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Nancy Willard - The Snow Arrives After Long Silence

The snow arrives after long silence
from its high home where nothing leaves
tracks or strains or keeps time.
The sky it fell from, pale as oatmeal,
bears up like sheep before shearing.

The cat at my window watches
amazed. So many feathers and no bird!
All day the snow sets its table
with clean linen, putting its house
in order. The hungry deer walk

on the risen loaves of snow.
You can follow the broken hearts
their hooves punch in its crust.
Night after night the big plows rumble
and bale it like dirty laundry

and haul it to the Hudson.
Now I scan the sky for snow,
and the cool cheek it offers me,
and its body, thinned into petals,
and the still caves where it sleeps.

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