

Dance of the Seasons

Martin Robertson

I Spring and Summer

The seasons come, the seasons pass.
Dog-rose in the hedge is answered
now by campion in the grass

while the grass-skirted poppy-dancer
dips to the wind her brilliant head
by time's rough gusts soon to be tonsured.

Spring came, and hardly come had fled
—footloose wanderer, not pretending
to stay us like our daily bread.

She's the wild gleam of heaven's sending.
Summer's slow spell is different from
hers, now from that long purse spending

blackberry-flowers in the bramble's room,
small-change for a cheapened purchase.
The seasons pass, the seasons come.

II Autumn and Winter

One by one winter puts out the torches.
The oak still holds its rust and the beech its red
but winds have washed the gold from the white birches.

Autumn is off where summer and spring have strayed,
scattering as she hurries her coloured riches.
Day by day, as the leaves are loosed and shed

and the stillness of the far solstice approaches,
clearer, blacker against the sky are spread
patterns of twigs, jutting from narrowing branches,

from stout, straight trunks—the armature where they laid
their fugitive creations, the three sweet witches.
The strongest beauty of all when all is said.