

## Snow by Grace Francis

When they fell in wisps of cold on my face, I danced.

I was expecting my first child and had never felt, let alone seen snow.

I had crawled out through the window of our tiny studio apartment onto the parapet of the building, and was so moved by the gentleness of the snowflakes, that I danced. It was one the most exquisite feeling that I had experienced. If it weren't for my husband gesticulating for me to get back inside, I would have lain on the parapet, looking skyward, just to watch the snow drop.

The snow made me forget my nostalgia for the warm rain that fell on my face back where I grew up. I had been constantly homesick and one of the things that I missed the most was the sound, sight and smell of rain. Raindrops fell in musical notes onto the rooftops, I would say. But I began to fall under the spell of snow that settled soundlessly into my senses.

And thus, formed my great love for the snow.

Thereafter every year, I waited for its return, as one would wait for a friend whom one hadn't seen throughout the years, but carried memories within.

When it did return year after year, I watched my children frolic in the snow, build snow men and women, have snow ball fights and I also watched them grow to love snow less and less every passing year.

And as the years rolled by, it seemed like we had grown old together.

Some years the snow was harsh, like it needed to shed its sorrows and its fury, tearing down trees and causing them to crash onto our roof much like an impetuous petulant child.

Other years, it fell in light and flippant swirls, and I smiled watching it through my window.

One snowy night, when I could not sleep, I tiptoed to the living room, looked out the window.

The street light cast a glow on the snow swirling down and I thought to myself,

“The night sky sleeps.

He is done shedding his despair

In soft tender snow.

Like soundless teardrops.

Onto Earth's bosom

Nothing stirs

Except the weight of pain

That swings like a pendulum

Between hope and despair,

But the night sky sleeps,”

I shuffled back to bed, feeling like I had sung a lullaby to my friend, the snow.

Every year when my husband says to me while shoveling mounds of snow, “this is it, this year we will leave New England for a place where we would never have to face snow again,” I sigh inside. How do I tell him that I carry a secret desire to be buried when it snows?