

Advent

by [Todd Outcalt](#) in the [December 14, 2010](#) issue

The leaves have at last slipped from the trees
And capped the snail trails along the concrete steps,
With winter tasks completed, windows caulked
Beside the smooth inebriations of chimney smoke.

We feel a portent wafting on cold breeze:
An omen marked by frost upon the panes.
The wind snatches the notes that we once spoke,
And in the silence children huddle like refrains.

The fires are stoked, the quilts folded with ease
Around the margins like an envelope,
And every hearth that opens its mouth to sing
Emits a fear not greater than its hope.