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Snowy Morning

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Ai Qing · *China*

SNOWY MORNING

Snow is falling, falling without sound
Snow is falling, falling without end
Clean snow has covered courtyards
Clean snow has covered rooftops
The whole world is so still

Watching the floating snowflakes
My thoughts are far, far away. I think
About the forest in summer and dawn in the forest:
Everywhere there is dew, and the sun
Rising and a small child walks out
Barefoot from the dawn light.
His face is like a fresh blossom, his mouth
Hums softly, his small hand
Grips a bamboo stick. He lifts
His small head; his brightly shining eyes
Search through the dense leaves
For the chirruping cicada.

His other hand carries a string of green,
A long stemmed foxtail;
And fastened on it are locusts,
Dragonflies and golden beetles. All this
I remember clearly.

It is a long time since we went to the forest.
Already leaves have covered the ground there.
There is no trace of the people left.
But I shall never forget that small boy
And his soft, gentle singing.
I don't know what small house he is in now,
Watching the snowflakes float without end.
Perhaps he is thinking of throwing snowballs in the forest;
Perhaps he is thinking of skating on the lake.
He cannot know
That there is someone who longs to see him
This snowy morning.

1956

translated by Marilyn Chin

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