

SONIA JOHNSON

Written in Church, December 23, 1979

The church of my childhood
was redbrick, too.
Smug and warm inside, I'd
watch the snow battling the windows
or one cold star in the cold sky
and rejoice at being inside with Mama
and the choir
hymning the wintry day to its close.

In blue by the covered wagon,
the pioneer woman poised above us
on choir breath
whispered, "Fear not, fear not."
Godwrapped in that singing room,
What was there to fear?

Tonight in maturity's church
goodbye who I was in the
warm silent service with snow fighting
to break through the windows of my youth
and ghost voices forever echoing
down the dusk and farewell of the wintry day.

Hello at last, cold star and blowing snow,
and you, my pioneer sister,
with your grave and steady eyes
who knew so well what there was to fear,
and feared not.