



The Katharine Ordway
Natural History Study Area

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MACALESTER
COLLEGE

ORDWAY
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located at 9550 Inver Grove Trail (Dakota County Road 77), Inver Grove Heights, Minn.

SNOWBOUND at ORDWAY

Snow was the inevitable result of the elemental forces which had been developing for several days and the sun had gone down on a bleak and unpromising afternoon twilight. During the night the snow came and by morning's light had blanketed the entire region with six inches of solid moisture for the parched landscape. "Heavy snow" it was, the expected result of the 29-degree temperature and it cohered tenaciously, making it very difficult to remove by shovelling, also difficult to walk in.

Opening the door toward the east was difficult because the snow had blown into a foot-deep drift there yet only a few feet away the swirling wind, which had howled in lament through the night, had swept a sizeable portion of the dooryard so clear of snow that the ground was visible. The door opening to the west was completely barred by a 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -foot dune deposited there as the snowladen wind had swirled around the ends of the building from the northeast; beautiful it was but also an effective barrier.

All day the wind continued, blustery and loud but ineffective at further rearranging the snow banks since the melting temperature (34° high) consolidated the snowpack into a consistency too heavy for even the strong winds to move. The day passed quietly for the sole human denizen of Ordway, safely marooned since the drifts barred ingress by visitors as much as egress by the maroonee, who was further stayed by a wonderful feeling of tranquility bordering on complacency - rather adequately described by the old saw, "Snug as a bug in a rug"

The jays moved actively all the morning as did also the nuthatches; but most of the small birds were stymied in their day's rounds. Down in the forest the squirrels broke off their recent activities and battened down against the threat of more snow; their tracks were conspicuously absent, as were all other tracks.

Late in the afternoon a Bald Eagle, the sickly March sun reflecting resplendently from its white head and tail feathers, flew northward up The River, occasionally circling in reconnaissance; shortly the bird returned, moving less leisurely downstream toward its winter haunts near Read's Landing.

At five o'clock it began again to snow - large, "juicy" flakes drifting downward in the now-calm twilight which came early as the sun was again neutralized by cloud cover. By latest light a new white counterpane had been laid down atop the snow blanket ... and the black of night intensified the closed-in but comforting feeling.

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