

1970

# A Door

W. S. Merwin

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## A D O O R

Do you remember how I beat on the door  
kicked the door  
as though I or the door were a bad thing  
later it opened  
I went in  
nothing  
starlight  
snowing  
  
an empty throne  
snow swirling on the floor  
around the feet  
  
and on an instrument  
we had been trying  
to speak to each other  
on which we had been trying to speak  
to each other for long  
for time  
pieces lying apart there  
giving off  
echoes of words our last words *implor*  
*ing*  
*implor*  
*ing*  
by deaf starlight for a moment  
  
and you know we  
have danced in such a room  
I came in late and you  
were far from the door  
and I had to dance with  
not you after not you before  
I could reach you  
but this was later than anyone  
could have thought

thin  
snow falling  
in an empty bell  
lighting that chair  
could I turn at all  
now should I kneel  
and no door anywhere

### S U R F - C A S T I N G

It has to be the end of the day  
the hour of one star  
the beach has to be a naked slab  
and you have to have practised a long time  
with the last moments of fish  
sending them to look for the middle of the sea  
until your fingers  
can play back whole voyages  
then you send out one  
of your toes for bait  
hoping it's the right evening  
you have ten chances  
the moon rises from the surf  
your hands listen  
if only the great Foot is running  
if only it will strike  
and you can bring it to shore  
in two strides it will take you  
to the emperor's palace  
stamp stamp the gates will open  
he will present you with half of his kingdom  
and his only daughter  
and the next night you will come back  
to fish for the Hand