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JEREMIAH'S WRATH: A TALE FROM THE INDIAN WARS IN MAINE

IT WAS ON THE SABBATH BETWEEN THE MORNING SERMON AND THE AFTERNOON THAT wrath first presented itself to me and I took it without thought into my mouth like the bread of God and swallowed it. After that it took other shapes — sometimes a man and sometimes not — and came along with me as a friend for twelve years until that day above the great falls when I found Colonel Bombardeen by the black spring and laid him under Amerscoggan ice. Then I let wrath go, which was as the Reverend Mr. Moody had counseled me, and out of my mouth it flew up to Jesus' bosom. Or so it seemed to me to do, though there are some, and Mr. Moody himself among them, who will say it went to the other place.

The day of wrath's coming was a day of hard cold. Snow lay in the meadow as deep as Satan's hand on a sinner's heart, and the river groaned like a bear to feel the ice embrace her. From the Kennebec to Boston that day God's ocean itself was stiff with frost, and an old woman who couldn't sleep looked out to sea before dawn at Brave Boat Harbor, where the moon was still full, and saw a man on the ice with three piebald oxen clad in iron shoes. He was wearing a wolf-skin coat, and the wind sat still on his broadbrimmed hat. Half a league out on the glittering waste he made her a fine salute and quieted her mind, calling out he was headed east to haul spars for the King, though it was the Lord's day and Colonel Bombardeen with his tawny minions stirring the forest all around.

We'd gone to meeting and trudged back to warm ourselves at noon. My father, who was as big a man as you would like to see, was eating beans. His name was Jeremiah, and so is mine. And I am just of his color too, being red-haired and spotted with freckles. My mother sat in the chimney between the fire and the sooted stones, giving the babe her breast to strengthen him against the dark afternoon. "O clap your hands, all ye people," she sang softly, "shout unto God with the voice of triumph,"

which was that morning's psalm. Mr. Moody had sung it first, line by line, and we afterwards with our voices filling the meeting house that our bodies couldn't warm, nor the candles on God's table, whose flames melted in the dull air. My mother's chin was long and broad with a line in the middle, up and down, where God scooped out the flesh as a mortal sign. I too have that cleft from birth, though I am still alive. Sarah, on the bench beside me hunched with her hands between her legs, watched our father move his jaws, waiting for him to bless us and give us leave to go to the fire. I had lived six years then in my parents' house, its eldest child.

"Mr. Moody spoke well today," my father said, "to remind us in this time of trouble that we are sinners in God's mighty hand, which will provide. Let the devil and his wild men lurk about our settlements. The Lord will make them food for kites and dogs. His judgments will not be fathomed."

My father tapped his lips with the flat of his knife before he opened them to receive more beans, and truly he prophesied beyond his ken, for as his teeth closed on the dripping spoon our light blazed and thickened most strangely. "Jere," my mother cried, and my father looked up at the ridge pole, which he feared because of the snow's great weight, but the beast was at the door. It was Colonel Bombardeen, the Indian king, swifter than the sound the first snow makes, carbuncles and tassels in his hair. Like a falling star, he split my father to the eyes. Like a man in a small boat at the harbor's mouth, he knocked Sarah behind the head as though she were a cod and he with a fish on his other line, and that next fish was me. His hatchet blew a wind along my face on the side that has a freckle on it larger than the rest, but I writhed and thrashed away and tumbled in God's mercy to the floor as the Colonel's blade cleaved my wooden bowl and rattled the boards from which we took our meat. My mother stared, and Shubael turned his puckered face to the blow that rolled them into the fire. Three times my mother sought to rise, groping for Shubael among the logs, but he was gone, and the flames were eating her clothes and hair. "God! God!" she called out at last and arched her back as on a bed and died.

From under her hip, where the dress was bright, a brand's end stuck out unburned. The Colonel pulled it out and thrust its fiery end into the straw packed eaves. Soft ropes of smoke hissed up the beams. Then, wagging his teeth, barking like the dogs one hears at night that live like

wolves, the Colonel pranced and preened, while the beans ran out of my father's mouth and blisters formed on my mother's eyes. From its peg, he pulled the coat that my father made from the spotted ox when it broke its leg, and put it on. It hung to the floor like the minister's gown. Scrape, scrape went the hem as the Colonel flung his feet in a hay de guize. And I lay dumb with fear on the beaten floor until he pulled me up. By the red hair that my father gave me, the Colonel dragged me into the snow.

There I saw his friends, Captain Squidd, who had one eye, and Sabatiste with his fat, sleek face. I knew them well. They came to town to sell their pelts. "Quack, Quack," they said, and "Samarie," as solemn as otters in their furry caps. They held their hands on their shameful parts, drawing their mouths down to look wise. Smoke rose from the snow on our roof like mist. God's tears burst from our cracking walls, and the flames made a sound like the loon's wings on Chase's Pond when the pines hemmed him in and my father shot him and he flopped in our boat with his red eyes and his stippled breast finer than blackwork done for the King. Ashes beat the sullen air. I could not breathe. I sank, and as I did, my father's coat upon the Colonel's body glowed like wrath itself, and from the bowels of his mercy God sent me grace, grace that came walking like the Lord at Galilee over the bright, deep meadow on the beat of a drum. It was Abel Stover, who lived where the ferry lands at the foot of Beech Hill, calling us to pray. A more urgent sound I never heard from village or field or mountain rock swelling to bear me up and make me mad.

The Colonel and his friends heard it too, and pursed their lips like men in doubt, standing on tiptoe and spreading their nostrils to the smoking air, while wrath filled my sinews with such joy as when the red moon looks down at harvest time or the wind hisses at midnight or freshets run across the soft land. "God damn you, Colonel Bombardeen," I said, which was the first curse that ever I spoke and the simple truth of my heart, and I took him hard by one leg with my arms and kicked at his other leg to bring him down, though all I could do was no more than the woodpecker does to the oak. He was as strong as the sucking tide, which no man can resist. Twining my hair as though to tear it off, the Colonel bent his eyes into my face and put his ax against my throat and made me still as stone, and there we stood as long as Abel took to sound his drum eight times.

Little did I care for aught except to hurt him, which perhaps he knew, as they say horses will not bolt with one who has no fear, for at last he pulled the blade back and said "Go." In God's good English he said it — "Go!" — and waved the ax up and down and back and forth, and his friends coughed like catamounts in the thin light of dawn. "Go," he said and, "Run." And he marked my forehead with a cross. I ran, but before I did I caught his hand in my teeth and bit the fleshy part between the wrist and thumb. Down the path, then, to the village I ran, the way we walked that morning through the forest and by the buried river. Until I came to the place where the drum was calling with its still, small voice, I ran, and there in front of the meeting house, where Abel was looking frightened to see me on my small legs, I fell belly down on the crumpled ground. "Jere," I heard the people say, and I gathered snow into a ball at my lips and melted it onto my tongue. As cold and sweet it seemed to me as God's bitter love.

Major Bragdon gathered the men, and they flew to the place where two rivers meet and the Indians pitched their lodges when this land was but a wilderness. There the snow was matted in their bodies' shapes and by their feet, but they had gone. "Into the howling wilderness," said Mr. Moody that night to the town assembled, "have they crept and found their kennels," and he prayed for our redemption. We stayed in the meeting house, lying in rows on the floor, while the men stood by the barred windows and doors with their guns and did not sleep. And no more did I, in spite of the wine they gave me, but turned from side to side in my blankets while the cold sluiced through the walls and made them pop. Twice Mrs. Moody came and kissed me and called me poor boy, dropping tears on my face and asking God to comfort me, and when she went away he did. He showed me a picture in my mind of Shubael tumbling in the flames and Sarah's head snapped back and my father and my mother like broken logs, and my heart leapt up.

The next day when the others were readying themselves to return to their homes, I sat on our bench alone with my eyes on my boots, not looking at the rolled up pieces of sail that Major Bragdon brought back, two of them long and two of them short, and all four smaller than I wanted to see. They were burned, I knew, and with the angels, as Mr. Moody said, but I was in the meeting house, and I was thinking how I

could kill Colonel Bombardeen when Mr. Moody put his hand on my head and I almost struck him, but he said, "Now, Jere, you will come to live with us."

And so I did. They were good people who treated me like one of their own: Mr. Moody, a silent man at home, but kind, and a pretty man in the woods, who could get the wind of a buck at dusk and stalk him close and drop him with a single ball, and he taught me how to do the same; Mrs. Moody, whose little ones all died as soon as they were born, except for Contance, who was Sarah's size when I first came to live there and who woke us at night with her fears and crying until Mrs. Moody sat on her bed and sang to her as though she were a babe, "Lullaby, lullaby. God is watching. Do not cry." Sometimes after dinner while Mr. Moody was writing sermons at his table, Mrs. Moody would ask me to sit with Constance by the fire, and then she would lean forward in her seat, resting her elbows on her knees and her chin in her hands and stare at us very strangely, as though she knew what God had in mind.

How the years turned slowly in that godly house! Spring creeping in with its languorous rains, the new hay drowned. Summer stretched upon the boundless fields, dazzled wings beating, the voices of crows. Autumn's salmon gathering in the black-backed pools, silk spilling from the milkweed's pods, squash on the hardened ground like giants' toes. Again and again and again the drum beating in the breathless dawn, the men going out to look for Colonel Bombardeen and coming back with scalps, but never his. And always, at the end of all, winter, and the day we bore our candles into meeting each alone and Mr. Moody praying for the dead beneath their frozen stones — father, mother, Sarah, and Shubael — waiting for God to send his angels down. And I waited too, wrath pressing against my bowed head like the old cow when I grasped her teats in her stinking shed and sent her milk hissing into the pail. I walked the bank of the river below the blackened chimney of our house to the place where the water runs smooth and deep over a ledge where the blue trout lie out of sight, and many times I thought to join them there, my fingers and toes thrust into the crevices forever, but wrath took me by the neck like a terrier shaking a rat, and made me live. When I was twelve, I went to Major Bragdon's house and asked him to set my name on the train band's list, and he asked was I sixteen, and I said yes, and he laughed. "I'll take you gladly when you

are," he said. "Wrath fortifies a soldier's heart." He spoke the truth, which gave me joy to hear. Every day I prayed to God to keep the Colonel safe until I found him.

Sometimes wrath made me speak aloud like mad Hannah, who walked our paths crying "The Beast! The Beast!" and striking her head. What I said was my own name, and I clenched my fists. People saw me, and there was talk, and once Hannah herself met me at the bend in the way that goes up Sassanoa hill, and stopped and stood stiff as a soldier with her hands over her face as I went by. From the ledges near the top where the berries look down on the sea, I heard her yell, "Abomination!" Once, and that was all. On Sassanoa, for the first time I cut my arm and made a bloody X on the smooth skin of a birch to stand for Bombardeen's heart, and stabbed it as deep as I could until the clear juice welled forth. I did the same to other living trees and to the dead ones in the cowshed's walls while Constance watched, her eyes wide because of my blood and my wrath. A bright morning in March with the crust biting my ankles I gave her my knife and held her up to a young spruce so she could strike too, her soul trembling in her body. She was ten and small.

One day in early June when I was still fifteen and Constance twelve she brought me pease porridge and meat in a bowl at noon when I was cutting swale. After I put my face into the water to clear the sweat, opening my eyes to see the pale crayfish scuttling among the weeds, she sat beside me, our backs against the signal oak's ridged bark, while I ate. Butterflies fanned our outstretched legs. The leaves, not yet quite full, hung silent as stars. It was then that I told her the whole story of my wrath, not just what she and all the others knew already, but everything that I recalled, every steadfast detail like a crystal in my mind, which I never told to anyone but her. How Bombardeen stood on his hind legs and danced. How he spoke English like the devil himself and signed me with the cross.

After I finished, and sat there speechless, she reached up and took a piece of grass from my hair and wet it with her tongue and pressed it against my cheek so it stuck and hung down like a green ribbon on her sleeve. And then she ran her finger down my cheek, across my mouth, and into my chin's cleft, where she let it stay, trembling all over and looking down. Overhead, ducks threshed the air towards Agamenticus on squeaking wings. I wanted to marry her then and there, nor was she unwilling. "Jere," she said, "Jere, yes!" and lay back as quick as an eel, the

skin under her shirt dry and hot and I in a fever to touch it until, in the midst of all, my wrath came into my mind and made me see my father's cloven head and my mother's body bent on the fire. My heart froze, and I sat up unable to go on.

"Honor thy father and mother, so saith the Lord," I said. Two spots burned in Constance's face. Her eyes were closed. "Yes," she said, and sighed as though she would never draw breath again. "And Sarah and Shubael too," I said. "Yes," she said, fiercely this time, "and all the saints whom the fiend has killed," and she opened her eyes and pulled her shirt down over her ribs and kissed me on the cheek where the grass had fallen off and went home with the empty bowl held before her, looking back many times. That afternoon I left the meadow with my scythe upon my shoulder and found Major Bragdon making a pen for his sow. "I shall be sixteen in four days," I told him, which he knew was true, so he said I should come in the evening, which I did and swore my oath to serve the King and put my mark beside my name. At dinner Mr. Moody shook his head. "Tempt not the Lord," he said. "Tomorrow you and I will shoot some ducks."

We went in the skiff before dawn to Point Bolleyne, where the ducks shelter on the south side. The sun came up like golden fire on the ocean's edge. Breathless, we heard the birds stirring in their grassy homes, calling softly to their mates. The water fluttered in the day's first breeze. From reeds as sharp as knives, six ducks swam forth attended by their young, all careless of our shadowed boat. I counted the babes, seventeen in three lines, before we shot, I aiming at the big drake in front and softly speaking the Colonel's name as I pulled the trigger. He dropped his head at once and tried to spread his wings and died. Behind him, a duck rolled and churned the water feebly with her broken wings, jerking towards the sun, and we went after her to twist her neck, while the rest fled crying to their nests. Then we drank brown beer, letting the sun stroke us and the birds' blood stain the bilge, warm and musty. Under our feet, the waves sucked at the skiff's belly, and Mr. Moody, working his lock back and forth to smooth it, told me that wrath is a sin that kills, which I had heard him say before, though only from the pulpit.

"Is not God wrathful?" I asked then, for this was a thing he also said. And I knew a wrath that made you live.

"So he is," said he, "and therefore should you leave it to him."

"Are we not servants to do his bidding?" said I. "If he sends us wrath

should we refuse? Is it not better to kill a fiend than a bird?"

He looked at me in wonder, for I was quick and sharp. "It is the fiend himself sends you such wrath," he said. "He killed your father and mother and Sarah and Shubael to make you sin."

To this I neither spoke nor moved my body in any sign, and he said no more until I thrust the skiff's nose into the mud below the house. Bent forward with his hands on the gunwales, one boot already out and his head slightly down so he looked at me from the tops of his eyes, he said, "Let it go. Let it go, and live in peace. The peace that passeth understanding." That was the most talk that we ever had at one time in all the years he was my only father except God. He was a good man and learned, but he had not seen this matter through to the bottom.

So Constance thought when I told her what her father said. She put her hand on my heart. "Do you know why the Colonel crossed you when he let you go?" she asked. "To make you weak!" And I thought of the psalm we'd said not many weeks before: "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength, O Lord, because of thine enemies." All that summer we had eyes for each other, even at table while thanks were being given, and there were touches too, though nothing God would disapprove. When we passed she whispered quick and low with her face calm, her lips as still as magic, "Fire burns" or "The ice is strong." She loved me for my wrath. Sometimes Mrs. Moody watched us hard, and whether she smiled or frowned was more than man could tell. When the train band mustered on the Sabbath, marching up and down in a mown field as though our work were to walk in step and not to kill, Constance stood apart and stared at me. And in the rosy, bird-filled dawn when we went out to raid, she came to watch us go, standing by drummer Abel at the parish door with a fresh egg in her hands or minced meat in a pie to take to Widow Moulton for a treat. At noon I found a mess of beans wrapped in cabbage under my bread and rum.

Harvest came. The leaves flamed and rattled on our ridges. The corn bowed its head in our fields. Colonel Bombardeen burned Falmouth in its sleep and ranged down over the Saco as far as Wells. We went out to meet him, and he turned away, slipping back into the desert forest where he kept his dens. All one night when we thought we would surprise him on the margin of a glassy pond, I marched with

wrath joyful and muttering by my side, and I spoke but softly in reply. Some were not so quiet though, whom drink made bold, and Major Bragdon warned them lest the heathen know our coming, which, as God willed it, he did. When we peeped for him at dawn from the bushes of a little hill, we saw he'd fled, the Colonel with Squidd and Sabatiste and all his throng, leaving us only the smell of his fires to fill our mouths. Some of our men were pleased, which I took hard and said so to Micah Williams, which caused him and some others to grin and set their eyes on me slantwise.

"There are those love their thoughts more than their freckled skins," said Micah.

"And others," said I, "love their skins more than all."

Major Bragdon smiled at that, so I asked him where the Colonel could be found. "At his place of refuge in the north," he said, "above the great falls on Amerscoggan, where the water bends on its way to the sea, which is too far now, what with harvest on us and the snow that's coming." Wrath smote me sharp and rode me home. I spoke to no one and ate my bread apart.

The snow came early that year, and deep. On Twelfth Night of the twelfth year of my wrath, I knelt on my blankets, the straw crackling and whispering under my knees, and prayed for the souls of my father and mother and Sarah and Shubael with uncommon fervor and beat my breast and head until they hurt. I lay down and went to sleep at once. An angel, gleaming and hard, came out of the east and met me on a hill above the trees. On his head there stared a thousand eyes. Even in his curled ears they stood and never blinked. He made me kneel, and he knelt too, so close our noses almost touched. All down the steeps, the pines, marked with broad arrows for the King, whined like gulls. Far off the waters barked with joy. Spreading one mittened palm before me as in admonition, he touched the other to the snow and with its tip he drew a crooked line rising to a hook and at the hook's point a circle and a cross. I knew at once he meant the bend on Amerscoggan where the Colonel lurked. The eyes looked down and up at once, and ceaselessly at me. Pushing, the angel put his lips to mine. I felt, not heard, him form the word, "Alone." Then I awoke to find him gone, and all around the dark was flowing through my room.

On snowshoes the next day I went to hunt on Agamenticus. High up where the dead oaks stand waiting for the hurricane to knock them

down, you can see the White Hills, but where the trail begins to rise, I veered off east by north and kept along the coast. Only Constance knew. Her lips trembled when I told her at the spring whose water never freezes. She whispered, "Yes." Inland, I skirted ruined Saco and Falmouth's blackened cellar holes. I sniffed their ashes on the tainted wind. Night came. Over a waste of islands, the moon rose like a pale egg. It was too cold to sleep so I crouched in the split place of a boulder, my knees against my chin, my fingers in my mouth and talked to wrath, who sat above me on a shelf that the snow made soft, dangling his iron heels before my nose.

The wolves crept by in sullen fear, and in the midst of the gloom I saw heaven in my beating mind, where the blessed sprawl at ease before an everlasting blaze. All of them were there. "Jere," I heard my mother say, and my father raised his finger with a smile. Opening their mouths as wide as crows, Sarah and Shubael sang to break my heart. "For the Lord most high is terrible," they sang. "He is a great king over all the earth. He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet." Then the moon fell behind the western ridge, and I shook the snow from my webbed feet, hung my ax head up in my belt, and left that crevice of content, following wrath, my friend, and thinking of Constance in my arms like new mown grass that stretches out in rows. My gun, a frozen wand of fire, gave shape to the air at my side.

At first light I came upon a doe with a hurt leg crouched in a tangle of thorns. I shot her when she tried to run and cut her haunches into strips. Inside my shirt, they clung hot to my skin. From her flank I took a piece the size and thickness of my mittened hands held palm to palm and ate it bloody as I went. A mob of little birds, gray bodied, black headed, met me where the dappled sun came through the hemlocks and lay upon my arms, the snow beneath my feet. Where a gully stopped and a stream purled in its secret, crusted bed, they disappeared. At Merrymeeting I turned west and reached Pejepscot when the western sun lay on the falling river like a kiss and on the broken fort, which those alive had fled, trudging south to us, Piscataqua, or Boston town.

In the fort's one room, I found the gnawed and shattered bones of six, one just a child, whose broken head inclined to touch her feet. I covered them with logs to save what there was left from wolves and birds. Wrath made me mad with grief. I lay upon their grave I'd made and prayed. When I came out the sun was down, but all around the air

glowed fierce and strange. On the rocks beside the falls, about as far away as Mr. Moody's from the meeting house, I saw a man with yellow eyes upon a face as red and shaggy as the northern bear's. Traps glittered on his back and breast. He had a pike to quell the beaver in his house. He turned and led me where I was to go.

The wind came up, and clouds. Snow shifted through the muttering trees. All that night and day and into dusk again, I followed him by Amerscoggan's side. At the place where the river bent, he stopped and spread his arms and shook his pike at the hooded sky. Snow swept like tears about his hairy face. "Jere," I heard him cry and saw his teeth. Then a squall blew off the pines, and he was gone. Where he had been hung insubstantial air. Beneath the bank on which he'd stood a spring burst out in surges that kept the water black and clear of ice. Like God, I climbed a rough skinned pine aslant the river's edge to watch, dragging my snowshoes after me, my ax, my gun. Among the boughs as sweet as stakes my father hewed to hold our salmon nets, I heard the Colonel's dogs begin to bark. The rankness of his camp came down the wind. Pushing my back against the hardened pitch, I drew the venison strip by strip from near my heart and chewed as night eased into day and heaven's snow filled up my tracks. By dawn the drifts shone spotless as a girl's skin. I primed my gun and charged it with four balls.

Captain Squidd came first, mincing through the trees like Satan's eldest son, attended by a tall and curly bitch, all black, who pricked her ears and romped. Where I had stood to take my snowshoes off and swing myself into the pine, the black bitch stopped and shoved her nose into the wind coiled snow and whined until the Captain grabbed her by the ear and led her down the bank. Side by side they kneeled and put their muzzles to the stream to drink, and afterwards they kissed with much ado. Laughing, Squidd beat her sides. She arched her back and sent her red tongue darting at the shriveled place where he had lost his eye. Coming from the river they passed beneath the limb whereon I sat and never thought of me in my pitchy cage, though the bitch looked at my tree's trunk with a loving eye, and for a moment her tail grew stiff. Wrath flitted round me, stroked my chin. I shut my eyes and let them live.

Next I heard voices like the sound of pebbles moving in the torrent's bed, and Sabatiste came plump and strutting with a crowd of girls. Into the spring they dipped their birch bark pails while Sabatiste, preening

on the bank, looked down. And one, the youngest so it seemed to me, looked back, and scooped a snowball from the watery edge and threw it in a sodden arc that broke to pieces on his thigh and left a mark, and all the women laughed. They left, and he walked close to her beneath my bough. I could have split their beaver hats, but Wrath said no. "To kill such as these," he whispered, "is to spit in God's eye."

At dusk the snow stopped, and the wind too, and the cold whined at my toes and ran a finger through my coat where the doe had lain against my belly's skin. Icicles hung from my brow. I lit my match and placed it in the lock. The fumes rose straight to my waiting mouth, and I sucked them in, nor did I make a sound. At last the Colonel came, walking with heavy steps and swaying like a tree, like my father when he wore the spotted ox coat at first, and it was new and stiff. On the trampled snow above the black pool, the Colonel paced and smoked and, muttering, made the cross upon his face and breast. Wrath ran a finger down my nose and touched my lips. Raising my gun, I blew the match until it flared with a little hiss that perhaps the Colonel heard, for he turned and threw his arms out to the sides, his eyes like carbuncles or the rings a trout makes on the calm of Chase's Pond. "Bow wow," he said, and "Perdonmoy," whose grieving sound was as sweet to me as the voice of God when he churns the deep or lays the clouds on Agamenticus.

I shot. The Colonel's cap jumped up, and yellow tassels sprouted from his head. Backwards he tumbled to the pulsing stream, and I dropped from my spy-hole after him. Though my legs were numb and pitched me on the snow, my arms were full of blood, and like a lobster with a broken tail I slithered to him. One ball had pushed his nose into his brains, and three had spread across his breast. Into the spring I shoved him, the water darker than his blood, and pushed him down. He rose. I pushed again, and still he rose and rolled and rose and would not sink until I struck him with my ax upon the heart, which made him throw his head and shoulders back and breathe a sigh. Face up he slipped below the ice, at which I cried one more and final time, "God damn you, Bombardeen," to speed him on, and shook my fist at the dark sign of him sliding towards the sea, and chopped the soulless ice four times, for father, mother, sister, brother, and chopped it once for Constance too, and that was the last curse that ever I spoke.

I found my gun where it had fallen, my snowshoes in the tree, and,

crouched behind a drift, Squidd's bitch, who groaned and fled, and so did I, not stopping until I reached the place where I had seen the moon brood on the islands in the desert sea, which now was lined with fire. I watched and saw the naked, perfect sun push its red head above the spotted world, too fierce and bright to gaze upon. It dropped God's glory straight into my heart and shoved me to my knees, my snowshoes crossed behind. I wept with joy and spoke such praise and thanks as loons might speak, or catamounts, or codfish stammering through their ruddy gills, or dogs that have run wild, asking God to save my soul and also that of Colonel Bombardeen, whom I had killed. And then I let wrath go, and God, for I had done no more than what was right, sent me the peace that passeth understanding, and wrath flew up in spite of Mr. Moody's eyes.