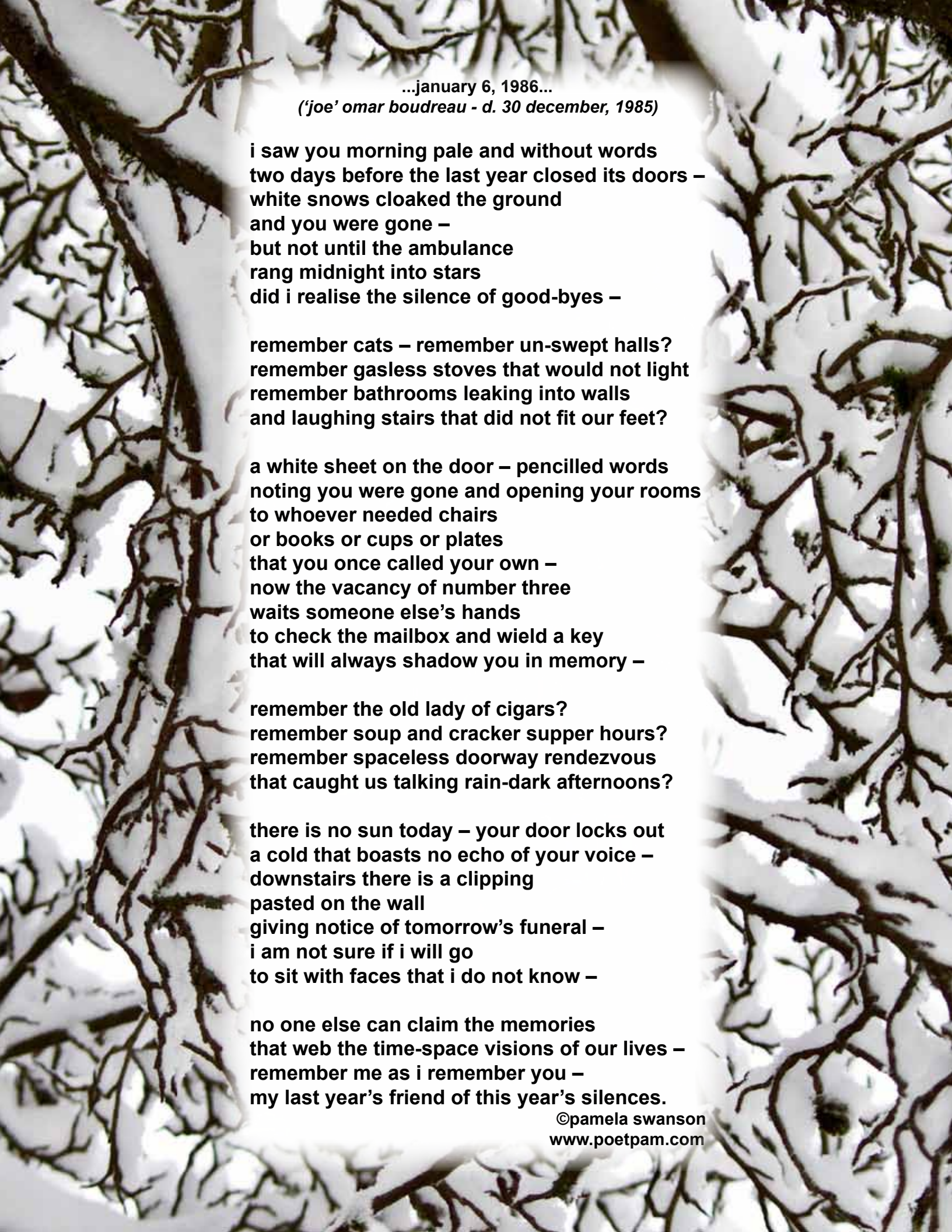




...january 6, 1986...
(*'joe' omar boudreau - d. 30 december, 1985*)

i saw you morning pale and without words
two days before the last year closed its doors –
white snows cloaked the ground
and you were gone –
but not until the ambulance
rang midnight into stars
did i realise the silence of good-byes –

remember cats – remember un-swept halls?
remember gasless stoves that would not light
remember bathrooms leaking into walls
and laughing stairs that did not fit our feet?

a white sheet on the door – pencilled words
noting you were gone and opening your rooms
to whoever needed chairs
or books or cups or plates
that you once called your own –
now the vacancy of number three
waits someone else's hands
to check the mailbox and wield a key
that will always shadow you in memory –

remember the old lady of cigars?
remember soup and cracker supper hours?
remember spaceless doorway rendezvous
that caught us talking rain-dark afternoons?

there is no sun today – your door locks out
a cold that boasts no echo of your voice –
downstairs there is a clipping
pasted on the wall
giving notice of tomorrow's funeral –
i am not sure if i will go
to sit with faces that i do not know –

no one else can claim the memories
that web the time-space visions of our lives –
remember me as i remember you –
my last year's friend of this year's silences.

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