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## CHERYL R. COWTAN

### A Wreath of Memories

A basket of pine cones  
sat in my mother's cellar.  
After a few dusty years,  
I couldn't help but ask her.

Why did you not leave these  
outside for the squirrels?  
Why gather up pine cones?  
Such seed dropping whorls!

She tipped out the basket,  
sorting the cones into piles.  
Then described each discovery  
right down to tree aisles.

"Jack Pine from your Nanny's  
last home before she died.  
Red Cedar buds from the place  
we lived on seventh line.

On the canoe portage  
of my sweet honeymoon.  
Your father and I found  
these giant, wooden blooms."

She held a Hemlock seed.  
"Oh yes, and this one.  
I found in your forest,  
when your first son was born."

My tears dripped down slowly,  
as she shared her memories.  
I had judged her kind heart  
over a few dusty seeds.

She glued all the pine cones  
into a beautiful wreath,  
and before she passed on,  
she passed the memories to me.

*Cheryl R Cowtan, a proud mother of two, attends York University's Education and English programmes. Formerly a Social Worker, Cheryl often writes about social issues. She is currently working on a poetry manuscript about violence against women.*