

John K. Samson

"Letter in Icelandic from the Ninette San"

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You'll recall from the sagas I hope Grettir's last stand
at Drangey
How his grip on the sword made his enemies cut off his
hand
If he'd fled here instead, and had tasted this terrible
coffee
Or read these letters you sent he'd surrender, and lay
the blade down

And it's Halloween
Skinny ghosts dress like cowboys and rest at the railing
by my door
On their way from the children's ward

Bev Monroe and his Pembina Valley boys play at the
party
And I practice my English on nurses, "Oh, that's a nice
name."
And they may ask for mine, but the burns on my back
from the x-rays
Say I shouldn't show anyone anything ever again

In another year
I'll be buried or shivering here.
Coughing at the grey spittoon
Painted orange by the harvest moon

Pack up mother's clothes
Drive her down to the new Betel Home
Sell the boat to Arnison
And then go stand up straight
In the place you're longing for
And don't write to me anymore

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