

## Seed Keeper

She walks through dreams as winter lies around us  
Singing the fires to soft slumber beneath smoke  
She walks through air above the dreamers  
She walks between sleep and frozen mists of morning

The fields are gleaned of all harvest  
The wood pile offers promise of warmth through winter  
Early risers adjourn seeking game in the beckoning forest  
In the clearing women stand in pre-dawn to offer prayers

One lodge remains silent in the early chill  
The old man has been rising later than usual this winter  
A few women walk past with arms of wood  
Their chatter is a little more insistent than usual

Soon the village will sound the news  
Another seed keeper has taken the journey  
The many years of constant attention to the seed jars  
The memory renowned for stories shared each winter

His was always the first choice each harvest  
He selected the best seeds to save for the coming year  
The past few years his gait slowed and he taught his son  
The village depended upon his effort at saving the seeds

Each clay jar filled and stored with loving care  
The children would visit him for a special treat  
He loved to mix dried berries and deer jerky for them  
He would tell them stories as they sat and chewed

His loving gaze had deepened with age  
In recent weeks he seemed to linger a little longer  
As he visited the resting place of the ancestors  
A fresh stone placed in memory of his wife

Smoke filled the openings of each lodge but his  
As the light of dawn arrived in silver morning air  
The other old men started making him a journey bundle  
As the owl called out a blessing across the hills

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