



*Photo courtesy of Michelle Harris-Love*

*Michelle Harris-Love is a professor and researcher in Washington, DC, where she studies how the brain reorganizes to support recovery following stroke. Growing up on a farm in southeastern Minnesota, she developed a love for both science and the arts. She finds that they both, at their core, require the same things of us: curiosity, exploration, wonder, attentiveness to life—and, as reflected in her poem, perseverance.*

## Minnesota is a Temperamental Artist

MICHELLE HARRIS-LOVE

Minnesota is a temperamental artist.  
An elitist, really.  
A cynic, some say.

She tests the art-seeker with skeptical eyes;  
challenging his desire for the art.  
Doubting it.

Doubting he is strong enough for art.

If he does not become a cynic himself,  
and go looking elsewhere,  
or stop looking,

If he remains with the artist,  
near to her side,  
watching her moods,  
watching the eyes that squint coldly into his,  
and does not seek shelter,

the testing goes on.

Blown to weariness with a thousand gusts of wind,  
stung raw with needles of ice,  
burned with cold,  
and burned with heat,  
until wise to the deception of the sun.

Chilled and burned and opened,

he lies pierced and weeping

before the great falls,  
the great lake,  
the great prairie,

and the artist's wet, silent eyes,

and sees. 🌿