

# Snow Signs

by Charles Tomlinson



They say it is waiting for more, the snow  
Shrunk up to the shadow-line of walls  
In an arctic smouldering, an unclean salt,  
And will not go until the frost returns  
Sharpening the stars, and the fresh snow falls  
Piling its drifts in scallops, furls. I say  
Snow has left its own white geometry  
To measure out for the eye the way  
The land may lie where a too cursory reading  
Discovers only dip and incline leading  
To incline, dip, and misses the fortuitous  
Full variety a hillside spreads for us:  
It is written here in sign and exclamation,  
Touched-in contour and chalk-followed fold,  
Lines and circles finding their completion  
In figures less certain, figures that yet take hold  
On features that would stay hidden but for them:  
Walking, we waken these at every turn,  
Waken ourselves, so that our walking seems  
To rouse some massive sleeper out of winter dreams  
Whose stretching startles the whole land into life,  
As if it were us the cold, keen signs were seeking  
To pleasure and remeasure, repossess  
With a sense in the gathered coldness of heat and height.  
Well, if it's for more the snow is waiting  
To claim back into disguise overnight,  
As though it were promising a protection  
From all it has transfigured, scored and bared,  
Now we shall know the force of what resurrection  
Outwaits the simplification of the snow.

