

A Night with a Wolf

by James Bayard Taylor (abridged)

High on the lonely mountain
Where the wild men watched and waited;
Wolves in the forest, and bears in the bush,
And I on my path belated*.

The rain and the night together
Came down, and the wind came after,
Bending the props* of the pine tree roof
And snapping many a rafter*.

I crept along in the darkness,
Stunned and bruised and blinded...
Crept to a fir with thick-set boughs,
And a sheltering rock behind it.

There, from the blowing and raining,
Crouching I sought to hide me;
Something rustled, two green eyes shone,
And a wolf lay down beside me.

Little one, be not frightened;
I and the wolf together,
Side by side through the long, long night,
Hid from the awful weather.

His wet fur pressed against me;
Each of us warmed the other;
Each of us felt in the stormy dark
That beast and man were brother.

And when the falling forest
No longer crashed in warning,
Each of us went from our hiding place
Forth in the wild wet morning.

Glossary

belated — running late

props — supports for a roof

rafter — a beam that supports a roof

