



## Wildfowler's World

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Storm racked marsh, the winds wild howl,  
The flickering shape of fighting fowl,  
But wind and snow or driving rain  
All serve to draw one back again.

Advancing waves pound at the mud,  
The tideline's stacked with drifted wood.  
And waders paddle at water's edge,  
Till driven back amongst the sedge.

But comes the dawn with storm's wild howl,  
And they'll be back in search of fowl,  
For wind and snow and driving rain  
Will surely draw him back again.

It's lying out in a night's hard frost;  
It's the birds he's downed and the birds he's lost;  
It's a blazing sky at sunset time;  
It's marshland covered with frosty rime.

It's whimbrel's call and teal's wild flight  
As it zips away in deepening night  
It's ragoon oil and flannel patches,  
Barrels, stocks and safety catches.

The storm will pass as all storms will,  
The marshland lies there, quiet, still.  
The zephyr plays midst reed and sedge,  
And sparkles flash at tideline edge.

This then is the fowlers world,  
Merse and mere, storm flag unfurled.  
For wind and snow and driving rain  
Will surely call YOU back again.

To hear once more the plaintive call,  
The curlew's cry beyond the wall,  
As lapwings dip and dive and soar  
And small, dark teal go rocketing o'er.

At morning flight midst gathering storm,  
Sit man and dog, they think of home.  
Of roaring fire and cup of cheer  
And tales to tell with glass of beer.

A fowler's world is many things,  
It's guns and shells and birds' leg rings;  
Water, mud and geese and fowl;  
And round the neck a sodden towel.

It's trees and streams and places wild,  
Delight him as they would a child.  
It's powder, primers, the big gun's roar,  
It's skylark's song as he sees it soar.

The sea's salt smell and booming thunder,  
Lowering sky that's rent asunder;  
Shafts of sunlight, yellow, gold –  
All memories to treasure as he grows old.

Till once again the storm god sings,  
And brings the beat of a thousand wings.  
Then wind and snow and driving rain,  
Will merely call him back again.

- J.M. Porter