Six humans trapped by happenstance
in dark and bitter cold.
Each one possessed a stick of wood
or so the story's told.

Their dying fire in need of logs
the first woman held hers back.
For of the faces around the flame
she noticed one was black.

The second man looking all about
saw no one of his church
and couldn't bring himself to give
the fire his stick of birch.

The rich man sat and thought
of all the wealth he had in store
why should his stick be used to warm
the lazy, shiftless poor?

The poor man sat in tattered clothes
he gave his coat a hitch
no way would he let his stick be used
by the greedy selfish rich.

The black man bitter and full of rage
held his oak branch tight.
For all he saw in his stick of wood
was a chance to spite the white.

The last man of this forlorn group
did nothing except for gain
giving only to those who gave
was how he played the game

The branches held in fate's cruel hands
was proof of human sin.
They didn't die from the cold without
they died from THE COLD WITHIN.