

A Field in Winter

by RV Staff Writer J.C.

The field lays barren in a cold as bitter as a morgue. It's forlorn and lost in time, sitting in a brittle winter light that is too weak to brighten the day and too feeble to cast a net of shadows.

Like a goose down quilt, the snow lays thick and smooth over the land, unbroken by any adventuresome step. For an acre in every direction, there is only white – the kind of nothingness that can taunt you like a writer's empty page. Not even Mother Nature remembers the flowers and seeds laying underneath like hidden treasure waiting to be discovered in the hull of a sunken pirate ship.

A speck of black in the gray sky grows bigger: a small, silent, solitary ghost. With a showy ruffle of wings, it lands on a sturdy little shrub at the edge of the field. A flash of scarlet and yellow on its shoulders stands out like military badges against its glossy black feathers; the bird preens and grooms without an audience to admire him. He warbles his song; a tiny coach whistling for other players to join his game, but there is no reply. As quickly as he arrives, he leaves again, vanishing into the heavens.

The ancient trees are weary with cold and can barely stand up any longer. The ethereal jingling of the ice-laden branches as they collide in the northern winds makes a lonely wind chime no one hears.

The rusted gate leans hard against the post like a tipsy king being held up by his sober courtier. Its gilded frame is chipped and tarnished, now just a faded memory of its former glory. It no longer stands sentry but has shifted open, allowing all of nature to waltz through its door into the abandoned palace.

Underneath it all, a warren of white rabbits slumber; soft balls of Angora rising and falling in synchronized rhythm; one heartbeat with many hearts. Ears twitching, they dream of greener days and a brilliant horizon bathed in gold.

Questions

1. Find three similes in the passage.
2. Find two metaphors and explain one of them in your own words.
3. Give one example of personification.
4. Is the field actually as empty as it first seems? Why or why not?