

The Quiet of the Year

In the quiet of the year,
the acorns fell softly among the golden leaves,
and were gathered quickly by the hungry squirrels.
And the oak tree thought, *I am sad because I will have no children,*
but I am happy that the squirrels are not hungry.

The year passed both quickly and slowly,
and when it was quiet again, the oak tree stood silently under the stars.
And again the acorns fell to the squirrels on the golden carpet.
And once more the tree thought, *I am sad because I will have no children,*
but I am happy that the squirrels are not hungry.

This happened yet again,
when the quick year had slowly passed to become quiet once more.
And the sad and happy tree continued to stand,
day after day, year after year,
dropping his acorns and thinking the same thoughts.

As the time neared for the oak to sleep, he thought,
I have never shared my sadness or happiness.
The next time my acorns fall,
I will tell the wind and the clouds and the stars that I am sad and happy.
And so he did.

And the wind listened, the clouds heard, and the stars understood.
And the smallest squirrel did not carry an acorn away as he had planned.
Instead, he dug a snug hole and dropped his treasure in.
He patted the dirt and golden leaves firmly down, and thought,
I am sad because I am hungry, but I am happy that the tree will have a child.

And the sad and happy squirrel did not need to say this aloud.
And the wind did not need to listen,
nor the clouds to hear, nor the stars to understand,
because the earth *knew*, and knew exactly what to do,
in the quiet of the year.