees
bursts upward from the white bank
before falling, like ashes, to land again.

How She Died

In the Moon of the Popping Trees
the bitterness rose in her throat
and the miasma filled the narrowing paths
where she tried to walk.

In the Time of Burgeoning Hope
the sunlight soured until she spat,
trying to rid her mouth
of the taste of rising bile.

Things meant to come right
were poisoned by the cold rains;
things meant to stand tall were stooped
under disappointment's weight.

In the Days of Lengthening Shadows,
she lay down long before sunset,
her bones weary, her eyes dim,
her heart too tired to keep up its march.

Anne Britting Oleson has been published widely on four continents. She earned her MFA at the Stonecoast program of USM. She has published a novel, *The Book of the Mandolin Player* (B Ink Publishing, 2016), and two poetry chapbooks, *The Church of St. Materiana* (2007) and *The Beauty of It* (2010). A third chapbook, *Counting the Days*, is forthcoming from Pink Girl Ink, and a second novel, *Dovecote*, will make its appearance from B Ink in September.