

## December 6<sup>th</sup> Circle of Voices, Dylan Thomas Child's Christmas

*In goes my hand into that wool-white bell-tongued ball of holidays resting at the rim of the carol singing sea, and our come Mrs Prothero and the firemen.*

*One Christmas was so much like another, in those years around the sea-town corner now and out of all sound except the distant speaking of the voices I sometimes hear a moment before sleep."*

*"But that was not the same snow," I say. "Our snow was not only shaken from whitewash buckets down the sky, it came shawling out of the ground and swam and drifted out of the arms and hands and bodies of the trees.*

*It was on the afternoon of the day of Christmas Eve, and I was in Mrs. Prothero's garden, waiting for cats, with her son Jim. It was snowing. It was always snowing at Christmas. December, in my memory, is white as Lapland, though there were no reindeers.*

*The wise cats never appeared. We were so still, Eskimo-footed arctic marksmen in the muffing silence of the eternal snows\_ eternal, ever since Wednesday\_ that we never heard Mrs. Prothero's first cry from her igloo at the bottom of the garden.*

*All the Christmases roll down toward the two-tongued sea, like a cold and headlong moon bundling down the sky that was our street; and they stop at the rim of the ice-edged, fish-freezing waves, and I plunge my hands in the snow and bring out whatever I can find.*

*And books which told me everything about the wasp, except why.*

*It snowed last year too: I made a snowman and my brother knocked it down and I knocked my brother down and then we had tea.*

*"Looking through my bedroom window, out into the moonlight and the unending smoke-colored snow, I could see the lights in the windows of all the other houses on our hill and hear the music rising from them up the long, steadily falling night. I turned the gas down, I got into bed. I said some words to the close and holy darkness, and then I slept."*

*And the high-heaped fire spat, all ready for the chestnuts and the mulling pokers.*

*December, in my memory, is white as Lapland, though there were no reindeer. But there were cats. Patient, cold and callous, our hands wrapped in socks, we waited to snowball the cats. Sleek and long as jaguars and horrible-whiskered, spitting and snarling, they would slink and sidle over the white back-garden walls, and the lynx-eyed hunters, Jim and I, fur-capped and moccasined trappers from Hudson Bay, off Mumbles Road, would hurl our deadly snowballs at the green of their eyes.*

*There are always Uncles at Christmas.*

*Some few large men sat in the front parlors (...), Uncles almost certainly, trying their new cigars, holding them out judiciously at arms' length, returning them to their mouths, coughing, then holding them out again as though waiting for the explosion;*