

Isn't It Beau-Tee-Full

We didn't have to worry about water pipes bursting only trying to keep the water bucket from freezing around the dipper. One of the last things done at night was setting the bucket on the hearth after the fire had been banked with ashes. When the water bucket became empty, I felt lucky that I wasn't the one that had to try to keep my balance going out to the cistern to draw water with a wet, frozen rope. Even with all the hardships during that winter, my Mother loved that winter wonderland. She was widowed in December of 1956 when my Dad, at 38 years old died unexpectedly from a heart attack. She was left with three children which included a two year old son. After we left the farm buying a house in town, Momma continued to share with Tony the excitement of playing in the backyard three foot snow drifts, building forts, sledding, and snowball fights.

Momma was the one that gave our three children a new sled for Christmas. It was like she knew the perfect snow would be falling the next month. She was there to help them build a whole family of snow people until midnight in our next door neighbor's yard. Snow angels were seen fluttering everywhere and the igloo built housed kids and dogs until almost spring's arrival.

Even though she had experienced a stroke, I was blessed to have been able to share with her our last ice storm in January 1994. She looked out the front picture window, and as she had done since the day I got married, called me to look out at the snow. This time not on the phone, but just from the next room "Come here, Marie, look out the window. Isn't it beau-tee-full!" She would always pronounce beautiful by drawing out one word into three.

Fourteen years ago as I lay on the couch after my first six hour chemo treatment, the first winter snow started to fall. With the ground white I felt the beauty of peace and hope as I watched twelve male and female cardinals gather at the bird feeder. It was a picture that only God could have painted.

I wish Mother was still here so I could hug her and thank her for sharing this love of nature with us. Without her knowing she passed down to her children and grandchildren the excitement and wonderment of each new fallen snow. Today, at age seventy-eight, I am still amazed at God's handiwork when He makes the earth look so pure and peaceful with His blanket of white.

Now, with that first flake of snow, it's my youngest daughter, Jill, calling with "Look out Momma, isn't it Beau-tee-full"! May this family tradition always be remembered, treasured and passed down.

Written by Marie Mayes Pitts