

The Snowflakes Sail Gently Down Full Poem

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Gabriel Okara

The snow flakes sail gently down from the misty eye of the sky and fall lightly lightly on the winter-weary elms. And the branches, winter-striped and nude, slowly with the weight of the weightless snow bow like grief-stricken mourners as white funeral cloth is slowly unrolled over deathless earth. And dead sleep stealthily from the heater rose and closed my eyes with the touch of silk cotton of water falling. Then I dreamed a dream in my dead sleep. But I dreamed not of earth dying and elms a vigil keeping. I dreamed of birds, black birds flying in my inside, nesting and hatching on oil palms bearing suns for fruits and with roots denting the uprooter's spades. And I dreamed the uprooters tired and limp, leaning on my roots – their abandoned roots – and the oil palms gave them each a sun. But on their palms they balanced the blinding orbs and frowned with schisms on their brows – for the suns reached not the brightness of gold! Then I awoke. I awoke to the silently falling snow and bent-backed elms bowing and swaying to the winter wind like white-robed Moslems salaaming at evening prayer, and the earth lying inscrutable like the face of a god in a shrine.