

Snowjoke

Phil Mellows

Nature's fine to look at, I suppose. But you don't want to get too close. Take snow. Take last winter. We don't get much snow in Brighton and everyone was very excited when the first flakes fell. Twitter was on fire with such insights as "It's snowing". But the fire wasn't hot enough to turn it to rain. "It's settling," said Twitter, and sure enough each tree, each rooftop; each hedge, each car was swiftly gilded in white.

It certainly was beautiful. The snow crunched underfoot, you left footprints and it was good. You want to make your mark in the world? Well, there you go. The snow was cold and wet, of course. It's important not to forget that. But even then there is a certain exquisite pleasure in wrapping yourself up warm.

But it wasn't to last. Overnight the snow froze. The hill where I live became a solid sheet of ice. I was trapped indoors for three days. Perhaps that was just me. Others seemed still to be enjoying it, but I have an uneasy relationship with gravity, I am a faller-over.

One afternoon I ventured out. In the hall I bumped into the Old Girl Downstairs. The boy scout in me, normally deeply submerged, suddenly jumped out. "Can I get you anything from the shops." "No . . . well . . . um . . . yes. You could get me a loaf of bread." But the road down the hill proved impassable. I tracked back, circled round, clinging to walls, virtually crawling across the ice. Eventually I made Sainsbury's and nearly two hours later I was back. I knocked on the door of Old Girl Downstairs' flat. No answer. She'd gone out. I should have asked her to get my shopping.

So now I wait in dread for the snow coming again, and only one thing might ease my fear. Grit. But I'm at the whim of a council that last year chose to grit only bus routes. How you were supposed to get to the bus route without breaking your neck it didn't seem bothered about. Perhaps this winter, with people already taking to the streets against the cuts, the snow could spark a revolution. We might fight for a bucket of grit and win a world. Now that would be beautiful.

www.philmellows.com
