

**A WINTER BLESSING** by Jenna Griffin

May you burn candles and log fires and a little bit of food to remind you that things can be good without being perfect.

May you spend time with children. May you tuck babies into knit hats and snowsuits. May you shout-sing carols and make paper crafts with school kids. May you be hit by a snowball or two.

May you fill your belly with warm, sugared drinks in the company of friends. May you have impromptu dance parties and last-minute gatherings.

May you stand in a space that is, to you, holy. May you be filled with the silence and the weight and the beauty. May you feel this sanctuary rebuild itself in the center of your being.

May you feel the cold, really feel it. May it remind you of what you have. May it break your heart a little. And then may you feel warmth, really feel it. May you be astonished by the heat.

May you start a new tradition with people you love. May you start a new tradition all alone. May you step back into old traditions that make you think of your childhood.

May you take in the early darkness without grief. May the long nights make the light sweeter.

May you warm your body under thick blankets, your hands by radiators, your feet in old slippers.

May you read children's books. May you listen to old music. May you work with your hands.

May you bake sweet breads and share them with people you don't really know. May you eat warm soup.

May you bundle up and go on walks. May you return with pink cheeks and full lungs.

May you make your home—whatever that may be—beautiful in some way. May you hang twinkle lights, or pine branches, or icons. May you sweep the floors and put away the dishes.

When you see someone in need, may you give freely and naturally, as if you had no other option, as if sharing what you have was still a rule. May you have the eyes to see those in need.

Blessed are you when you do not fear the winter. Blessed are you still if you do.

Blessed are you when you endure the growing pains of compassion. Blessed are you when you bless the snow and do not curse it. Blessed are you when you look at the gray of the sky and see angels.

Blessed be the bare trees, the frost, the clouds of our breath in the air. Blessed be the blue skies when they come.

Blessed be the winter. Blessed be the world. May peace reign.