Snow

The Staves

White are the far-off plains, and white
The fading forests grow;
The wind dies out along the height
And denser still the snow,
A gathering weight on roof and tree
Falls down scarce audibly.
The road before me smooths and fills
Apace, and all about
The fences dwindle, and the hills
Are blotted slowly out;
The naked trees loom spectrally
Into the dim white sky.
The meadows and far-sheeted streams
Lie still without a sound;
Like some soft minister of dreams
The snow-fall hoods me round;
In wood and water, earth and air,
A silence everywhere.

Save when at lonely intervals
Some farmer's sleigh, urged on,
With rustling runner and sharp bells,
Swings by me and is gone;
Or from the empty waste I hear
A sound remote and clear;
The barking of a dog, or call
To cattle, sharply pealed,
Borne, echoing from some wayside stall
Or barnyard far afield;
Then all is silent and the snow falls
Settling soft and slow
The evening deepens and the grey
Folds closer earth and sky
The world seems shrouded, far away.
Its noises sleep, and I as secret as
Yon buried stream plod dumbly on and dream

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