

# 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.

