

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*

41