

# The Miracle of Winter

Taylor Nelson Farris

Virginia Outdoor Writers Association, Inc.,  
2008-09 third place High School Writing Competition (grades 9-12)

As the broad, structured limbs loosely intertwined above my head, a few warm rays of sunlight escaped from the frigid grasps of that December morning. As they leaked through the tree's canopy, each ray not only brought a small ounce of warmth to my chilled face but also reflected against the icicles that hung from every frosted branch. This reflection projected mini rainbows that cascaded down from the highest branch to the snow dusted ground, where I lay. I was officially in a winter wonderland.

Christmas Eve was finally here; however, with it came the largest ice storm Lancaster County had seen in ages. No electricity, busted pipes, and icy roads were some of the side effects that came with this white Christmas. Most of the adults' minds were clogged with these thoughts and could not escape their worries. Where are we going to cook the Christmas ham? How am I going to get to the airport with the roads being covered in black ice? Wait, whose pipes just busted? I could have watched them panic, but instead, I watched the snow as

millions of delicate snowflakes dotted the dark, bitter night sky. Christmas was only a few hours away.

By the early morning hours, calmness overcame the household. There were no frantic phone calls or people constantly pacing. However, there was a plan. Despite the slick roads and the freezing air, everyone bundled up and jumped into their cars, heading to an unknown destination. To me, this place was not unknown, but rather a place I had known for almost my whole life, a place I would escape to on a spring morning or a summer afternoon but never during winter. As six cars pulled into this deserted and snow covered field, one by one we piled out and stood in amazement. In front of us was a 60-foot tall tree covered in ice. Icicles dripped from as every branched while a light snow was sprinkled over every limb. Sparkling mimosas were passes around to all of the adults and homemade hot cocoa to all of the kids. As we toasted to this Christmas, we all gazed up at this miracle of nature that showed us the beauty of what

we despised before. We saw nature for what it truly is: a gift.

Now, here I lay with my head up against this ancient tree. Laughs and pieces of my family's mid-morning chatter hum into my ears as a smile comes across my chapped lips. I watch a few snowflakes slowly descend from a branch above after a slight gust of wind pushed them off the edge. As they land, the frozen ground is dusted with these white shavings, slightly resembling the mounds of snow that lay outside this tree's canopy. I am completely engulfed by nature and its pure beauty portrayed as through frosted glasses. This magical touch truly shows me the miracle of winter and how sometimes it is what is needed to open one's eyes to life: a life with nature.

For information on the VOWA High School Writing Contest (grades 9-12) contact chairman:

David Coffman, Editor  
*Outdoor Report*  
Department of Game & Inland Fisheries  
P. O. Box 11104  
Richmond, VA 23230  
Telework—434-589-9535  
Email: david.coffman@  
dgif.virginia.gov



Taylor Nelson Farris, third place in Virginia Outdoor Writers Association, Inc., High School Writing Competition; she is a senior at Lancaster High School, Weems, VA. ©Marika Byrd/The Byrd Nest