

On a withered branch
a crow has come to perch –
at dusk in autumn.

The beckoning of winter
Calls the fear of early frost

Light offers little
Warmth is much harder to find
When the days are short

The sickle moon beams above
While the grey landscape slumbers.

His call cuts crisp air
By piercing the silent calm
Just before darkness

The fall colors all fade now
As the shadows grow longer

Crisp brown leaves crackle
Unknown visitors approach
Crow, silent, waiting

The exhausted hikers stop
Embraced in nature's beauty

The brisk chill freshens.
Above, the bold Hunter strides.
The dim trail beckons.

Curiously the crow thinks
That smell - coffee and woodsmoke

Backpack cast aside
Left open for all to see-
Swift descent, a prize!

Cautious, curious, wonders
What to take? Perhaps a key.

A key, a clue, what?
Maybe what to leave behind
Calms the restless heart

A ring of keys - lo behold
Some shiny, some dull, all his!

Unlocking nothing
For autumn's ink-winged phantom,
His domain the sky.

Soaring high, the keys in flight
In-nest landing, the final site.

He and mate built nest
Eggs then chicks to raise and fledge
Now hold new treasures.

Thick mists rise from the damp ground
Gentle rain catches the light

One enters with four
Hooves, silent and full of grace
Prepared to take flight,

Crow startles, wary, watching
Then sees only gentle friend

So quick, doe takes flight –
White tail flashes out of sight –
Crow alone watches.

Then lonely for company
He flies back to the campground

Charcoal turned to soot
Fluffle of rabbits appear
Noses search for crumbs

As they scrounge for the last bits
Before settling in their den

Crow watching by night
Waits for breaking morning light
To begin anew.

The rising sun - cold, crisp day
Restores the bright fall colors

Campers awaken,
Stretch, groan, slow to get going
Stir fire's ashes

Outdoor sleep settles the soul
Breathing strength to weary bones

Crows, does, and rabbits
Sharing their space with hikers
Cool autumn daybreak.

Your keys are now in my nest.
Flora and fauna say "Thanks."

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