

Night Shadows on Snow

He had seen as many nights as he had days. Some days he wished he had never witnessed. Some nights he wished had never happened. However, like everyone he ever knew, he wished for another.

Inside the cabin only the fire light from a small window of an old wood stove reflected off a single pair of old eyes. As old as he was, he was still mesmerized by the fact that the small window pane of that wood stove was made of something called, Mica. Thin as a sheet of paper and light as a breath, he had seen it withstand his hottest fires. It never burned away, melted or distorted. The Mica window pane remained as clear as lightly stained water. Inside the old stove the fire was as hot as fires always are, yet, although he never tried, he was certain he did not want to touch it. The radiant heat from the stove warmed the man as it always had. However, he knew when he got out of his chair, he would find it much cooler in the corners of the cabin and especially in the bedroom. That was always the case this time of year. If he checked the thermometer on the tree outside it would read 22 below.

He stood up slowly in the dark and fire glow, and made his way to a frost covered window. He remembered a time when he wasn't alone. Together they stood side by side feeling the warmth of each other and watched the sorcery of winter together as he now watched alone. He guessed winter doesn't care who watches a full moon on a star filled night. Doesn't care how many dreams are shared as moon light dances on diamonds floating on virgin snow fields. Simply does not care which soul concentrates on the night shadows for a glimpse of somethingBeautiful.

His eyes were fully adjusted to the dark. The moon was so bright it illuminated his upper body as he stood inches from the cabin window looking out allowing a passerby to easily see him. Of course, there was no passerby.

A full moon only happens once a month but the waxing and waning on each side of a full moon adds many nights that he could almost read the Sears and Roebucks catalog even though the kerosene lantern was "two hours cold." Since his earliest memory he never tired of watching the simple enchantment of a cold winters' night unfolding over a deep snow covered landscape. Like tonight, and every night like tonight, why did he slightly strain to see into the darkness of the tree line as the moon light gave way to the forest and its blackness. What a contrast as "Mise en scene" rearranged itself as he changed his glance to the bright flat uniform plane of the lake.

Countless snow flakes under countless stars, sparkled from his private moon defining the topography of small grades, drifts and the unknown buried a foot under the white blanket. He could make out the tree line horizon on the far side of the lake which made for a perfect delineation between the lake shoreline and the forest beyond. He guessed it was these backdrops that could help a memory and soothe a heart. But, an old mans memory is as fragile as his heart sometimes. "Both can be bring one to his knees," he knew, but only once did anyone catch him crying over it. No one would catch him tonight either. Alone or not, "he" would know. Instead, only the moon saw an old man's defiant smile as he wished for one more winters day and Night Shadows on Snow.