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Final Essay
Timeless Inevitability

Not a sound stirs, not a drip, nor a drop. The world is silent and cold and dark. Dark, except for two nearby street lamps radiating lifeless, fluorescent light, and following their shadows sits a house. A house tucked behind bushes drooping with icicles. It's been months since lights have brightened the now barren floors and empty closets.

But months ago, when that family was home, the house knew livelier days. A wreath decorated the door, covered in pinecones and red-ribbons and upon entering, a blast of heat warmed the frozen fingers and nose. Boots stood stiffly by the door, dripping with ice and slush, until the winter vanished.

As the sun rises, the shadows retreat indoors. The dinging of railroad guards welcomes the new dawn, and day after day, morning after morning, the Earth warms and wakens, until gradually, almost as if an artist gently erases the snow and the cold, the first bud appears. Droplets run down the windows, collecting and melting the last of the frost off the panes. The house shakes loose curls of shrunken paint. Blossoms emerge on the yard's fringe, bursting with fragrance and color; children run by and into the house, a season's worth of dust and disease tumble into the sweet, chilled air, only to be dispersed into the wind.

Upon the first signs of life, the garden was tended to: perennials of royal purple and sunny yellow planted with care. Bikes came down off the porch and pumped with new air. Shovels were locked away, and instead hoses brought out, indicating impending change.

With the explosion of heat, smells and colors, the lawns thicken, barbecue smoke hangs in layers, and the sound of children laughing and running barefoot fills the air. The house joins in. The door swings wide open welcoming in guests; windows transform to screens; friends and

neighbors stroll through with lemonade; children come from the beach, spilling sand around the house, tickling the floorboards; rain from afternoon storms rolls through the gutters, splashing and spilling, flooding into the driveway. The house glows with the vivacity of life.

Lawn chairs were laid out, and water balloons filled to capacity. Steaks grilled to medium rare, and bushes were trimmed with precision and red berries grew ripe, until the sun began to set.

Tangibly; air catches fire, as do the leaves, burning bright with oranges and reds and yellows; aging until ripe for their last journey in a flurry of wind – whirling and spinning, swooning and swaying, to rain upon children giggling all the way up to school. The house fashions a fedora of maple and oak and Gingko leaves, and as the children calmly return home, the aroma of fresh baked home apple pie wafts through the rooms. Lights flicker on as orange melts to blue.

Rakes replaced the hoses, and large piles rose up. Backpacks sat near the front door, the sound of chewing apples with caramel filled the air. Bonfires died down to candles.

Until the first chill of cold snuffs out the last wisp of fire, and soon the warmth of light spills out through the frost encrusted windows. The moon rises over the drifts of snow, caked in glinting ice. Stars burn with celestial mystique, and beneath them, the house sits in darkness, and, with no ears to hear it, the wind moans without a sound.