Question Asked of An Autumn Wind

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THIS is a night! Wind, high and cold and sweet in the pine branches. Wide swept heavens, clear of clouds except for a few far-flung banners in the west. Stars swinging through space, infinitely far away, and glittering frostily.

A night for singing—but your voice is hushed. A night for dancing—but you walk softly. A night for rejoicing—but you stand in awe.

Dark pine trees toss branches thick with clustered needles toward the stars. And naked elms creak and sway, and rattle leaves dried on the twigs, the feeble clapping of withered hands.

Why, wind, are you so joyous when the year is dying—when the trees stand naked, and lonely in their nakedness—when the sky is high and very far away, and even the stars look strangely at each other?

Why do you dare to fling my hair out streaming behind me, and sweep your roughly caressing fingers across my face?

Why do you toss high the naked branches, and why sing high and cold and sweet in the pine tops when all the world stands silent?

Life can ebb in a night. Silent shall be the branches—empty the nests—dried and colorless the leaves.

And yet, you sing.

O, wind, where is your surety of returning joy?