

# The Daily Astronomer

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**The Astronomy of the Branches**  
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**S**how no love to the stars.

Bestow no affection onto incandescent punctures of the cold firmament. For, contained within the cosmic climes are but indifferent spheres of sterile fire: radiating away creations potent flames into the chill of the soulless infinite.

It is not toward the sky that the admiring mind can comprehend the message of astronomy. It is not on charts of meridians and orbits that we'll know the truth it offers.

Instead, it is there....over there in the field of deepest snow....where a quiet old man trudges slowly toward a tree long since made barren by pitiless time. It is there, by the same man who expends his failing strength to snap away the weakest branches from the aged tree. He tucks them gingerly under his arm and makes his painful trek away from that field....that field of his blooming youth where his vague memory traces nestle in silence under winter shrouds. He never looks behind him, but instead moves in deliberate steps....his feet snapping the crust of once tranquil snow. At the edge of his periphery, a crimson Sun settles below the horizon.

Yes, it is there...in the cottage to which he returns with his bundle nestled in gentle arms. Astronomys deepest truth embedded in the yawning silence of the cottage room...in the sleepy shadows in the cusps of the sofa the old man now regards with a fragile smile. I've got them, he declares in a voice that could scarcely rustle dust. I found it straight

away...as though it were waiting for me....it has waited a long time for my return....but it is still there... he says with a sudden pitch, like that of a child gladdened by thoughts of more pleasant dreams. He brings the branches to the fireplace and lays them on newspaper. He turns to look behind him. I promised us this, he says quietly to a sofa that seems to regard him curiously, as though it were bending its neck slightly and smiling to itself.

He lights the newspaper and makes his way to the sofa: to the sofa where she sat....where they sat...and now where he sits alone. Yet, he knows the astronomy of the branches: he knows that in the ignited flames of frozen branches lays dormant the distilled starfire of summers long past. The branches catch the spark and smolder. He turns to speak to nothing. Our Sunlight is coming back...

Pouring out before him is the energy of those many afternoons: the afternoon that they were as young as morning and as free as air: the afternoon when she teased his hair and kissed his cheek to make him blush....and the other afternoon when he grabbed her hand and made her giggle at the sounds of his adoring verses....and much later on a particular afternoon, when he said he was not afraid of Germany, before kissing her cheek and making her weep...and much later still, when the world awoke from madness to see them standing united under the flourish of foliage of the tree that retained all their shared sunlight. The tree that stood steadfast in that mid-Spring evening, when they spoke nothing in words, but chose to dance slowly together under the stars of Orion.

The embers are cooling, he whispers while reaching for the unyielding upholstery that so recently wicked away the last traces of her fragrances. But I dont want to sleep just yet.

He arises with pain, but continues still to the door. The ruddy sheen of the ash-enshrouded embers guide him out into the deep winter night. He steps uneasily into enveloping clouds of his own labored breath.

How beautiful it all remains...and not a moment has elapsed up there in the play fields of the gods.

The tired old man glances for a moment out into the darkness... out into the haven of crystalline shimmers of ice...where spirits nestle in sylvan clusters and laugh in whispers...into the darkness where the spring blossoms will soon unfurl under the benevolent Moon to capture its shimmer in pre-dawn dew beads. And into this enchanted realm he takes his dissolving moment to murmur the secret...

We grabbed the morsels of starlight when you offered them to us. Yes, by God, we did that.

And though his bones ache, and his knees are weak...though the chill is biting and the sleep weighs on his eyes, this quiet old man steps gently onto the field...and, under the spell of joys rekindled, smiles faintly under the stars of Orion.

