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Spring Scents in January

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Rocking in my winter chair, squinting through smoke rings, with red cobwebbed eyes, at the black jade idol dangling from the obliquely dim mystic lamp—too dim to read.

A pre-dawn fog, winter breath from the unseen mouth of a premature spring wind, stretches out above the frost-thickened sleeping suburbs, nearly quenching the moonlit stream, allowing it only to mist through my window—still too dim.

Deciding whether to sleep or maintain till the sun steps straight in to disperse the fog: when it matters little to read or be read, and it's out for the country, where the frost is reduced to white crystal shadows of bushes and trees absorbing the light; where homemade dogs can still at least act like dogs, and you can’t help but notice, while the roads are still gravel, that everything is warming up for anyone who knows the scents to smell.