

Bourne
toWrite...
creative writing
workshops

The Wood in Autumn and Winter

by Penny Jones

Oh, to be in Sussex
Now that Autumn's there,
And whoever walks in Sussex
Through the damp trees and the mud stick
Finds on the moss wood floor,
Buttery with field maple and hornbeam
And the stars of the checker tree thick,
The ground churned where the fallow and the roe
Have crossed the swollen stream
In search of sedge, saplings or a straying doe

And after, when winter follows
And snow builds in the blackened hollows
The prints of woodland creatures show where they creep
In silence broken only by the pheasant's whirr,
In search of food in the ghyll's chill deep,
Scratching by fern, lichen, oak and fir.
Until alerted by the brief song of a robin who has stirred
They move on softly, unseen and unheard
Through the frosted grass, where shadows cast
Across the white ridges, signal the return of sun at last.