

The First Day on Snowshoes

by Con Chapman

The first day on snowshoes is hardest of all;
the legs sink and wobble, hips and knees creak
in new-fallen snow, ankles bend and I recall
last winter's walks. I have grown weak,

I think, but soon my strength returns.
I stop for breath. I can hear my heart
in this empty field; I feel it burn
against the wall of my chest. I start



once again; up the hill, how many more
winters, I ask, do I have ahead?
I subtract from ninety—maybe two score,
if I'm lucky. Then, I think, when I am dead

I will have walked here fifty years;
it puts in perspective a moment's fears.

