

Ottawa in Winter - Dr. Jharna Chatterjee

"Forecast of snow-storm today,
Accumulation - up to 30 centimeters,
Don't drive unless you have to."
The radio warns.
"Bundle up, folks, the temperature is minus 18 C,
With the North-West wind, it feels like minus 33."
Okay, I need no-nonsense snow-boots and
Down-filled hooded coat, thermal undergarment and a sweater,
Woolen scarf, hat and mitts;
No silly game with Mother Nature.



celebratecanada.wordpress.com/2008/12/19/

Slowly struggling through the slippery roads
To the still-dark bus-stop,
I wait and wait and wait.
The red-framed jack-frost bus-shelter bursts at the seams -
I stand outside, under the roof but no walls.

Boys and girls – Black, White, Brown – dark and light,
Build a family of Lilliputian snowmen on a high cement planter;
Snow plays with their hair, falls on backpacks, painting exotic designs.
They shout in French or in English, and in some unknown tongue,
Fight with snowballs, laughing, hugging, running,
Until the bus shows up.
My toes no longer hurt – it has been forty-one numb minutes now.
I wonder at their sneaker-clad feet and unzipped jackets! How on earth!

I turn my face away from the slicing wind – to no avail.
The bus must have broken down
Or the driver could not make it.
A snow-plough comes, clears the sidewalk.
We board the stressed out, belated bus.
City arteries clogged, need by-pass!

A red car and a grey car in the ditch,
And an articulated bus stuck,
Wrapped around the constricted corner.
Even a snow-plough lying sideways up,
Forlorn and hopeless beside the road.
The bus lets me off;
Crossing the street is an adventure, climbing the Alps.

"Freezing drizzle, roads are treacherous;
Motorists are urged to use caution."
Pedestrian me? Need Cougar boots with gripping treads,
Fewer things to carry, and lots of time.
I inch in small steps,
Sticking to the slender, salt-strewn safety-strip of the driveway.
Tippy-toe along the road to the bus-stop, wishing I could creep or crawl.
An ambulance rushes by.
Another statistic, someone slipped and broke something.

"Sunshine, unusually mild temperature -
Snow- and ice-sculptures may melt."
Oh dear, I need to go to the canal, to Confederation park,
To Dow's Lake! Right now!
Wow, look at the crowd of festive fun!



National Capital Commission Ottawa website

Toddlers fat in snowsuits, young women and men,
Fast teenagers in droopy jeans,
Parents with their Bjorn-bag babies –
Skating, walking, stopping at the "Beavertail" shack,
Shooting photos of the ice-figures, snow-arts,
Of Winterlude's frosty scenes.



Lonelyplanetimages.com
A snow-sculpture



travel.webshots.com/album
An ice sculpture at night

Ah, Ottawa in winter – awesome, fatal, spell-binding,
Mysterious behind a shimmering, snowy veil.
Evergreens lining Ottawa River Parkway at dusk,
Painting a Group of Seven masterpiece!
The Peace Tower, the Chateau, the lights by the canal,
A magical, fairy-tale land!



www.groupofsevenart.com : Fred Varley - Stormy Weather Georgian Bay, Canada

Notes:

1. The photo of this famous painting is by one of the "**Group of Seven**". The following history is taken from the Internet.

The story of the Group of Seven Artists began in the early 1900s when several Canadian Artists began noticing a similarity in style. Canadian Painters Tom Thomson, J.E.H. MacDonald, Arthur Lismer, Frederick Varley, Frank Johnston and Franklin Carmichael were often believed to have socialized together through common interests and mutual

employment. One particular venue, the Arts and Letters Club in Toronto, served as a common meeting place for the artists.

A. Y. Jackson later joined them around 1913. About the same time, Dr. James MacCallum and another artist by the name of Lawren S. Harris came into the picture and money was raised to build the historic Studio Building for Canadian Art in Toronto. During the spring of 1917, tragedy struck the group as Tom Thomson drowned in Algonquin Park's Canoe Lake. This tragedy shocked the Group, and questions were raised about the suspicious circumstances surrounding the drowning. The first World War had also interrupted the group's focus on art.

In 1920, the group put on their first exhibit and formerly called themselves the Group of Seven. The artists included were J.E.H. MacDonald, Franklin Carmichael, Frank Johnston, Arthur Lismer, Lawren S. Harris, Frederick Varley and A.Y. Jackson.

During the 1920s, the group established itself as uniquely Canadian in style. As their popularity grew, the group began travelling across Canada, a task not taken to lightly in those early days. They are historically recognized as the first group of European descent to capture the feel of the Arctic on canvas.

The Group's final joint exhibition was in December 1931. In 1932, MacDonald died and the group disbanded. In their wake rose a new group called the Canadian Group of Artists, of which Group of Seven members included painters Harris, Casson, Lismer, Jackson, and Carmichael. The C. G. P. held their first formal exhibit in November 1933.

The Canadian Group of Painters are historically recognized as having a significant impact on the Canadian Art movement and forever changed the style and spirit of Canadian Art, as did the Group of Seven. (www.groupofsevenart.com/history).

2. Winterlude Ottawa

Every February, Canada's Capital Region is host to **Winterlude**, Canada's winter celebration. Three fun-filled weekends of excitement and activity await the whole family! From spectacular ice carvings to an amazing playground made of snow, Winterlude is a great way to take in the best of our Canadian winter.

Skate on the world's largest skating rink — right in the heart of Ottawa! Marvel at majestic snow sculptures and glittering ice sculptures or enjoy spectacular shows under the winter sky. (www.canadacapital.gc.ca).

During the Winterlude, eating "Beaver-tail" – sweetened, flavored and fried flat bread is a popular activity for the revelers. Beaver is the Canadian national animal. The bread looks somewhat like its flat tail in shape. Little shops can be found on and around the festive area.