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"The wood is cut in lusty, brown shreds"

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The wood is cut in lusty, brown shreds,
the harvest is over, and snow spits
at a featureless sky.

The hunters drag their catch
across a naked field, and dogs
that once preyed in fury,
now lie at the nape of a fire.

In the silence of fields,
the leaves gather themselves
for a last, solemn dance, before the nights linger
on the fringes of a desolate earth.

It is time for the flurry of hands,
the ancient savor of meat,
the curve of shoulders,
and the glowing, orb of bellies.

The hunter removes the layers of cloth,
the layers of field, the layers of wind,
the layers of time,
and remembers the sweet taste of flesh.

Wendy S. Neidlinger