

Never Satisfied

*I've thought and I've think and I've sweated and swore,
I've bitten my nails 'till they're down to the core,
I've chewed gum, drank coffee, sometimes something stronger—
My racked brain and nerves can't take it much longer.*

*The point I'm trying to put over is whether
A person can live in such miserable weather
As 40 below-zero, I mean,
I've tried to be subtle, but I'll have to come clean. . .*

*And say that it's mostly a matter of grit,
You can't escape, so you put up with it,
You pull the wolf ruff snug over your head
And wish you were in Hawaii instead.*

*With boots, mitts and parky securely in place,
You're dressed for the part and ready to face
The ice fog, the cold, the car that won't run,
Your neighbor comes over to join in the fun.*

*With a battery charger—a jumper cable
From his car to yours, you're finally able
To rock ahead on tires that are square,
It's not lack of air—it's from just standing there.*

*With much difficulty you follow your route
Through a peephole just big enough to see out,
The windshield and windows are covered with ice. . .
To see where you're going, you have to look twice.*

*The sun was just rising when you started to town,
An hour of shopping, and the sun has gone down,
To add to your troubles and compound your plight
Of 40 below, is darkness of night.*

*You head for home—a good place to be
With visions of newspaper, slippers, hot tea,
But the furnace went out, A water pipe froze. . .
What makes for a happier homecoming than those?*

*Chilled to the bone, you phone up a plumber,
You try to keep calm and remember that summer
Even comes to such places as these,
If you can only survive the deep freeze.*

*Ice fog, frozen pipes, a car that won't start,
Two hours' daylight, are only a part
Of the trials you'll face when you come to Alaska,
Is all this misery worth it, I ask you.*

*Frostbitten fingers, your nose or your feet
Will only add to the troubles you'll meet,
Cabin fever may have its way
Unless your day's work is balanced with play.*

*But all things must end, and winter does too,
With spring breakup, there's so much to do,
The ice on the rivers will soon break away. . .
You bet on the hour, the minute, the day.*

*You might be lucky. You might win the pot.
Supposing you do? As likely as not
You'll catch the first plane and get out of here. . .
Perhaps to Hawaii, a place you hold dear.*

*You'll lie on the beach, the sun beating down;
You've surfed and you've swam and been out on the town,
But the lack of a challenge may seem spur you forth
With your tan and your bags on a plane heading north!*

By MARGARET CHOAT

© (Copyright 1966)