Winter Chills

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"Winter has me in its grip, think I'll take a summer trip." wrote singer Don McLean. But the way this winter is going I do not think that there will be any escape and it will follow us even if we run forwards warmer climates.

Very few in our country enjoy the cold winter days. Especially this winter, when you just cannot stop shaking; the cold just cuts through you and getting up from bed and going to work turns into a gigantic task. Nothing seems to motivate us as we look at the dense fog and poor sunshine, hiding beneath our wrap-around mufflers and monkey caps. As we force ourselves to get down to work this time of the year, pushing against the wind there is little we can do except dream of the time when the days were longer and warmer. It's no surprise that nearly all of us are feeling this way in varying degrees. There is a movement toward hibernation going on it seems; we are moving slower, avoiding things we normally like to do, and after several days of clouds and constant rain are having trouble maintaining our general perky and productive attitude in the office. With every dip in the mercury our ability to function decreases as well.. Most people will describe themselves as less productive and less energetic in the wintry months. The winter has certainly managed to suck all the energy out of us!



But as the sluggish fog descends and it turns cold and grey, increasing our complaints and tantrums; the homeless and the poor out there are praying that it will not rain anymore this winter. Each night as they sleep under the open sky close to each other as much as possible blanketed by fog and mist trying to conjure up images of sunny bright mornings they wonder where they will go to find some hot food and warm shelter, at least for the wintry dark nights. Nevertheless the merciless winter enters their body through the small pores of cement bags they use as blankets and plastic bags they use as caps and gloves. They procure these essentials from the heaps of garbage in all the corners of the city. If they get lucky they may manage to make a mini bonfire with a pile of burning twigs or discarded papers that will make their chilly and frosty evenings a wee bit warmer. And when in the morning you honk your horn and rush past them irritated with life and the weather you might fail to notice the street urchins blowing their hands, tears coming down their faces because of the cold, wandering confused at the middle of the roads without decent clothes (let alone winter clothes!). Perhaps you will see them pull their clothes over their mouth trying to protect their nose from freezing. They have come from remote villages in search of food and work and today like every other day they will dine on footpaths and lunch under the trees -- if they manage to gather some food. Maybe they will get their food by begging, stealing or by taking up some hazardous job.

If we could listen to these people describe winter and hear their bitter experiences then perhaps our attitude towards life would change. The tasks of waking up from bed, going to work and carrying on our daily chores would not be so hard either. Neither would we be blue because of the grey weather.