

HERMIT

Lee Slonimsky

Joe Apple is a hermit in these woods;
he's lived here now for nearly forty years.
His way of life is not well understood;
why does he choose to live with owls and deer?

I saw him once, about ten years ago,
a dark skinned slender man with long gray beard
in threadbare coat, amidst the twilight snow,
his eyes so far away as he came near.

I opened up my mouth to speak—he ran
and disappeared across a ridge with caves—
he vanished like the wind, this forest man
long rumored to inhabit caves' gray maze.

Sometimes at night I salve my solitude
by walking in the woods that Joe ran through.

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