

## *This Land in Winter*

*This land is not forsaken though some may think it so  
They damn it from a distance yet little do they know  
How sweet and pure the mornings, how clean and fresh the air  
How teeming are the forests, what life the waters bear  
When winter snows and ice prevail strangers often say  
“ 'Tis but a frozen wasteland!” Speak not so, I pray!*

*The day begins at almost noon with a red glow in the east  
Icy crystals hang like gems, a scintillating feast  
For eyes that can see beauty, for open minds and awed,  
For hearts that fill with wonder at this handiwork of God  
The hoar frost cloaks each tiny twig of every branch and tree  
The sun comes out and they become exquisite jewellery  
Glisten, gleam and glimmer where'er the eye is cast  
Sparkle, shine and shimmer, a wondrous vista vast*

*The air stays crisp throughout the day, peaceful, still, unflawed  
Like heady wine it moves the mind to notions yet untrod  
The forests still and snow-crowned, the rocks, the hills, the air  
Inspire the soul to fly on high, a sense of freedom rare*

*Slowly soon the light is gone and day turns into night  
The stage is set, the curtain lifts on the wondrous northern lights  
Against a starry background, beneath a watching moon  
A stately dance of spirits to a haunting, unvoiced tune  
They walk and weave across the sky, now bold, now fading flight  
Now reaching up, now falling, across the polar night  
In colours, hues and shapes not in the brush nor palette  
Of da Vinci, nor van Gogh, nor Buonarroti's mallet  
Small wonder, then, I think, it is, one knows within the heart  
Of all the sights in all the world, this is matchless art*

*A great and mighty splendour enshrines this northern sod  
A monument, a sculpting, a masterpiece of God  
Mere mortal words fail capture of the fleet, ephemeral touch  
To the heart, and the rapture, that we are blessed so much*

### Notes:

Written shortly after moving to the Northwest Territories, upon hearing the views of many friends and relatives who seemed to regard the North as somehow being the “creation of a lesser god”. Circa 1979.