

# Winter Reflections



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When you talk to New Englanders about what they like about New England, 9 out of 10 times the answer is the four seasons. I know my son Scott who is now a true Californian says that sometimes he misses seeing the trees all covered in ice and a light snow on the ground. This is what New Englanders think about when we think about winter. To be sure we complain about the snow, the cold, the ice but in the summer we complain about the heat, the humidity, the weather too and the seasons well that is what New England is about.

Last year at this time, we were trying to find a place to camp that south of Washington D.C. was warm. This year

we are trying to figure out whether to put on the air conditioning or the heat. But wait this could change in a blink of the eye and the headlines yesterday were talking about measureable snow on the horizon. Snow, ice, freezing rain all to be expected in the winter season.

As I was thinking about sermon and worship topics this summer Deb and I thought that today we would reflect on winter. I half expected there would be at least a dusting of snow, and I sure didn't expect that flowers would be blooming in the labyrinth nor the squirrels and chipmunks still running around the yard all frisky and such.

But here we are a week into winter and we know as sure as the New Year 2016 will come to be in 4 days that the winter weather that we are familiar with will be here too, sooner or later.

However, the weather won't prevent us from reflecting on this season. I chose three or four poems from the back of the grey hymnal for us to focus on.

Both Deb and I had some thoughts to prompt your reflection on these readings.

Let us read together #488 by Langston Hughes. Deb will then share her thoughts, I will share mine and then for a few moments in silence we will ask you to reflect on your thoughts. Then we will ask you to turn to your neighbor and talk about this particular poem.

**Deb**

**Rev Susan**

The phrase that spoke to me is a broken winged bird and dreams that cannot fly. I have had cats for most of my adult life. Cats like to catch birds and on occasion the cat has brought a broken winged bird to the door to show me. The cat often has a puzzled look about its eyes as the bird flops around helplessly. The cat seems to be saying to me, I caught this thing, it is supposed to have gotten away from me, it is supposed to have soared free, not just given in and be lying here. I have on a couple of occasions been able to rescue the bird, to hold it in my hand, to move the wing gently into place, to clean the feathers of cat saliva and to let the bird go to fly free. To the cat and to the bird that is their natural world, the cat is supposed to pursue the bird, the bird is supposed to be able to soar free to dream of worms, and safe nests and seed. The cat's purpose is to

help the bird fly and rise above its possible demise. Winter is like that for me. We are supposed to rise above the gloom and challenges of winter, rise above the complaining and griping about the winter and to continue to hold fast to our dreams.

**Deb what prompts do you need to repeat**

What do you think? After some time of silence, I will invite you to turn to your neighbor and talk.

Now let us read together #541 Winter Meditation

Denise Levertov's poem and words made me think of the privilege of being able to rest. The trees do the work they are supposed to do- they create their seed bundles and then they rest. What are we missing? This is what I ask myself, what is the work I am supposed to be doing? I know winter is the ideal time for the natural cycle of resting. Why can't I get into the natural cycle as a tree does and take the deserved and appropriate rest? How do you know when it is time to rest? How do you allow yourself that privilege?

**Now let's hear from Deb as she presents some of her thoughts prompted by this poem.**

Now be silent with your thoughts then turn to your neighbor and discuss what ideas, emotions, have been sparked by this reading.

*If we have time I want to end with RR #544.*

May the silent reflections, the wise words shared among yourselves give you peace and calm this day and in the days to come.

Blessed Be, May it be so.