TAKE HEART

A Conversation in Poetry

Edited & Introduced by Wesley McNair, Maine Poet Laureate

The late Theodore Enslin of Milbridge was one of Maine's most distinguished poets. Shortly before his death last November, he wrote that today's poem was influenced by Benjamin Franklin's glass harmonica. According to experts, the beautiful music of this instrument is in a range that makes the brain uncertain about where the sound comes from. And so, perhaps, this story of a traveler whose route into the snow is difficult to follow, and can't be found on any map.

The Glass Harmonica

By Theodore Enslin

It snowed in far country
north and
beyond the trees.
As I went through the mirror
my breath froze
clouding it,
and they saw me no longer
in the villages of spring.
I walked alone
across level plains,
and my tracks disappeared
in the snow which went with me.
A wind rose
playing on harpstrings
and reeds.
There was nothing there, and my fingers
touched ice.
A music
a music
an echo of music—
sound not a sound
in the quiet north country—
the snow.

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