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Poems

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Poems

Abstract

CHRISTMAS BREEZE, WINTER NIGHT, STRAIGHT EDGES BREAK For Aubrey Williams

John J. Figueroa

CHRISTMAS BREEZE

Auntie would say 'Ah! Christmas breeze',
 as the Norther leapt from the continent
 across Caribbean seas,
 across our hills
 to herald Christmas,
 ham boiling in the yard
 plum pudding in the cloth
 (Let three stones bear the pot;
 and feed the hat-fanned fire).

This breeze in August cools a Summer's day
 here in England.

In December in Jamaica
 we would have called it *cold*,
 Cold Christmas Breeze,
 fringing the hill tops with its tumble
 of cloud, bringing in
 imported apples, and dances
 and rum (for older folk).

For us, some needed clothes, and a pair
 of shoes squeezing every toe.
 And Midnight Mass:
 Adeste Fideles!

Some Faithful came –
 and why not? – a little drunk,
 some overdressed, but
 ever faithful.
 Like Christmas breeze
 returning every year, bearing
 not August's end, nor October's
 wind and rain but, Christmas
 and 'starlights'
 and a certain sadness, except for Midnight Mass
 and the Faithful
 ('The Night when Christ was born')

I miss celebrations, but I miss most
 the people of faith
 who greeted warmly every year
 the Christmas breeze.

WINTER NIGHT

From my window I could see
 That silver ice had bent the birch
 And forced it, cross-beam wise, to lurch
 Against a coal-black tree.

On the hearth, as on a perch,
 Sparrows of russet flame
 Leapt in an aery game
 As vigil lights in a midnight church.

A black gust shrieked its wrath,
 The white birch, falling, sighed,
 The sparrows gasped, then died
 And left their grey ash cold upon the hearth.

STRAIGHT EDGES BREAK

For Aubrey Williams

Straight edges break
 Straight edges break into
 Into outer space
 Straight edges break

The sea's edges break
 Break into probes
 Into the spread ellipses
 Like constant lace
 Like constant lace riding
 The thighs of the bronzed
 Horsewoman rocking rocking

Up the edges the sea horses
Climb like agile fingers
Probing until the rock shudders

Straight edges break
Away from cubes and pyramids
Like fire like fire
The edges break
The edges break into
The fire that I and edges share

Break into the fire
That white and smooth
Probes these rocks and those
Outer spaces probes
My inner fire solid fuel
Shifting its edges

The straight edge breaks into
The straight edge breaks
The straight edge of
The girl dancing edges
Nearer her partner and then breaks

Breaks into shattering motion
Like the fire of the sea
Around its granite blocks

The sea breaks
The sea breaks into
The sea recovers herself and pauses
Like the fire of the girl
Holding her arms to herself

Before and after dancing