

## FIRST SNOW

--For A Very Merry Jazz Fest, Friday, December 12, 2025

In winter  
all the singing is in  
the tops of the trees

-- Mary Oliver

Wasn't today, I want to ask my son at bedtime, a kind of song?  
Before I could finish stepping down the stairs that morning  
he was outside drumming his feet on the frozen walkway,  
padding through the downy snow, clapping to the beat  
of snowflakes, those little cymbals, that fell, glistening  
all over the lawn.

And in the park next door, more players, of delighted flutes  
and velvet violins, sailing down the slide. Later, dripping icicles  
were the snare and the triangle, together, dropping  
their tempo as the sun hid and the moon rose  
to conduct the snow song in its place. But he's already dreaming  
and I remember

how he admonished me so gently just the night  
before, when I almost spoiled the show. *It might snow tomorrow,*  
I'd whispered. *No*, he said, closing his eyes. *I want to be surprised.*  
A lesson for the poet: snow, like song, must be touched first,  
tasted, before it can ever be described.

© Cristi Donoso, Poet Laureate, City of Alexandria, 2025