

Weird Tales

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BIRCH TREES

by MARVIN LUTER HILL

Birch trees have talked to me on many a night,
They whispered ghostly tales in words of white,
And syllabled with light.
Their leaves have sighed
Of how men died
By quick swords,
 glistening
In moonlight, where the spring
Trickled in mire
That turned to liquid fire.

And when their flesh was dust,
Their stark bones gleaming in
Moon-textures wan and thin,
Would rise and thrust
Their flashing blades into
Each other—sulfur-blue
Those swords were seen
Darting between
Their ribs—worm-eaten clean—
Till blood, like moonbeams, dripped
To the ground, where they skipped—
Fighting and grinning,
Feinting and spinning,
Until the dawn
Glimmered—and they were
gone!

They told of how birds
 came,
As thick as clouds at sunset, bringing buds
Of crimson in their beaks till all the woods
Were a glory of flame!
And the creeks would essay
To flow uphill, their spray—
A tangle of light on the breeze—
Spiraling over the trees.

Oh, I have seen
Tall birch trees lean
Along the moonlight, dwelling
On memories, and telling
Them to the night
In words of white.

