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## ***Sean's Retort***

Howard Tessler

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### *Sean's Retort*

#### **Abstract**

I hunt to fill my table; to sate my hunger.

#### **Additional Keywords**

Poetry; Sean's Retort; Howard Tessler

# SEAN'S RETORT

by Howard Tessler

*I hunt to fill my table;  
to sate my hunger.  
Pheasant and stag  
fall to my bow;  
lie still before my hounds.  
But I ride through my woods  
and not your dreams.*

*Once you, too, ate red meat  
at my table, laughed  
at the play of men  
before a lit fire.  
You drank your fill of wine:  
your lips wet, your cheeks flushed.  
You smelt of cloves and scented water.*

*That night I learnt not  
of ancient lore, nor heard  
the words of minstrel's song;  
but saw myself in your black eyes  
and washed in your body  
'til morning's light.*

*A child rose  
as sun follows moon.  
With the skin of a winter's fire --  
this child's days will be of dreams,  
her nights of peace-filled sleep.*

*When, dear lady,  
did you put 'round your shoulders*

*a cloak of chaste wool?  
Abandon silk and fur?  
And when did Grace fall  
from your eyes? Or life  
spring 'round your feet?*

*What manner of pilgrim  
prays at your place of rest,  
Fair Lady of my bed?  
And what leaves he behind?*

*What bonds held you captive in my arms?  
We shared the day; walked 'round  
the garden's pond.  
But when, fair lady, did I walk in your dreams?  
When did I hold shut your eyes  
to the open sky?  
When did I weigh heavy  
on your sweet body?*

*You speak of blood on frost?  
True, I am a huntsman  
and have filled December's woods  
with the cries of death  
and the smell of blood.  
But dear Lady, speak you of frost in blood?  
I ask you to name my hunter.  
I speak of one who hunts  
not stags but men  
and leaves cold ash  
where once lay burning faggot.*