

## Winter

It was cold—, so ~~bitterly~~ cold. He lay on his back in the dirt, arms and legs spread at odd angles, as if he was about to make snow angels without ~~any~~ snow.

“What was that?!” he said.

“I’m not sure,” a voice answered.

The fading sun painted the ruined landscape in ruddy hues. Twisted piles of metal ~~turned~~ ~~glowed~~ bronze as they reached for the sky and sprawling mounds glittered like gold. He lay among them and fumed.

“How rude!” he exclaimed, “Damned North Wind tearing through here and knocking me on my backside! It’s not even October yet!”

“Are you alright?” the voice asked.

“Fine, fine,” he grumbled, “Just took me by surprise.”

He lay still, feeling out ~~the forming the~~ bumps and ~~bruising bruises~~ that were forming. ~~A headache was taking shape s~~ Somewhere in the back of his skull ~~a headache was taking shape.~~

“I’ll feel it tomorrow,” he ~~mused~~ said, “It’s ~~too~~ early for this kind of wind, don’t you think?”

The wind howled in protest.

He shivered and looked at the sky. ~~Colorless~~ clouds ~~were squeezing~~ the sunset into little blushing pockets. His breath steamed in the chilly air—tiny clouds ~~to add~~ adding to the big ones ~~above.~~

He swiveled his head from left to right so far that his ears touched the ground ~~on each~~ ~~side.~~ To his left, he could see a road between piles of rubble and ~~a~~ the cloudy sky above. To his

**Commented [AR1]:** Change per CMS 5.158 adverbial suffixes okay?

**Commented [AR2]:** WC: The verb ‘turned’ implies movement. Change okay?

**Commented [AR3]:** Note: Since he is still speaking, this can be one paragraph to keep dialogue attribution clear.

**Commented [AR4]:** Edit for passive voice okay?

**Commented [AR5]:** WC: change okay? Sometimes simpler words are best in dialogue.

**Commented [AR6]:** Is the character referencing the North Wind specifically? If so, you may want to change this to reflect that so it is clear that the character is acting, not just random wind.

**Commented [AR7]:** WC: Clouds aren’t generally colorless, especially at sunset Maybe change to simply ‘pale’ or ‘light.’

**Commented [AR8]:** Why past progressive tense? Consider changing to just ‘squeezed’ for simplicity.

right, the ground ran flat but for ~~some mounded trash and the gouges of-made by bulldozers and~~ ~~the mounded trash~~. In the distance he picked out lines of scrawny pine trees ~~under more clouds~~.

**Commented [AR9]:** Edit for clarity okay? This way there is no confusion that the trash mounds made gouges.

**Commented [AR10]:** Deletion okay? It feels redundant.

“They call this Kendal Yards?” he ~~said~~~~asked~~. ~~“Not much of a ‘Kendal’~~, more like a ~~“junk”~~ yard.”

**Commented [AR11]:** What is a Kendal? Will the reader know what that is?

**Commented [AR12]:** FYI: Junkyard is one word per MW

“Yes,” the voice agreed. “But that’s just the official name. Most people call it the ~~“rail~~ yard.”

**Commented [AR13]:** No single quotes needed here per CMS 7.60

“God only knows how it got that name,” he ~~snorted~~ as he looked at the nearest pile of dirt. Twisted railroad tracks poked out ~~of the ground~~ at odd angles, as if the hill had a nasty case of ~~bed~~ head.

**Commented [AR14]:** WC: this is an awkward word choice, since it is difficult to talk as you snort. Consider changing to possibly ‘scoffed’, or rework sentence to ‘he snorted derisively and said...’

**Commented [AR15]:** Addition for clarity okay?

**Commented [AR16]:** FYI: Bed head is two words per MW. No hyphen needed.

“I’d call it a tribute to construction...or destruction...or both. Why am I here again?” he asked.

“The seasons,” the voice said patiently. “You’re here for the change, the leaves.”

“Ah,” he said. “Now I remember. The business of Autumn.”

He flopped his head from ~~right to left this time~~, focusing on a dump truck ruts that led ~~from junk pile to one~~ junk pile ~~to the next~~.

**Commented [AR17]:** LOGIC: this is reversed from earlier. Currently he is looking to the left at the ruts and trash, but before he was seeing them on his right.

**Commented [AR18]:** Edit to remove repetition okay?

“Still, I ~~ought to have~~~~should’ve~~ picked a better place to start. This one is unforgivably ugly.”

**Commented [AR19]:** WC: This feels like a very formal word in what has been a very informal conversation. Change okay?

He picked his head up off the ground and looked down over his feet. Broken earth sloped away, between heaps of rock and metal. A gurgling melody drifted to him from a river beyond.

“Nothing dampens her spirits, does it?” he ~~snorted~~~~said~~, ~~nodding his head in the direction of the~~ ~~river~~.

**Commented [AR20]:** WC: again, it is difficult to talk and snort. Edit okay?

“No, I don’t suppose it does.” ~~t~~he voice replied.

“Can’t figure rivers,” he continued, “Year in and year out they’re on with the same babble and trill, ~~sometimes louder, sometimes and~~ softer. Old Man Winter freezes them. Spring thaws quicken them. ~~Old Man Winter freezes them.~~ But they don’t stop. No, they babble and sing like there’s no tomorrow. You’d think they’d get sick of it.”

“Do you get tired of the leaves?” the voice asked, “The colors of fall?”

“Point taken,” he said.

Across the valley, beyond his feet, he could see a city of a million lights. They glittered gold and white like the sun on the sea. Above the city, the sky was still a brilliant canvas of reds and oranges between the clouds.

“How long do you think, before they notice?” he asked, “How long before they realize he’s almost here?”

“It’s hard to tell,” the voice said.

“Harder, since the cities popped up,” he added, “I suppose it won’t be long now, not with this demon wind around.” The wind tugged at him coyly. “Do you think they remember?”

“Remember what?” the voice asked.

“How he rides ~~it~~ the wind south. How he drags his icy claws over everything. How he steals the warmth. Do you think they remember him?”

“No, I doubt it.”

“You’re probably right,” he said, then sighed, “They’re too insulated now. Not like the old days.”

“Those were hard days,” the voice countered.

“~~Yes,~~ Bbut they had more heart. You disagree?” he asked.

“No.”

**Commented [AR21]:** Move okay? This makes sense as the first action, so there is something for Spring to thaw.

**Commented [AR22]:** Is spring a named character like Old Man Winter?

**Commented [AR23]:** Moved to earlier in paragraph.

**Commented [AR24]:** STRUCTURE: This section seems a bit off topic and is distracting from the main point of the story. If it is really important, consider elaborating and showing the reader why the mention of the river is important. If it isn’t really that important, it could be cut.

**Commented [AR25]:** This is a really nice phrase. Good visual.

**Commented [AR26]:** LOGIC: Earlier, the clouds were colorless and the only color was the pockets between the clouds. Addition okay?

**Commented [AR27]:** This phrase was a little confusing and ambiguous. Addition okay?

**Commented [AR28]:** Again, is the North Wind?

**Commented [AR29]:** Clarification of ‘it’ okay?

**Commented [AR30]:** This is another great visual phrase!

“I thought as much.”

He stretched his arms and legs out as far as they would go, then took a deep breath and blew it out as hard as he could.

“Think I could be the wind?” he asked.

“Do you want to be?”

“Maybe. Nobody seems to care for Autumn anymore.”

“That’s not true,” the voice said, “Y-you care.”

He ignored the voice and listened to the wind. It whispered promises of ice and snow as it headed for the city.

“He’s early. Too early. Why is he so damned early?” he asked, annoyed.

“The seasons don’t quite-always work to-on a schedule,” the voice offered.

“I bet the old goat has an icicle in his cap for some fool reason. Not even Halloween and he’s set to freeze me out. No regard, none at all.”

—“Indeed,” the voice lamented, “Old Man Winter will have the countryside whitewashed before Thanksgiving.”

—He sighed, “And Thanksgiving is my favorite. The color, the contrast. You can’t have a proper Thanksgiving when it looks like Christmas. Did he even think about that?”

—“I don’t know,” said the voice. “You could ask.”

—“There’s no asking the Old Man. No regard-consideration for anyone, that one. I’d just as soon go get the river to stop singing.”

—He arched his back and pointed his chin to the sky so he could see behind himabove his head. Darkening clouds stretched as far as he could see. They promised snow, lots and lots of snow.

**Commented [AR31]:** STRUCTURE: This is another area that is a bit off topic. It doesn’t really add much to the story. Consider cutting it.

**Commented [AR32]:** If you choose to cut the section above, this transition should be revised or cut as well.

**Commented [AR33]:** Clarify dialogue attribution okay?

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**Commented [AR34]:** WC: revision to change repetition okay?

**Commented [AR35]:** If you decide to cut the earlier passage about rivers, this should be revised or cut as well.

**Commented [AR36]:** LOGIC: if his back is on the ground, behind him would be the ground. Revision okay?

**Commented [AR37]:** Edit okay? The clouds earlier were colorless, but this shows that they are changing.

—“Well, look at that. It’ll look like January by breakfast if this keeps on up.”

—“Such is life,” the voice chided.

—“Maybe *this* life. Maybe so. But I don’t have to like it.”

—“You could ask for better weather. Something warm.”

—“Yeah, I’ll ask. Warmer, but not too warm. It’s not natural. Like a too-early wind.

Either way, the leaves ~~are will be~~ ruined—it’ll rain. They’ll be a soggy, matted mess.” he complained.

—“Better a soggy mess than nothing. Out of sight ~~and~~ out of mind.”

—“You’re right. Better wet leaves than no leaves. Thanksgiving isn’t Thanksgiving without leaves. And there’s always next year.”

—“That’s the spirit,” the voice said. “Are you going to get started now?”

—“No, not now.”

—“But, the snow.”

—“Not now,” he interrupted. “This is my time and if I start now I’ll be rushed. Winter or no Winter.”

—He relaxed and looked up again. The clouds had finally choked all the color out of the sky. Night was falling. The temperature was dropping.

—Tiny ice crystals began to fall. They billowed and swirled around the piles of junk, gathering up in groups, growing from a dusting to a veil, then from a veil to a blanket.

—He sighed again.

—“Tell that crusty miser that I’ll not be rushed,” he said to the wind. “Autumn comes and goes as it pleases.”

—Then he closed his eyes and thought warm thoughts.

**Commented [AR38]:** This phrase is a little awkward. Either ‘keeps up’ or ‘keeps on going’ sound a bit more natural. Edit okay?

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**Commented [AR39]:** WC: why is the voice chiding? A spirit of nature would maybe be more concerned about such an unnatural event instead of scolding Autumn for being upset.

**Commented [AR40]:** What isn’t natural? The early winter, or warmer weather? Please clarify.

**Commented [AR41]:** FYI: Hyphenate modifier.

**Commented [AR42]:** Dialogue attribution okay?

**Commented [AR43]:** Is a pause intended here? Otherwise a comma is not needed.

**Commented [AR44]:** Edit per CMS 13.41 Okay? Em dash indicates interruption, while elapses indicate trailing speech.

**Commented [AR45]:** Addition okay? Otherwise the phrase could read “I’ll not be rushed.” It just needed a little clarity.

**Commented [AR46]:** Is this referencing the season winter, or the character Old Man Winter? If it is only the season then it should be lower case. Please clarify.

**Commented [AR47]:** This is a great visual phrase!

**Commented [AR48]:** LOGIC: The story begins in September, which is still mostly summer, so how can it be snowing already? Perhaps revise the timing to October? Snow would still be fairly early, but not impossible.

**Commented [AR49]:** Very nice!

**Commented [AR50]:** So far he has been conversing with just a voice. Is the voice the wind? Or is he saying this to the voice? Please clarify.

## **Style Sheet**

### **References**

*Chicago Manual of Style*, 17<sup>th</sup> edition

*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11<sup>th</sup> edition

### **Punctuation**

Use serial comma

Follow CMS 7.60 Common Expressions and figures of speech (p2, no need for single quotes)

Follow CMS 6.85 Em dashes instead of commas, parenthesis, or colons (p1, used to amplify phrases)

Follow CMS 13.41 Faltering speech or incomplete thoughts (p5)

### **Capitalization**

Follow Chicago 8.88- seasons are lowercase, EXCEPT when referring to character names

Autumn

Old Man Winter

Follow Chicago 8.46, lowercase points of the compass when indicating direction, EXCEPT when referring to character names

North Wind

### **Capitalized Word List**

Autumn

Christmas

Halloween

January

Kendal

Kendal Yards

North Wind

Old Man Winter

Spring

Thanksgiving

### **Word List**

alright

backside

billowed

breakfast

brilliant

bulldozers

canvas

construction

contrast

countryside  
coily  
crusty  
crystals  
destruction  
fumed  
glittered  
gouges  
gurgling  
headache  
insulated  
landscape  
matted  
million  
miser  
mounded  
patiently  
promises  
rail yard  
railroad  
regard  
rubble  
scrawny  
soggy  
squeezing  
stretched  
swirled  
swiveled  
tribute  
tugged  
twisted  
unforgivably  
weather  
whispered  
whitewashed