

## By Moon and Star

Be'lakor

Fifteen times the leaves had shorn,  
Trode by boy and beast  
Kith and kin to fare him well  
The youngling parted east

The rite was whet and worn with time,  
As sons dared risk unseen  
Mere passage had convinced the herd  
And none defied routine

Eyes, fixed afar - a trial to come  
Now, his suffering - only begun

He journeyed deep into the woods,  
And took no drink or food  
Desperate to become a man,  
'Fore stupor choked his mood

Carrion gloated at each step,  
In dreams the evil milled  
Doubting every sickened thought  
Depraved against his will

Eyes, turn inwards - observe with hate  
Now, this suffering - will not abate

Growing weakness in his gait  
He slumped beneath the sun  
Each bleeding foot began to weep  
Skin and bone was one

Rousing with a fitful gasp  
He crawled on tattered knees  
And bound for home by moon and star  
His trial was complete

Staggers carried him to town  
His joy was soon to shed  
Kith and kin would greet him not  
For each one was dead

The sixteenth leaves began to fall  
Indifferent, they withstood  
Now, a man with nothing left  
He turned back for the woods