

# Black Capped Chaplains

The Deadfly Ensemble

One

Father Kelly argues capably; he quantifies the flames of hell.  
But I'm a young man not immune to winter's fingers and perfume.  
Cider, wood smoke, blanketed lanes, black-capped chaplains cha-  
tter in the treetops; laughing in the boughs they preach a way  
of mischief this December day.

Two

Sullen orchards frosted, glowering, horses shod with soot and l-  
ost but glowing embers, old November chimneys breathing blacken-  
ed breath. Shiny noses, reddened cheeks, buttered rum and laden  
mantelpieces act like creases in a well-  
worn tavern yuletide grin.

Three

Dusk induces shops of cinnamon, clockwork mice and gaily-colore-  
d cloth to burst with heady flights of boisterous, bounding, bl-  
oodstained light. Snowflakes shine like retinal haloes! Church  
bells all but mute, yet I tiptoe, slipping past the headstones  
into the woods where a pretty girl promised me that she would!

Four

Gifts and forfeits, coy and ribbon-bound, given, coaxed, unwrap-  
ped, surrendered. Hearts are leaking, spirits set on wreaking c-  
haos-love duets. Suppertime, eggnog, pipes alight! A song in th-  
e lungs of mortal merriment! These are days unbent with cheer!  
The animated deathtime of the year!