Aldo's Last Words

William Stafford

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ALDO'S LAST WORDS

When the sentries came over to talk about the verdict, we began to study our blankets. We wanted to be survivors.

Beyond the stockade it was about two hundred yards of open to the forest. Nothing was out there beyond, except wilderness, and whatever waited.

"I do not believe what the wind pretends to be saying." Aldo's voice did not try to hide, but the guards were used to his talk, and as usual he slurred, and spoke roundabout.

"No," I said.

"The storm will be tomorrow."

"Yes," I said.

"But there will be this clear space before dawn, before we sleep."

"Yes," I said.

And in that space Aldo told me these things, or acted some of them out, before they killed him in the morning and let me go:

Mostly, grass is in favor.

Thorns are cynical, and trees don't care about us, but they are good neighbors.

Many who side with us have purposes that swing wide of ours.
Sometimes the borders and the people who live there want to enter their own capital.

Suddenly a quiet dog will bark for days and lap water all night in order to live.

Hands are strange—they touch brick and moss, wander the walls, conduct something, a song no one has got around to singing. They want whatever life can offer. At the last they reach.

In the morning when the sentries came I watched Aldo walk away saying:

Rescue me, Day.
Hands, be my friends.
I want to give you everything I own.