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Haydn: The Unpublished Sonatas, Hob. XVI.18-20, 44-46

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What are our hopes for the world?

A winter night after snow,
the long walk home, faint smudge of moon
back of the clouds; and the great weight of the firs,
the open fields whose whiteness
floats above them like a ghost.
No wind, no lamp or candle
in some distant window. You could be
the only animal. How long?
It will be hours. Only your footsteps,
and what you carry underneath your coat,
what you have folded in your arms,
what is cradled on your heart. It is so close,
maybe it's become your heart.
Perhaps it always was.

Only your footsteps, and the dark,
its nearness, and the way it does not care,
that clear, sweet silence after snow.
Is it the dark itself you love?
No. But forgive yourself for asking.

And climbing the stairs at last, then,
and lighting the fire,
and slowly, gently, taking off your coat.

Winner of the Governor General's Award for Poetry and the Dorothy Livesay Prize, **JAN ZWICKY** has published more than a dozen books of poetry and prose, including *Songs for Relinquishing the Earth, Forge*, and *Wisdom & Metaphor*.

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