

Words About Snow

by Phyllis Chesler



photo credit: Richard Abrazi

Snow has furiously fallen, a hard and lashing snow, coming both straight down and at a slant, blanketing my city street. The wind continues to howl. Somehow, this snow is not enchanting. It is not falling softly. In its intensity, it is somehow ominous. It does not stop. First the plague, then the cold weather halted this great city. Now—snow has managed to cancel our medical appointments. The schools are closed, as are the courthouses.

I remember blizzards and snow storms in my childhood in the 1940s and 1950s. They were always full of wonder. Once, my father's car was swept out to sea (he had been parked near the beach). We actually laughed about this catastrophe. Galoshes, mittens, scarves—we were all models for a Norman Rockwell painting of children building snowmen (back then, it was not

snow people), throwing snowballs, being reprimanded.

An idyll of Innocence in America, or simply relief after the years of War. Ugliness unpainted. Few faces of color, but lots of working class people, women mainly in their places (except for Rosie the Riveter), older people, images of nostalgia. Now all viewed as diabolical, Satanic.

In *Snow Day*, poet Billy Collins, former Poet Laureate of the United States, wrote: "Today we woke up to a revolution of snow.../But for now I am a willing prisoner in this house.../I will make a pot of tea."

He speaks for me.

Poet Mark Strand is a bit more somber in his view of winter itself. In *Lines for Winter*, he sees the season as symbolizing the winter of our lives.

"Tell yourself

as it gets cold...

that you will go on....

And if it happens that you cannot

go on or turn back

and you find yourself

where you will be at the end,

tell yourself

in that final flowing of cold through your limbs

that you love what you are."

Well and beautifully put but I will end with Robert Frost, who never fails us. He writes in *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*:

"The woods are lovely, dark, and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep
And miles to go before I sleep."