

Before Spring

Night. The mountains stab cold shadows
white and dark against the stars.
Crescent moon, smiling wanly,
dripping pale shadows of sagebrush,
scrub oak, and knapweed.
I turn, survey my wandering footprints—
blind and broken stitches
in the melting snow. Below them streetlights,
much like stars, shine blurred and warm
through this winter breeze,
and all around the headless stalks
of last year's wild grain shiver.
As usual, I climb here late, late—
when all is still, when only
the timid mule deer see and wonder
why I whisper to the stars,
and to anyone beyond them
who might be listening.
I pull my coat tighter, guard
against the night, the restive breeze,
the shifting seasons of the heart.

—Roger Terry

This poem was a finalist in the 2025 BYU Studies Poetry Contest.