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Story of the Northland

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Oh list to my story, Of the Northland hoary,
Where winter is night and the wild winds blow,
And the air is white with the driving snow;
And the malmute's wail As they speed on the trail,
Like a shriek of despair Floats out on the air,
When it's forty below And the raging winds blow.

Good comrades together, in cold and rough weather,
Have started at last, Over hills high and white,
And plains wide and vast Towards the great Northern Light.
There's a big strike of gold Farther north, they are told.
They've traveled for days, When the gathering haze
At length seems to warn Of a coming storm.

Mush! Mush! How they go! O'er the crunching snow;
Hear the driver shout To the galloping steed,
As Husky leads out And Nig shows his speed;
And the morning, then noon, With its twilight gloom
Change quick into night With nothing in sight,
Save the fury born Of an Arctic storm.

The snowflakes fly, As swift thru the sky,
As if they would chase The shrieking air,
And the wind in the race Is everywhere:
The shimmering moon has heard the tune,
And hides its fright From the bellowing night,
And the cold is intense, As the darkness is dense.

God pity! They're lost! And this is the cost
Of hunting for gold And risking the blight
Of the Arctic cold In the winter's night;
With many a shout They wander about,
And pray, forlorn In the piercing storm,
With those wild waves of sound Dashing round them and round.

The good dogs try With pitiful cry
To face the storm While from eyes and ears
They see at morn Bursting blood with tears,
And shivering Jack That night so black
Laid down on the trail With a dying wail
And the wind, loud and long, Sang his funeral song.

They struggle in vain With hunger and pain;
The stormking reigns, And all things in fright,
On hill or plain Have fled out of sight:
All hope they abandon, And ramble at random,
While the winds still blow The maddened snow,
And the storm's ceaseless surge Sounds a funeral dirge.

Have they caught sight Of a road house light?
'Tis a beam afar, Revealed in their eyes,
Thru the gates ajar Like a beam from the skies,
And who can tell How soon to them fell,
A soul's sweet rest that comes to the blest,
And stormless days In Heaven's bright rays.

Their only grave mound Is white and round.
'Twas built by the storm to hide from the sight

Of travelers at morn His work of the night.
And perhaps a Mother, Or- some other,
Thinks as she prays, 'How long he stays',
But looks long in vain For him home again.

For many, the poem might be read
at your birthday celebration for me
and her 80th birthday,
Aunt Martha