The Sound of Snow

Snow falls in the dusk of Connecticut. The stranger
Looks up to the glutenous sky, and it is remembrance
That tickles the end of his nose like the fingertips
Of a child and remembrance that touches the end of his
Tongue with the antique purity and coolness of the snow,
As if this were almost the beginning, the first snowstorm
Fluttering between his house and the serious hemlocks.

And best of all is the sound of the snow in the stillness,
A susurration, the minute percussion of settling flakes;
And the stranger listens, intent to the whispering snow
In the fir boughs, earth's most intimate confiding,
And he thinks that this is the time of sweet cognizance
As it was once when the house, graying in old dusk,
Knew him and sang to him, before the house forgot.

In the last moments of day the earth and the sky
Close in the veils of snow that flutter around him,
Shutting him in the sphere of the storm, where he stands
In his elephantine galoshes, peering this way and that
At the trees in their aloofness and the nameless house
Vanishing into the dark; and he stamps his feet urgently,
Turning as if in anger away from an evil companion.

Yet when, like a warning just at the fall of darkness,
Yellow light cries from the window above in the house,
From the boy's room, from the old sixteen-paned window,
The stranger remembers the boy who sits in the light
And turns the glass sphere, watching to see the snowstorm
Whirling inside. And the stranger shivers and listens
To the tranquil and lucid whispering of the snow.

POBA
WHERE THE ARTS LIVE

Poem by Hayden Carruth

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