

Seasons in the North: A Play in Verse

Dramatis Personae

Gertie: A small girl

Gertrude: A lovely woman in her prime (Oblivious to all but Collin in Scenes 1 and 2)

Gert: A wise old woman who laughs

Collie: A small boy

Collin: A strong man in his prime (Oblivious to all but Gertrude in Scenes 1 and 2)

Col: A funny old man who cries (Appears only as a voice in Scene 4)

Scene 1: Spring

(Scene is a wooded garden)

(Sound of wind, birds twittering, crashing brush. Lights up with Gertrude and Collin down center. Gertie, Gert, Collie well upstage center with even spacing)

Gertie: A puff of cold; there's still a puff of cold wind, (Col enters from audience, passes between Gertrude and Collin without them noticing, goes to Gertie, kisses her hand and takes his place with the other three upstage) but my sunny is back.

Col: Here I am again, little girl.

Gert: Here you are. Ha.

Col: So lovely: Spring.

Collie: Do you see the sun coming up like a baseball on fire?

Gertie: Here you are. There's still a puff of cold wind, though.

Gert: It's a reminder not to get too snappy with your warm morning, your sunny coming back. Ha!

Not too snappy, sure that the day's forever. Not too sure...not too sure...

Col: (Turning to Gertrude and Collin) Listen. I like to listen to them...missing it all.

(Collin and Gertrude are unaware of the others)

Gertrude: Feel that chill. Feel that chill. It's May. It's May...good god!

Collin: That chill is why we live here.
That fresh, open bite that holds us here
reminds us that there's work and love to do.

Gertrude: Reminds you. Reminds you. I've got better things to do than freeze when I should be warming.
It's May. It's May!

Collin: It's May and the bears are awake
panting out their sleep, breathing in what's coming.

Gertrude: It's always bears! There are birds too
freezing to the maple branches, poor things
little wrens, crazy nuthatches no bigger than my fist.

Collin: The water's unlocked; the deer are moving,
the ducks are back...and eagles...loons.

Gertrude: It could be warmer...

Collin: It could be colder too and has been!
23 inches of snow that year...
May 11.

Gert: I remember that! Ha!

Col: A cold Spring surprised us.
Chilled us.
(Smiles) But we loved warm.

Gert: We loved hot, ha!

Col: Crazy old woman (lights brighten)...look at the new sun.

Gert: Sad old man, feel the day grow.

Gertie: My little puff is gone. My little wind.
I like that little cold that comes
in the dark just before the light.

Collie: Bam! The sun skyrockets into day.
I'm gonna run along the shore and chase the fish,
now that the ice is gone.

Gertie: Doggies do that...I've seen'em!

Collie: Yeah!

Gertie: Silly doggies!

Collie: Yeah. I'm a silly doggy, woof!

Gertrude: Oh good god but life is going.

Gert: Good.

Gertrude: Oh but life is going...

Col: Into summer, into fall...hmm...winter.

Collin: We've got Spring.
Let's hold cold Spring.

Gertrude: You can't, you know...

Gert: I tried to hold Spring once.
A warm Spring. I burned my hands, ha!

Col: Nobody clings to Winter.
Now Spring...

Collie and Gertie: Long Saturdays at the lake...

Gertrude: The birds are back, not just bears.
The birds are hatching out.

Collin: The bear out of his den...hungry as hell.

Col, Gert, Collie, Gertie: Feel the wind is swirling.

Col: The cold air is making the world new.
Up North. Superior awakens.

Gertie: All the little lakes wink.
All the little lakes with pine and birch and oak and beech,
hemlock all around.

Gertrude: I can't see my way through it.

Collin: Stop planning...

Col: Those dead leaves will dry and drift
then replant themselves
into soil to be maple
birch, oak, pine
hemlock again
along that old shore.

Gert: That old shore, ha! We made love there.

Col: Yes we did...I remember.

Gert: We made a lot of happy. Don't be sad.

Gertrude: Stop planning and you stop living.

Collin: (Embraces her) Stop planning and you start (kisses her.)

Gertrude, Gert, Gertie: Oh you!

Col, Collie: Look at that sun.

Gert: Time was, ha!

Col: I loved that time.

Collie: Sun's up, sun's up! The beach is wet!
Time to splash!

Col: Time to splash...

Gertrude: Well...

Collin: Ya, there's work. I sp'ose...

Gert: "I sp'ose." Men always,
big north men, slapping their thighs
knocking back their coffee and beer, ha!

Col, Collie: I sp'ose...

Collin: I sp'ose there is work
down by the water.

Col: Big fish in that lake.

Collie: Big fish just waking up...

Gertie: They don't sleep! They don't!

Gert: Just swim around all moony eyed
bubbles, ha!

Collie: Out their fish lips! (makes fish face) Big bass jumping !

Col: Cold, cold water. Ice that was
only days ago.
Changes, lots of changes...changes...changes...

Gertrude: (over Col's last line) Changes. And this is
this is where it starts.

Collie: Spring.

Col: Spring.

Collin: I'll get my shovel...
I'll get my shovel and...

Gertrude: I'll watch that you don't dig up the bulbs.

Gert: Spring.

Gertie: Spring. It's Spring.

Collin and Gertrude: Spring.

Collie and Gertie: I wonder...

Col: I know too much...

Gert: Make s you dumb to know.

Col: I know!

Gert: Ha.

Gertie and Collie: I wonder could we kiss the wind?

(Collin and Gertrude kiss again)

Col: That would last, I bet
with the wind swirling
Spring coming up on the lake
deepening to dark water
sails riding over
new ones and old.

Gert: Ride that wind! Ha!
Better peel potatoes for dinner.
You gotta eat!

You gotta eat!

Col: Ride it until you're gone
I used to dream that.

Collie: I can run as fast as the wind!

Gertie: Can't!

Col: Oh yes...oh...yes...

Collin: Will there be children?

Gertrude: Yes...oh yes...

Collin: Fine boys springing up.

Gertie: Girls with questions

Gert: That go unanswered. Ha!

Collie: Girls with big bass eyes blowing
bubbles in a Spring mud puddle! (Gertie chases him)

Col, Gert: Oh you.

Collin: That's a fine dock stretching out there I've built.
When the water gets warm there should be a raft.

Collie: Out deep! Only bold boys can go...

Col: Bold boys...

Gert: Bold boy! Ha, ha! I've slapped me a few.

Col: At least one.

Collin: That's a bold wind. That'll clear off some old air.
That'll make way for the new shoots.
The bears and wolves will run in a wind like that
right over the ridge onto the next lake.
All these dots of cold water
loons coming back...

Gert: (Trills like a loon) Ha!

Collie: (Howls like a wolf. runs around)

Gertrude: So much business in a day.
So much business in this cold weather.
Everything's moving. Everything's moving.
Fast! So fast!

Collin: Gotta get a grip.

Col: Loosening in this wind.
You can't hold it kids.

Gertie: Love. This sand. This sand!
this beach. It needs to stay this way.

Gert: It won't.

Col: Sand. It's all sand...blowing...

Collin: Beach sand. Beach sand in a can.
Now I'll do some planning. (Looks at Gertrude)
Good and dry. Good and dry.
Don't cry...
I'll get it in a can for winter.
In the truck box.
In the truck box one can on a side
for traction.
It'll hold. It'll hold even on ice.

Col: Like sand...so man Springs...

Collin: The sand's too wet in Spring.
Summer sand, now summer sand...

Gertrude: (Nodding) It dries.

Gertie: It all dries up. It dries up
It blows away, blows away,
the sun doesn't stay and it blows away...
Make it...make it...make it (crying) make it...

Gert: Now, now, ha! Now that's true.
That's true what you're saying
but it's just one thing...

Col: Just one thing...

All: Just one thing...

Get: It's only one thing is all.
So...ha. So...ha!

Gertrude: Pay attention elsewhere.
That's the key.
With Spring passing.
If you try to hold it...

Col: It loosens. Slips away so easily.

Collin: You gotta wonder.
This water is so cold.
God, I used to swim this early.
I did. I did.
Damned stupid kid.
Surprised I didn't lose them!

Col: Ha, ha, ha! Oh shrivel up! Shrivlel up!

Collie: Ha, ha, ha! Shrivlel up! (Collapses, jumps up, howls like a wolf)

Gertie: Shrivlel up? Shrivlel up. Shrivlel up.

Gert: (patting her) Long time.
Long time. Ha.

Gertrude: You can't hold it
The butterfly feeling as it grows.
You can't hold it.
That secret that you share with him.

Collin: It's a good life.
A new life.

Col: Thank God for new life.

Gert: But no...you can't hold it.

Collie: Old man. Old man.
The Spring is raining.
The Spring is shining.
The Spring is glowing.

All: Glowing. Growing.

Collie: (Howls like a wolf)

Gertie: Why do you do that?

Collin: Good, rough Spring. Lot to love.

Gertrude: I love you, but there's work. So much work.

Col and Gert: Why do they do that?

Collie: Why? Why? Why? Ha. Ha. Ha!!!

Gertie: Why though?

Collie: There's no why! the sun's coming up.
It rose cold.

Col: It rose cold.

Gert: Warm days(Embraces him) Warm days.

Collin and Gertrude: (Embracing) I love the work.

Col: (Still holding Gert) The ice is out; the water is cold.
This new Spring. Always new. Always new.
Always knew I could come back forever
If it was Spring little nip,
reminds you that you're living,
then it's worth it. Worth it all.

Collin and Gertrude: Worth it all. You don't have to think.
You don't have to drink in all that's come before.
You can just live into it. Just live into it.

Gertrude: Hold it...

All: Close. (Collie howls.)

Collin: Love...

All: the cold morning.

Gertrude: Trilliums. Thousands of white, white trilliums!

Gertie: Dutchman's britches...

Col and Collie: Water lilies...

Gert: Come later with the blue flags. Blue flags, ha!

Col: Under the old hemlock

Gert: Hemlocks are high and lonely...

Gertrude: Lovely...

Collie: Old...

Collin and Gertrude: Lovely old hemlock.

Gertie: Lonely...

Col: This Spring is young. Just heard the ice break.
Now the water's clear and cold but warming.

Collie: Clear and old.

Collin: The bear's out of his den.

Gertrude: The birds. I saw a robin.

Gert: Big flocks. Big.

Col: The sky is awash with birds...

Collin: The water's high...

Gert: They're missing it all.

Gertie: It comes too fast. So fast.

Gert: Now, now.

Gertrude: Now.

Collin: Now.

Gert and Gertie: I sp'ose.

Gertie: But which way does it go?

Gert: Which?

Gertie: Which way?

Collie: This way! That way! (howls)

Collin and Gertrude: (Smiling) Which way?

Col: This way. That way. I sp'ose.

Gert: Now. Now.

Collin: Sun's up good and firm.

Gertrude: Firm. Firm for now, for seconds, for seconds...

Gert: No thanks! Ha!

Collie: I had seconds and thirds (howls)

Col: Now.

Gertrude: How long dow we get to stay?

Gertie: How long?

Col: Now, now, it's Spring. It's Spring. Enjoy the cold turning.
Enjoy the cold turning to warm with lakes rising.
Buffleheads first back and those loons...

Gert: (Makes a loon call) Ha!

Col: It's all coming back now. Just live it.
Don't kill it with expectations.

Gertie: Will it pass?

Col: Ah...yes.

Collie: I'm running past. Running fast. (Gertie chases him)

Col and Gert: Ah...yes.

Collin and Gertrude: Spring, love.

Col: Love.

Gert: Love. Ha! Good loving.

Collie: Good loving (makes smooching sound)

Gertrude: I love this wind. I hope it sounds all night.
And I hope the sun comes up warm.

Col: All gifts. No guarantees. Just grace
while it's here. Spring.

Gert: Grace. Ha! Grave. Lovely. Spring.

Col: Lovely grace.

Gertie: Lovely grace.

Collie: Lovely! (smooching sound)

Gertie: (Hits him. They chase each other around)

Col: Comes the day. Full Spring.

Gert: Funny Spring.

Gertrude: Lovely...

Collin: Off with my shovel. Fine dock.
Off with the fishing pole after supper.
Love that cold warm turning promise.

All: Promise.

Col: No guarantees. Now. Now.

Gertie: (Smiling tired of the chase.) Now.

Collie: (Falls down) Now!

Col: The day goes.

Gert: The day glows, just before it goes. Ha!

Gertrude: Full day and gone, like that.

Collin: A good day.

All: A good Spring day.

Collie: Moon rise.

All: Moon. Moon. Moon. over water.

Col: Going gold over water.

Collin: Under new stars.

All: New. Cold turning warm.

Gert: Wolves running. Ha.

Gertrude: Old wings in the night.

Col: Sun to come. Sun to come and summer.
Just own it. Just own it while it passes.

Collin: Fine, fine night. Great her in the sky. Fire crackling.

Gertrude: Getting cold.

Gert: Just right. Ha!

Gertie: Short night.

All: Much light.

Collin: Spring.

Col: Spring turning. Burning in young hearts.

Collie: Old farts thaw in Spring!

Gert: Ha!

All: Let it ring and shine love this time.

Collin: Spring.

Gertrude: Spring.

Collie: Spring.

Gertie: oh...yes...Spring.

Col: A time of turning and loving never holding always loosening and swirling.

In the warm, in the cold...

wool and down... up and around with the wind and water

opening the world, closing down the stars.

Light in the night. Hope in our hearts.

Collie: And farts! (collapses laughing)

Gertrude and Collin: Yes, it's Spring!

Scene 2 Summer

(Sounds of birds and water. Seagulls, eagles, sound of a summer screen door slamming, children's voices, a lawn mower starting up, a chainsaw, boat motors, wind and water, birds etc. slowing fading, sound of a zebco reel casting and reeling)

(Enter Colin from audience with canoe paddle and Gertrude from upstage holding two coffees, on a summer front porch, they stay stage center on the front steps)

Colin: There are swans down the river this chilly morning.

Gertrude: (Drinking coffee and handing his over) Really, swans?

Colin: Really, white as this new day. They glow.

Gertrude: It will warm later. Warmest day yet they say.

Col: (Entering from upstage) (Colin and Gertrude still can't hear the others) Then hot. Later hot. Never liked hot.

Colin: Bugs, will be bad when it warms. They're just starting now.

Gert: (Entering from stage left stands downstage left below the porch)
Bugs. Bugs in everything. Damned bugs, ha!

Gertie: (Entering from stage right stands down right)Biting bugs!

Collie: (Entering from audience stands down center)Fighting bugs. Dive bombing.
Giant mosquitos! (makes a plane noise)

Col: (Grinning and walking by Gertrude and Collin without them noticing joins Collie)
So big they cast shadow!

Gert: (Going to them smiling) They hide behind poplars, peek around corners, ha!

Collin: Swans are...

Gertrude: ...good luck they say.

All: Good luck.

Gertrude: (Grinning at him teasing) Glowing you said?

Collin: Seem to.

Gertrude: Like this growing summer.

Col: Sweet days. Old days. Days we had...

Gert: Together, ha! Good days.

Collin: Love.

Gertrude: Love. (They kiss)

Gertie: Sweet love.

All: Love these summer days.

Col: Afternoons stretch out like lovely long eons, casting and reeling.
Reeling and casting.

Collin: We should fish later.

Gertrude: Later, yes. I have a new fishing hat. (He smiles) I like looking into the depths.

Collin: You say, but those darknesses scare you, don't they?

Gertie: Yes!!!!

Gertrude: A bit, but a good scare. Good sense to be scared. Healthy.

Gert: They don't scare me anymore.

Col: Any less?

Gert: (hugs him) Ha!

Gertrude: Those summer depths, holding our hearts to the fire. Loving summer stars.

Col: There are scars too.

Collie: Here's where I got stuck with a broken popsicle stick! Right after the game. I was two for three with a triple!

Col: Those old days holding the bat handle. Looking in that lefty's eyes. Smoke rising Behind the clapboard right field fence where they were cooking hot dogs. Chum always had moonshine from his uncle down south hidden in the dugout. He'd give anybody a drink for two bits.

Collie: Jimmy says it wasn't neither a triple so I walloped him and he stuck the stick in my hand. Cool scar!

Gertie" that's what you get for all that summer boy stuff. Fighting. Hot fighting. Boys are so...

Collin: You're right. Even the stars are warm in summer.

Gertrude: You can bring it along when it's hot. There's room for error. Fires are just for fun.

Col: Those old...

Gert: Daze! You're in a daze! Don't get caught in that. It'll make you sad. Silly sad. Ha!

Col: Summer days are a kind of time travel.
You forget the pains
And think you can still hit far, run it out,
Crash into fences...
No offense will stick.
You can just spit in anybody's eye
And after they wipe it
They'll wink back and say,
"Ya got one comin'!"
And you don't care.
You'd welcome the tussle
Rolling in the dust...

Gert: (quietly) We all got one coming...

Gertie: I guess you just must fight.

(In the background Collin and Gertrude are having a wordless dispute about something, she goes off through the screen door. He throws up his hands, then, after a moment follows her.)

Collie: We got the right to roll.
We're young in summer!
Young is a spinning bicycle spoke,
You can't even see us going...

Col: Invisible, invulnerable youth...

Gert: Ha. We're not shatterproof, I guess.

Col: We're all glass enough I s'pose.

Collin: S'pose I'll sit on the porch with your lemonade later.
Listen to the game.

Col: The players are never as good as the ones in your head.
If you can see'em it's like they're dead, but on the radio...
The sound coming from so far away while you fish...
Coming from a place so different
But the sound of it is at home amidst the rushes
Everything is so alive then, the water, the birds
And that radio sound so alive with the little things...
That's a better ball game than one you see on TV
Or even right there at the ballpark.

Collie: Bouncing off...

Gertie: Satellites...

Ger: Ha!

Col: And then the sound of baseball memory: games past.
That disembodied sound
Makes them strong and brave in your spirit's eyes
Boys I knew, men who threw baseballs
Right through walls
And smirked back at ya...

Gert: There was never such...

Collie: Did they do that all the time?

Col: Ya!

Gert: In your mind... Ha.

Col: Yes...the best place.

Gert: The resting place.

(Lights fade to night. Sound of peepers. Loon calls)

Gertrude: Summer night. Now it's hot.
This porch is the spot to watch the day go.
Day glow along that northern line over the lake
Into night.

Gert: That's right. She's saying it right.
Easing into mid life of night. Ha.
All those babies bawling for their milk
In the hot summer night
All those babies, raising them up.
Good and bad...
All those pups are wild.

Collie: Rough, like me.

Gertie: Silly. He, he's just so full of the summer.

Col: He's full of something. (Grins)
He's simmering. He must.
And sometimes, he'll bust out before his time
Get beaten back down
Don't you worry, hon...

Gert: He'll come around...

Collie: Ruff! Ruff! Arooooo!

Gertie: Really?

Gert: (Patting her) Really. Ha!

Col: Men usually do mellow by summer's end
Or else they burn out like a skyrocket bursting

With tears and flames and sad fame
They all end somewhere in their independence.

Collin: (coming through the screen door with lemonade) This is a good, warm night...

Gertrude: (following same) That fight we had today was dumb...

Collin: We fought?

Gertrude: Oh!

Gertie: Oh! Oh! How? How doesn't he know?

Gert: Ha!

Col: Ha, ha, ha.

Gertrude: Really?

Gertie: Funny?

Collin: What?

Gertrude: Really.

Collin: What.

Gertrude: I'm going in again.

Collin: I'm coming with
In off the porch.

Gertrude: Oh no you're...

Gert: Let him in, dear.

Gertie: What? Why? Should she?

Collin" Why? What did I...

Gertrude: Oh...

Col: Love.

Collin: I love you.
Let's finish the lemonade.

I know I'm dumb.

Collie: Arooo!

Gertrude: And you don't know why?

Gertie: He really doesn't, wow.

Collin: No.

Gertrude: (Goes to him) 'Kay.

Collin: (smiling) 'Kay.

Gertrude: Hot old day...

Collin: Nice night.

Gertrude: No more fighting this nice night no
Matter what. The age is raging
Deep into summer.
In the cities they're angry at each other.

Collin: Here we just hide in the summer shadows
Swat the flies, until we cool down
Fish the starry little lakes

Col: It's best for all our sakes to take a breath
Keep a low chin
Don't look so close at all the sins
That have been committed against us
All the bites we're nursing
Just leave off the cursing and look
For the summer cure in deep
Cold water
Baseball on the radio
Old cars flying by shined up new
And you, you with the face...

Gert: Thanks

Gertie: Thanks.

Collie: Thanks.

Collin: Thanks for the lemonade
The ice in the pitcher is milk

I'll get much more.

Gertrude: Let the door slam.
I like summer slammers.

Collie: Wham! And away I go.
I might be ten miles away
From morning until night
If I'm in town the streetlights
Are a way to know when to go home
At the lake it's when the bugs really attack
And the voices start coming over the water
Aroooo!

(Music of a string band, mellow voices answering loons and paddles in the water)

Gertie: The music. The music.
The summer music (dances around)

Gert: (Dances with her) She likes it piped into her head!

Col: Now, now...

Gert: No offense. No kids had no sense. Ha!

Collie: (Bellowing) Loud we go!
Look out below!

Collin: Here we go, honey...(comes out and hands her a drink)

Gertrude: No amount of money
Is as sure as this summer porch...

Col: But summer's slippery like a trout.
The deeper you fall into those summer stars
The farther you've traveled
When you come out.
And then, well...

Gert: The other older summer when's
not so easy to find. Ha!

Collie: Summer time warp!
Arooooo!

Gertie: (Looking up) Oh, there's so many...

Gertrude: So many summer stars to count.

Collin: The rim of the Milky Way
Smiling at the Pleades in August...

Col: (quietly) The sin of the Milky Way
Is that it never seems to have changed
When we look up older.

Gert: Now. Now. Ha.

Col: The aurora...

Gert: And then we're out...

Gertie: So fast. So fast!
I'm so young
I feel

Gertie with Colin and Gertrude: So old. (The latter two look at each other)

Col: (Still looking up) Now...(then down at his hands)

Gert: (Going to him.) Now, ha. Never you mind.

Collie: I could count a zillion!

Gertrude: One thousand six hundred six
What's your count?

Collin: Hmm?

Col: Hm.

Gert: Hm. Hm. Ha.

Collie: Humina, humina, humina!
Burn it in big fella...

Col: Throw'em the dark one...

Collie: He can that...

Col: But not the curve.
Not the curve of time.

Collin: One quick cast beneath
Those thornapples,
Right over that pebble bottom
And I had that trout running!

Gertrude: Recounting are we?

Collin: No, just like you and the stars
It's the first time.

Col: It's...

Gert: ...always...

Gertie...the...

Collie: ...first...

All: ...time.

(Pause natural sounds rise up light shimmers faint sound of baseball on the radio)

All: Summertime.

Col: some time
I'll tell you..

Gert: here we go! Ha!

Col: Some...

Collin: Time.

Collie: Fun times by the lake.

Gertrude: Mistakes were made.

Col:...time: the time will be right
To talke about those old games
Those summer lanes by the lake
Firls in bathing suit
Boys sporting their skinny summer chests
Pretty days. Pretty daze.

Gert: Pretty Dazed all right.

Collie: Pretty girls! Arooooo!

Collin: (kisses Gertrude) You are the right kind.

Gertrude: What kind?

Collin: Ripe, luscious, cold summer fruit
Like the lemonade.

Gertrude: I should be offended,
But you're so dumb I'm not...
Maybe it's me. (They laugh.)

Collin: This is all I've got
Pea brain that I am
The hot makes you dumb
Makes you come up with goofy stuff like that
Men are faulty
That's what women never seem to get
They think there's malevolent intent
But for most of us there's not
There's no more intent of any kind
In many and most a boy or man
Than in a puppy dog or a kitty kat
You'll grow old trying to find anything mean
Planned in men.

Gertrude: So women do plan their meanness?

(Again a little pantomime of argument)

Gert: Oh, hear! Oh dear. Under this clear summer sky
We're going to bring out the thunder?
Oh no wonder you young folks are so quick to let it all go under
Ha!

Col: You know it's never that simple.
Besides, they're just spoiling for summer love.

Gertie: Yes?

Collie: Yuck. You girls...you girls..

Col: Don't go there young buck.
Go chase some stars

Stay out of the bars and bushes
Don't get in a car that'll go too fast for you.

Collie: I'm a rocket? Ba wooom!

Col: That you are
Summer boy.

Gertrude: I take joy in your out and out silliness. (reconciling with him)

Collin: Well, I've got it to spare
So I do my best to share it

Col: Fine, fine night. All the good old loving fights
Are done under the stars.

Gert: For you they are. Ha.

Collie: Scrappin' in the nighttime dust...

Gertie: Oh...must you?

Col: he must, so he can be better for himself later.
That's the whole silly schedule.

Collin: I used to know the names of half the sky.
Now the bear is the only one that catches my eye

Gertrude: You and all those ursa majors and minors!
Unbearable!

Collin: You're terrible!

All: Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha ha!

Collie: Aroooo! That's a pun, right?

Gert. Fun night. Ha!

Col: Funny, funny lives we lead
Here under the summer stars.
We do our best to ignor the scars
Block out anything that mars our happiness
And just go on
And when the tears come maybe we've been
So awash in laughter for so long

It carries us along:
That fine old flood

Collie: Boom! Plop! Now I'm a dud skyrocket
Blew up right in place
Landed on my bum.

Gertie: Hmm. Maybe we should just stop at dud. (He chases her)
Ha, ha, ha!

Gert: Ha! Lookat'em!

Col: Summer fun.

Gertrude: The night's almost done.

Collin: Getting longer, working on towards Fall.

Gertrude: Let's not borrow that.

Collin: Nope. Nope. You're right.
We don't need
To darken this night
Borrow less light.

Gertrude (grinning) Or fight.

Collin: We fought? (She chases him, they fall into an embrace.)

Collie and Gertie: (Tussling on the ground, laughing.)

Col: so love let's stay true.
Just see it through
There's love for all of us
As this summer wains
Weigh the losses with the gains
And gain some wisdom
For later

Gert: Ha!

Col: All right, gain a sense of what's fun
In summer then

Collie: Like skyrocket! Baseball.

Gertie: Old porches...

Col True casts and still waters

Gertrude: Love has come to stay this summer.

Collin: Amen to that.

All: Amen.

Gertie: And summer comes again?

Col and Gert: You bet.

Gertie: For all of us?

Gert: (Turns away) Ha.

Col: We'll see. (Exit all but Collie)

Collie:(Making a huge gesture like a skyrocket going up)

Bawooooom! (Runs off sizzling)

(Sounds of nature and a baseball game on the radio peepers, lines casting and reeling splash of a fish jumping, loon, wolf answering)

Scene 3: Fall

(Scene is a fall forest)

(Ducks quacking, geese high overhead, crashing brush, whispers, wolf howl, wind and leaves skittering for a long moment, then three shotgun blasts)

(Note: Gertrude and Collin are now aware of the others)

(Enter Col)

Col: My light is fading, but I will smile.
Miles to walk and paddle in the cold air
Trails to follow, but I do so, so slowly
Older and older. I'm waining
Straining to make sense
Working towards past tense
That's where this journey has always been going
And something in me knew that
Even when I was little Collie
With the fire and howling
Or sometimes scowling Collin
Straining at his work
Now I'm ol' Col
Wise man doing all I can
To make all these other versions
Girls and boys
Men and women
Rest easy
Oh,
There is light
I'm much more than semi-sure of that
But they need to know to fight
That this we are now ain't forever
That we fall
And though we semi-surely will rise
Again
We will not stand on this same ground
A second
Time
This casting off for another journey
Is so sweet, so bitter...
Like dawn through the hardwoods

Frost growing on the dead leaves...

(light brightens)

Ah, here come the colors. (Exit)

(Enter Gertie with a maple leaf)

Gertie: My sunny is fading.

The leaves are pretty

But they whisper sad...

(Enter Gertrude now fully aware)

Gertrude: Lovely. Love.

You have to be strong to love the Fall up North

It's short, so short,

Cold soon drains the colors

Gertie: Yes? So what's coming?

Gertrude: Now. Now. Call on ol' Col

He'll explain it all

Make you laugh

(Enter Gert)

Gertie: My sunny is fading

My dear warm sun

Gert: Now, now. Ha. Ha. Ha.

Gertrude: What were you going to say?

Gert: Just laughing, remembering...

Gertie: That's so scary...so many years...

(Enter Collie, flexing his muscles)

Collie: Big chest and hairy arms. I'm a man!

I'm a hunter!

Gertie: You're a silly boy! (smiling)

(Enter Collin)

Collin: What's this, what's this?

Light is fading.

Time for the boy and me to head into these colors,
Find the game
Grab hold
Take aim

Gert: Ha!

Gertrude: What is it with men and cold coming?
Ol' Col could tell us

Collin: Let's go boy!

Collie: Bang! We're gone!
You'll hear us in the distance...

Collin: Not if we do it right
We'll meld with the colors
Be both death and life
Go away
Come back sweeter
After we howl at the hunter's moon

Collie: What about ol' Col?

Collin: (sighs) That day is past
Come on boy

(Exit Collin and Collie)

Gertrude: What is it with north men?

Gert: Ha! Men they say...

Gertie: Why do they go away?

(Enter Col)

Col: Not our place to stay in the Fall
Until we're old
(Aside) Until we're almost gone

Gertie: Tell us;
Tell us some Fall stories...

Gert: Ha! You don't know what you're asking for!

Gertrude: I'd like to know
Though it might make me mad

Gert: Ha! It will
You with that thunder.

Col: I hardly recall...

Gertie: Tell.

Col: Look at those colors
Maple oak
Those clinging beech
Poplar even

Gertrude: Being vague...

Gert: Slippery...

Gertie: Tell.

Col: (sighs) You get beyond the trees early
The dead leaves crunch
You look up to see if you've sounded too much
There's a sense of scents
That you've smelled before otherwhen
Then you see the shadows moving in the light
A buck, a bear,
The sound of squeaking wings in the sunrise
The guise you've put on
Of son and husband and father
Grandfather even
Fades for the farce it is

Gert: That's Fall talking...

Gertrude: These north men in Fall...
I don't know if I want to know more
I guess at things that trouble me

Gertie: But tell me
I want to know

Col: I've said too much
I'm not sure it's even true
We mistake our season's masks

For our own faces
And for north men in the Fall
Well...well...that's all
The unknowing knowing
When the leaves turn
When the night fires burn
And daylight breaks in the swamp
There is a glowing bitter, bad
But better somehow
More whole
Than our other faces
Joy and disgrace
All mixed with the wild game on the table
Bad manners, good flavor
And another day's hunt ahead
Life and death it's strange
And good

Gert: That's enough. And all is well
I don't see so great a sin. Ha.
Mostly just an old man's bluster

Gertrude: North men's bluster...I wonder...

Gertie: Tell me...

Col: Honey, men, north men aren't so nice in Fall.
They get big, and laugh large,
Tramp into the woods
Make their kills
Real kills with blood and all

Gert: Ha! So full. So full of cold scares.
The blood...the blood is nothing.
This little girl, she knows
You north men think you're so secret
Go off to your camps and killing
Come back wanting to be warmed
Oh it's just more silliness like Collie
Gotten big and hairy is all. Ha!

Col: Maybe...probably you're right
In a north woman's light

Gertrude: It's not that simple?

Col: She wants it to be
So I can live with that

Gertie: There's more

Col: No flies on her

Gertrude: I couldn't see
I couldn't see before
Collin and I were so wrapped in each other's
Eyes and arms

Gertie: Wonderful. I don't like this quick cold
And my sunny fading even as he's telling
I like that you know me though

Gertrude: I'd know you anywhere now

Gert: Not always, though. Love makes us dumb

Col: We're always every age
Just got to get a sense
This season makes it hard
So short
So full
So many distractions for north men
In the woods. Once I saw a bear...

Gert: Ha!

Col: A mother and her cubs crossing a log
Over a river.
The cubs were scared, so scared
She crossed over, crossed back
Showed them fat ol' ma could make it
They could too

Gertie: They did?

Col: They did (smiling, it fades) God, what's
Happening to me?

Gert: (In a small uncharacteristic voice) What is?

Gertrude: Now.

Gertie: Now.

(Enter Collin and Collie)

Collie: We're back!

Gertie: (Appealing to Collie) My Sunny's fading.

Collie: I shot'em! Six point...

Gertie: (not comprehending) What?

Collin: This boy
This boy
I never knew this boy...

Col: (Aside) You'd forgotten...

Collin: Old man
Old man...

Col: Boys, it's time we talked...

Gert: Here they go. (Getting up to leave. Turns to the women and waves them off stage. Turns back to Col.) Don't you...
Don't you...
Ha.

Col: I won't
Not just yet
(Aside, watching the women go)
Oh love
Oh love, so bright
The night is falling hard
It's falling
It's calling me
I'm not sure if it's home exactly
But it's a place
Grace may be calling
The leaves are covering it all

Collin: This boy...

Col: I heard.

Collie: (pantomimes with an invisible rifle)

Bam! Down he goes!

Collin: Everything feels it
All these folks
The women...well...

Col: The woman, boys
The woman wants to know
We owe her that.

Collin: I don't know how to say...

Collie: Hey, hey! My big kill!

Collin: Probably better not
To say it like that...

Col: Ha, ha. Definitely
Not.

Collin: Ya. Ya.

Collie: I can't
I can't hold it in like that.

Col: Then let it out with us, boy!

Collie: (Grinning) Arooooooo!

Collin and Col: (Slapping him on the back) Ha!

Collie: Aroo! Arooo! Arooo! Arooooooo!

Collin: (smiling a little less as Col watches) Enough.

Collie: Aroooo! Aroooo! Ar-ar-arooooooooooooooooo!

Collin: Enough.

Collie: Aroooooooooooooooooo—

Collin: Enough!!!

Col: Oh
Boy.

Collie: (meekly) Okay.
But you didn't have to
say it that way.

Collin: (Helpless) I did
Though...

(Collie exits angry, brooding, muttering)

Col: (Aside) You did.
Better or worse
You did

Collin: (watching Collie go) Jesus.

Col: (Hand on his shoulder) Let him go now
Let him go into the dark
Let him bark and mutter
Every word after "enough" you utter
Will only make it worse.
It's enough.

Collin: I never knew

Col: That's true. So true.
You can't say your love right
For those rough young types
All we know of dying falls and leaving
All we know of grieving for all our dead fathers
Blinds us
Binds us
Tongue ties us
Then it all comes out at once
A mess of death and loss and hollow victory
In the end
It's just rough love
Just love
And you can hope some day they know
They're going to go off
They're going to go off half-cocked if that
Maybe in these Fall camps
Maybe in the Fall
We call all...(long pause. After Col slowly holds his chest)

Collin: What's wrong?

Col: (Aside going feebly off)
It's gone.

Collin: What the hell?
Now what the hell was that?
The boy
The old man
Where did they go?
Where will they?
Show me
Show me

(Enter Gertrude)

Gertrude: The women are gone
I could see them
But then they were lost in this cold mist
It was such a short season

Collin: I don't know any of the reasons

Gertrude and Collin: The leaves are so beautiful
I've been away from you alone long enough
Look into me
I'll show you all I can
For as long as I can

Collin: I'm a north man
I walk the woods

Gertrude: I'm a woman of the north
I know the wind

Collin and Gertrude: We can love
At least there's that

Collin: That's flat out good
With the leaves falling
Thank you for calling me back
From the woods
My love
I heard your voice on a warm wind
Thank you for calling me back
To love

Gertrude: Ha.

Collin: What?

Gertrude: Something I felt for the first time

Collin: It makes me sad
But sad in a way I never quite knew before
Old scores to settle that seem new to me
They scare me I'll say it
I'm sad and grateful
How did I not know
That Grace is all around?
Still, I never quite grasp it
I want to ask questions into the cold night sky
I want to know why

(Enter Gert)

Gert: Ha.

Gertrude: Oh...that's what I said.
Why?

(Enter Gertie)

Gertie: Where's my sunny?

Gert: (Looking around) Where's...my...

(Enter Collie)

Collie: Here I am
I'm back!
Ol' Col said...

Collin: You saw him?

All but Collie: You saw him?

Collie: (oblivious) Sure!
He said, (imitates him) "Let it fly until you can't!"
So I am! Best thing that old man ever said.
Zoom! Helicopter seed in the wind
Spinning, spinning...

All but Collie: So, silly

Collin: Oh
God
Love

Collie: Spinning! Spinning! Bazoom!

Gert: Ha.
(Aside)
Oh, Collie, Collin,
Ol' Col
It's all so fast. So fast.
You go and I stay a while after.
Not fair never was
The air is cold and old
And you just go off chasing that old bear
Damn you! Damn it! Oh god let me just die...
(pause)
I wanted to hold you
To scold you once more for all your silly ways
Make you stay, just a while my dear
(sighs, sad smile)
But you couldn't
You would
But you couldn't
You went away

Gert, Gertie, Gertrude: My sunny is gone. (They go off arm in arm)

Collin: I've got to come to grips.
I'm stretched in this middle place.
I'd like to be all three
But I've got to build a new self right here
And now
Now
Now
I hear shots ringing
The flat quacks of ducks sing
Grouse drumming
Squall lines forming
And I'm armed with nothing but empty words
I've said
He's said
Her words can't reach me now
He's so young
He's gone, I think
Ol' Col,

Collie
Come back
But they can't
They're going, going gone
I'm the bridge
I'm all there really is
Now
Now
Now
There's such a great chasm beneath
Open air to fall through in my worst dreams
Rough waters below to pull me down
Leaves falling
Falling
Falling
Fall
You just can't stop this quick north season
You can only howl at the hunter's moon
Drink deep
Arm yourself for what's to come
With whatever grace comes your way
And finally just lay down all your arms anyway
The charms of the year are fading
With this lovely last light. (He exits)

(Enter Gertrude)

Gertrude: Now where's he gone?
Our song isn't finished
He's looking for answers
But hardly knows it
And the time is growing short
I'm changing
I'm ranging into something new
And he's not paying attention
When he looks again
I'll have new intentions
Ha.
There it is again
He won't know me then
He'll have to learn me all over
And he wasn't very good at it the first time
Ha.
Well
All we can do is hold each other
In our few spare moments

In this quick season
The reasons are all illusive
Fall is no bargain
It's no cheerful deal
Ha.
It's just not easy
(Pause. She looks up)
Snow clouds

(Enter Collin)

Collin: ...building in the west. (Looks at her as if for the first time. Embraces her)

(Enter Gertie)

Gertie: My sunny has faded.
I don't know how I know
Not to be sad
But I'm not.
(Looks at them)
We come again.
The light builds over after cold.

Voice of Col: What a girl!

(Enter Gert)

Gert: Ha. Say it little girl.

Collin: We can hope

(Enter Collie)

Collie: (oblivious) Big snow and downhill chasing!
Can't wait! Can't wait! (Looks at Collin)
Have to though.
Okay. Okay. (quietly, comically) Aroooo!

Collin: (going to him down center. Whispers tenderly) Arooo!

All: Oh, this short season.
They go without reason
Leaving us hungry for answers
The cold is coming
We feel old
But somewhere, somewhere

Life is stirring
Building on a west wind
Getting ready under the new snow
Sleeping now only to grow

(fade out)

Scene 4: Winter

(Col appears only in voice.)
(The scene is the front porch covered in snow)
(Sounds of a winter wind, bleak, biting, lonely)
(Enter Gert from stage right)

Gert: I pray this isn't what it looks like.
And I'm pretty sure
Ha
Pretty sure it isn't.

Voice of Col: It's not dying you need to prepare for
Too many too ready for death in life already
Too many forgetting to live
In this white season
There are reasons
Just know there are reasons

(Enter Gertie)

Gertie: Cold, cold miss my sunny.

(Enter Gertrude)

Gertrude: Now. Now.

(Enter Collie)

Collie: Here it comes
White flakes falling

(Enter Collin)

Collin: (patting Collie on the back) Be bold

Gert: (Aside) Old. Ha.

Collie: Bold, bold, (pinches Gertie's bottom)
Cold, cold!

(They run off laughing.)

Gert:e Ha, ha, ha!

Gertrude: In the face of it...

Collin: They race around.

Gert: And around, ha.
Snowbank building
On the porch

Gertrude: The old torch of the year burns low.

Gert: Tells us we may have to go, ha.

Collin: Now. Now.

Gertrude: No! Not! (Goes to Gert, scowls at Collin) (a touch tearful) Never.
Just riding out another season.

Collin: (realizing) Yes. Oh yes! (Weakly) Be bold.
(Aside) Still, we do get older.

Gertrude: (Aside) Those flakes piles so high
The sky so gray and full of age and aches
Children growing. Going off so unknowing.

Collin: Bold, bold.

Voice of Col: (We see Collie and Gertie race across stage laughing)
Hear yourselves
Clear yourselves
Own the hours
Don't cower in a corner
Older bolder
Show them old woman!

Gert: Ha, ha, ha!
Enough of that
We're no indoor cats
Get out there
In the cold dark
Under the moon
Run while you can!

(Enter Collie racing across the stage)

Collie: Aroooooo! (Exit)

(Enter Gertie for just a moment looking at the others who embrace each other watching the children.. She's out of breath.)

Gertie: He's so crazy!

All: Ha, ha, ha!

Voice of Col: See?

See!

See.

Gert: I see.

Gertrude: What?

Gert: Listen to me

Wondering, wandering.

There's work to do.

Collin: Need to get the shovel and the scoop
Move that white stuff round and round

Gertrude: The ground's freezing
Won't see flowers for months
Birdseed time
Creed of the sky is white and white

Gert: (Fixated) Wind blowing
Changing the world

Collin: Word is a cold one
Snow for months and months
And months

Gert: (Coming around) Nine months of winter
Three months of company

Collin, Gertrude: Ha!

Collin: Gotta keep warm
The woodpile is dropping already
Hope I've got enough in the shed

Gertrude: Dead leaves stopping
Frozen where they lie under white
Pressed to the earth like a hand to a heart

Voice of Col: It's a song that comes out a groan
A moan at first but it'll build nicely

Hold on and live
The world will be green again

Collin: It's easy to live then
But now is the fight

Voice of Col: The dance...

Gert: The dance. Ha.
A chance to blow some warm air into it
Skate or ski
Save yourselves
(Aside)
Save me.

Gertrude: Yes. Yes. Come with me.
We'll show them something
(They go off into the house together)

Collin: Winter thoughts fight you
Bite and chill you
They can kill you
If you're not careful

Voice of Col: Now. Now.

Collin: You've gotta breathe life into it
Begin to live through it not fight it
Months of cold will quit
When they're damned good and ready
Be steady
Stay with the stars that never get cold
Watch them shine over warm or cold
But sometimes for whole months
You can't see'em
Clouds and snow act as that chilling screen
Daytimes when you can barely see
Sometimes it doesn't seem fair to me
And where are you old man?

Voice of Col: Now. Now. Green is gaining...

Collin: Now...now...now.
I wish I could see the green
But these winter thoughts are grinding
I should be minding my own warm business

But the cold has other ideas
I feel old and those kids have gone off
Bold and strong with my words
That I can't heed
They're impervious to cold
Too old me.
How much more do I have to offer?
(pause)
This is such petty suffering
I offer it up
I offer you everything
I know I should humble my needs
Oh hell
The walk needs shoveling again (muttering)
More wood for the furnace...

(Enter Gertie and Collie)

Gertie and Collie: Whoa! That was cold!

Gertie: You're so bold (smiles at him teasing, playing with his hair)
You're such a big snow boy now!
Fastest on the slopes

(Collie puts snow down her back she runs in circles shrieking)

Collie: No! Ha! You're the fastest
with snow down your back!

(He runs off. She stops, smiling just before going)

Gertie: Oh my sunny. I start to see you now.
Again. (Pause, in love) You're back. You're back.

(Enter Gert)

Gert: Oh, mh sunny.
I'm still here and the snow is piling
I'd like to just file out down the aisle
Out the door

Voice of Col: Now. Now.

Gert: Now, now, now, now...when?
You stubborn old man
Stop snowing your old words on me

Stop trying to make me grin
You grate sometimes you old ghost
I wake from dreams and I'm not in your embrace
Your face is gone
I can't see it move
I can't feel your breath on me
Death is moving

Voice of Col: Now...

Gert: (furious)
"Now, now, now now! "
It's a message sent to pacify
But damn you old man I'll cry if I need
The creed of cold is not my creed
I'm tired of these wrinkles
Keeping on this good old face
If I could race with you once around the rink
Down a slope and across white woods
I'd go in a moment
But you're gone
I'm here and can't go
Only your voice in whispers lingering on
Telling me nothing I need to know
(enter Gertrude)
I'd spit at you if you weren't only air
Did you care did you care for me
When you went with those old dead leaves?
You left me here!
(Gert turns and sees Gertrude, long eye contact)

Gertrude: Now...

Gert: (Smiling weakly, starts to collapse) Now.

Gertrude: (catching her desperate with her questions about herself and age and how to go on)
How? How?
Old woman.
How?

Gert: (smiling) Better now.

(Gertie enters smiling then sobers and stands watching)

Gerrude: Really. How?

Gert: (whispers) No. Not really. (louder) Fine. Fine. (Standing on her own.

(Gertie runs to her)

Gertie: Really? Real.

Gert: (firmer) Really. (Patting Gertie's hand) Now. Now.

(They go off)

Gertrude: Fine.
Fine old woman
What I wish to be
No that's a lie
I want to be that girl
Loving the swirl of snow
The way he
Oh
Just the way he was
So silly
So averse to anything frilly
Three day growth of beard
That burned when he first had it
Rubbing it hard against my cheek (smiling) my neck
Never serious for weeks on end
I was so much more than just his friend
I was me!
A small goddess to him
A lover of his way
He mine
Time has cost us
Children going away
Now yet another day of cold
We're getting old
(enter Collin)
This winter is winter and winter and winter
With a cap of white
Endless night with no stars
With nothing to make this white way waver
We're slaves to snow and cold labor
Even the morning coffee is cold (she dumps it out)

Collin: Now. Now. Now!

Collin and Gertrude: what's this we're doing?
Misconstruing each other only because of cold

This is no way
This is snow's way getting
Under our skins

Collin: Gotta breathe

Gertrude: (Nods) No more seething at absent stars.

Collin: (Putting his arm around her)
We've traveled far

Gertrude: And we've still a ways to go

(Enter Gert, watching)

Gert: Love. Love lives yet.

Collin and Gertrude: Love lives under invisible stars.

(Enter Gertie and Collie)

Gert: The scars heal.
(Aside)
Aching grows, though.

Gertie and Collie: Arooooo! (running off)

Collin, Gertrude, Gert: (somberly) Arooooooo.
That's the way.

Voice of Col: That's the day it warms
The sun comes out
The white lights back
You can hardly see
But you know what's coming

Gert: Then

Gertrude: Now.

Collin: Now.

Gert: More months of cold.

Gertrude: Find another scarf

Collin: Work in te garage
Set another fire
Move the snow

Gertrude: (looking at her hands, her arms)

Cracks in the skin
So mundane
So heartless
Just more cold
And more and more
Late winter storms wet flakes

Gert: Dragging this old face
Into another day. Ha.

Gertrude: Ha.

Collin: Ha.

(Kids back in and running)

Collie and Gertrude: Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha!

Collin and Gertrude: How do they do it?

Gert: They're young
No mysteries because they're having fun
They don't ponder
They live in the present the now
The now
The cold hard wonderful now
Warmed by their young hearts

Voice of Col: It's just artless youth

Gertrude: And growth of good and ready
Then later they'll have to be steady
For both young and old

Collin: Bold, bold.
Living the brave dream of youth in winter
No cinders to be stoked
The cold's a joke
Some snow down your back
You will never crack

It just stands tall and asks
This season, "Whatcha got?"

Gertrude: (gallows humor) Snow.

Gert: More snow. Ha.

(Pause)

Collin: Gotta get at that drive way
Woodpile's way down

Gertrude: Head to town
Milke
Eggs
Book to read, something warm!
Tropic of Cancer
Tropic of Capricorn
A seed for Spring
Maybe bring some flowers in
Make us look feel warm (smiling suggestively at Collin)
And close the blinds

Gert: February's the shortest month. Ha!

Gertrude and Collin: What a joke!

Voice of Col: Now. Now.

Collin: March snowstorm.
April for Christ's sakes!
Even May!

Gertrude: More big we flakes!
Sleet!
Ice storm!
I'd like to break a window into Spring!

(Sound of cellphones or whatever the latest techno do dad is)

(Gertie and Collie enter saying what they're texting or tweeting or sexting or blimblamblexting)

Gertie: R-U-COLD?

Collie: FRZZZING! IS THIS UNREAL OR WHAT?

Gertie: SO COLD, WITH I COULD HOLD YOUR HAND!

Collie: Duh, I'm standing right here.

Collin, Gertrude, Gert: Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha!

(the kids go off holding hands)

Collin: Youth is so dumb.

Gertrude: But
I hate to say
So afraid to wake the winds again
They're edging into Spring
Loving the warming,
Watching each other's eyes
Seeing the singing ringing in the skyway
The old...

Gert: ...highway of stars. Ha.

Collin: High above this cold

Gert: Not so old. New again

Gertrude: Renew again

Collin: Skies warm and blue again. Ha. Ha.
A guy can hope.

Collin, Gert, Gertrude: Nope!
More snow.

Collin: Ice crystals just for fun. Black ice!
Cars sliding off the highway.

Gert: It's just the way of things.
Winter will stop when it stops

Gertrude: Up north here!

Voice of Col: Green, Green. Green. Growing.

Gertrude: We owe the earth so much
But it's hard to see in this endless season

Collin: Is there any real reason
I have to scoop this damned driveway again?
Maybe I could just pack it down with the truck tires
The wood's gone
Oh the damned gas bill!

Gert: Will it ever stop?

Voice of Col: Yes.

Gert: When?

Collin: Soon? I hope soon.

Gert: Watch what you wish for. Ha.

(Enter Gertie)

Gertrude: I have doubts that green will ever come

Gertie: You do?

Gert: Oh you.
Little girl
Don't worry
Your sunny's coming

Gertie: He is, isn't he.

Gert: Oh yes?

Voice of Col: Yes.

(Enter Collie)

Collin: Yes. (Going to Gertrude)

Collie: Yes! (going to Gertie)
Here I am!
(Big dumb grin)

All: Cold season's end and back again.
Wait, wait.
It turns
It turns

Collin: Banks dwindle

Gertrude: But they come back

Gert: Grow again

Gertie: Don't they know they can't?

Gert: No
We don't know they can
(Aside)
That's the bitter lesson
We don't dare ever learn

Collie and Gertie: The snowbanks are gone!
Disappeared!

Voice of Col: Here. Here. Now. Now.

Gertrude and Gert: The first shoots in the garden

Collin: Oh
Gotta clean that mud mess
In the yard (muttering, sound of barking)
Damned dog!

All: Here it comes. Here it comes.

Gert: The cold's not goine, but it's aging.

Gertrude: No longer raging at us

Collin: Just waging it's old, old war

Voice of Col: With a voice that dwindles
Spindles down to nothing

All: Nothing more.

Gertie: One last snow flake!

Collie: (Grinning) Here I am!

All: Say goodbye to winter.

Gert and Voice of Col: Hello to the real new year!

(Blackout)

Epilogue

(All but Col standing in line facing the audience down center)

All: Seasons

Collin: Reasons to get up and face the day.

Gertrude: Kids

Collie: and old folks

Gertie: Finding their ways

(Enter Col, joins them)

Col: Along their chosen road.
An often frozen road

Gertrude: It opens out into green and Spring

Gert: Steaming summer and multi-colored Fall. Ha.

All: We wouldn't go away.
We don't want another way

Collin: And why should we?

Collie: how could we leave our seasons?

Gertie: Our reasons for being
Even when we're far away

All: Up north is old

Collie and Gertie: And green and cold

Collin: We've sold our souls
In a beatific bargain with nature

Gert: An old dance that lives in each season

All: The reason for living up here
Up north.

(Slow fade with all holding hands and smiling)
(Quickly back up from black and bows)

Finis