

Words not needed

By Nancy Cramer

I sit by my window watching the fragile snow flakes whirling and spinning as they cover the grass, the sidewalk, the driveway and the parked cars. Soon the cars will be wearing bonnets and cloaks made by the delicate flakes. The car owners, inside warm apartments, decide against making the planned trips to stores or other destinations. Too much trouble to sweep off the snow. Or they rationalize, "It'd be just my luck to be hit by a car sliding sideways."

I too resist the urge to leave my chair by the window. Soon my vision will include bushes coated with white icing of snow. Cars will wear blankets of snow. The wild geese flying overhead are honking their displeasure at their favorite patch of ground disappearing beneath the white coverlet. They will circle several times, then fly off to more hospitable ground.

Snow fascinates me, perhaps because as a child I was never exposed to it. We lived in Texas, and it was never cold enough to turn rain drops into snowflakes. So my first encounter was as teenager when we visited grandparents in Ohio for Christmas. We built snowmen, snow mothers, and snow children. There were snowball fights but my pitching arm failed me most the time. Then one year, the unthinkable happened. The nearby Lake Dallas froze over, and while there was no snow, there was ice. Our school was dismissed for the day, and our mothers loaded us and our two big Irish setters into our 1940 car and off we went to the Lake. Clad in galoshes, no ice skates were to be had for miles, we skated and slid and fell and had a grand time. The ice was as clear as the water glasses that dressed our dinner table. The dogs barked and ran and slid and tried futility to chase us but they stopped with all four paws on the ice at the edge of the lake.

Our mothers huddled together, drinking coffee from thermoses, then retreated to the warmth of their car's heater turned on high. Finally, our coats covered with sprinkles of ice, our faces were cherry red, and our hands almost frozen stiff in our woolen mittens, we too sought the welcome warmth of the car. Memories.

Then awake to the present time, I glance outside. The snow had stopped. The delicate once bare tree limbs are covered with a white furry substance, with patches of bark showing, like a Japanese painting. I savor the picture once more, then turn to my computer to record what I have witnessed. But this time words were inadequate. They were insufficient to describe the scene I just saw. Disappointment filled me, and my inability frustrated me. Then I remember the memories. Those will not fail me. I can recall those enchanting times from my memories whenever I want. No words are needed.



**Say you read it in
The Journal!!!**

It's Minus 16 Degrees Outside!

By Nancy Cramer

My husband called to me, "Come look at these tires. They're square." Indeed they were square, not flat although the bottoms looked flat. How were we to drive home from our visit in Minnesota? Somehow my husband got the car started, warmed it up, and gradually moved it down the street. Bump, bump, thud, thud, the protesting tires gradually assumed the roundness of their origin. Just as we were about to enter the freeway, the engine stopped. My husband steered the car to the side of the road and got out to lift the hood. His head, covered with the parka of his jacket, disappeared under the hood. He soon emerged, his breath almost freezing in the air and got inside the car.

I had been sitting nervously, wondering if a place that rented a sled with dogs was nearby, or would we be stuck in the snow and the tires freeze into squares again. But my husband had other ideas. He got out and rummaged around in his tool box, hustled into the car again to warm up, and gave me the instructions I had been preparing for. Cautiously, upon his command, I crept in the snow and ice to the back of the car, found what else he needed, then opened the door and collapsed into the warm air inside. Soon I heard a "Vroom, vroom, sputter, vroom, vroom" and on and on. He closed the hood with a pronounced bang, opened his door and gasping he got into the car. Whatever he did, he never told me. But it worked, and our tires which were starting to square up again, assumed their proper roundness and home we drove. We decided to leave Minnesota with its arctic air to the hardy Minnesotans.

Dear Readers: Sometimes the old things are better than something new, especially when it is done in haste. This is what I have done for today- gone into the past which isn't really much different from what today can turn out to be. Stay warm, stay safe. We are all God's children. Nancy C.