

*"Shorter daylight hours and a softer lemony light that fades early, but often in a flaming sunset. Winter can seem to be the place where time stands still." Our Elevate artists reflect on winter light, with words and images to delight and inspire you.*



# elevate **your mood**

bringing colour and inspiration to you

Issue No. 4

## The arrival of winter and a doorway to starry December nights

Image: 'Agrarian landscape' - David O'Connor



*David Davies writes:*

The lead up to Christmas time is underway. Advent comes from the idea of 'arrival' or 'coming', which seems a nice way of looking at winter – as a beginning and perhaps, a bit like opening the doors on an advent calendar.

Different cultures and religions use counting up or down towards mid-winter festivals as way of preparation and remembering what's important. The Jewish festival of Hanukkah, also known as the Festival of Lights, runs for eight nights and days. It occurs on the Hebrew calendar between late November and late December. Candles on a candelabrum (menorah) with nine branches are lit each evening using the 'shamash', or "attendant" candle, until all eight candles are lit together on the final evening of the festival.



In other cultures, the idea of 'shamash' or "attendant" relates to summer warmth, the success of crops, and a symbol for justice and compassion. The themes of Advent include hope, peace, joy and love along with faith, journey and forgiveness.

The theme of hope links with the tradition of evergreens at Christmas including spruce trees and holly. A 'tree of paradise' was often at the centre of medieval mystery plays performed across Europe on 24th December. The tree would be decorated with apples (representing forbidden fruit) and wafers (representing redemption). Holly is a symbol of protection and hope. The berries soften after being frozen or frosted, becoming an important food source for birds. During winter storms, birds often take refuge among holly leaves which provide shelter and protection from predators.



Image: Jane Hacker

And, finally – tinsel! Originally lead or silver strips used to mimic ice. For me, from childhood memories, tinsel was like opening a door on the starry sky of a frosty December night.

# Winter Light

Stephanie Jalland



This month I am joined by Bridget Jupp, who normally attends creative sessions on a Monday at Peter Gillam Day Centre at Salisbury Hospice. Usually at this time of year we are busy conjuring up a short performance for the annual festive party. So instead, we have been thinking of, imagining and celebrating winter light and invite you to take the time to pause for a while and join us.

Settle somewhere cosy and if you can put some background wintry music on to get you in the mood. Winter from Vivaldi's 'The Four Seasons' perhaps, listen to the biting strings and the breathless beauty as he captures the energy and drama of the winter frost and snowfall.

Winter gives us shorter daylight hours and a softer lemony light that fades early but often in a flaming sunset. Winter can seem to be the place where time stands still.

The darkness and the chill can affect our mood but we all look to light to cheer us. Moonlight, starlight, firelight, candlelight,

lantern processions, colourful Christmas lights. Lights in the darkness as we slip towards midwinter and the sun at it's lowest on the Winter Solstice, the shortest day and the longest night of the year. Lights in the darkness reminding us that the light will slowly return with the renewal of the seasons, and the warmth and light of spring.

Christina Rosetti wrote, "In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan, Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone"

Is it all bleak? What comes to mind when you think of winter and winter light?

For Bridget it's "the weird sort of light created by heavy snowfall, an almost sinister light. Everything is light because of the whiteness of the snow, and sound is muted. A falling silence that comes with the falling of snow."

"Midnight mass and all the light falling out of the windows and doorways showing the snowfall"



Image: 'Glowing skies over the watermeadows' - Paul Russell

*"I would be a star twinkling against the dark sky.  
Twinkling on a really frosty night, amidst a twinkling carpet of stars."*

"The light from the inside shining out, to throw a path to help you through the snow. The light from a streetlamp, snow falling just in a steady drop. The light seems to be shining through the snow, it's lovely if you're looking out from the inside. It's quite a different perspective, very different from looking at light from the outside in."

If you were winter light, what would you be? A candle flickering, late winter sun behind the silhouette of trees, sparkly Christmas lights?

Bridget said, even though the sun was pouring golden into her room as we talked, "I would be a star twinkling against the dark sky. Twinkling on a really frosty night, amidst a twinkling carpet of stars. Shining



Image: Miriam Espacio www.pexels.com

and shining away. It's a lovely thought if not very practical. Centuries ago people were afraid of comets in the sky, but there is nothing more beautiful than starlight on a clear night and if there is snow even more so. In the snow you see the tracks of the birds...there are a lot of things to be said for this time of year."



Here is the river where I used to roam  
I was here a lot so it was more like my home  
I caught an awful lot of fish and managed to sell them  
To help with my wish

by Andy Wickham

**Would you like to contribute to a future edition? See back page for details.**

# Early winter musings

*Hannah Lefeuvre writes from her off-grid small holding in Somerset*



Our morning begins before dawn: the Rayburn is lit and hardy breakfasts await. Electric lights are conserved and quiet activities occur before 8:00am. As we approach winter solstice,

our focus turns to maximising daylight hours. The majority of our solar panels face east, so the main electrical consumption occurs in the first part of the morning. Water is pumped and lithium and electric bike batteries are charged for later in the day.

Weather permitting, outdoor work occurs before late afternoon, including a deep cleanse of the dense, shady garden areas. Trees and shrubs are felled, coppiced and pruned, and piles of logs are stored for next year. Leaves from paths become mulch for fruit areas, while piles of willow lie in damp spots, ready for crafts.

The long, quiet evenings are a sanctuary for crafts, candles and music. Christmas gift making begins from early November and each year, we enjoy extending our creativity with the resources



we have available. This year, silver birch logs, dogwood and willow branches have inspired miniature Christmas trees, individual tree decorations and winter wreaths. The winter vegetables continue to bring joy and colour to our plates, and many an apple crumble is enjoyed at this time of year, as we work through our fruit stores.



Whilst these seasonal activities bring us great comfort, we cannot escape the challenge that this winter will bring for so many. I would love to be talking with patients at the bedside at this time, but for now, I hope hearing about our home and garden will resonate and lift your spirits a little.



Thanks for reading. It's been good to be in touch. Would you like to contribute some of your own reflections, a poem or image for our next edition on the general theme of winter into spring?

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