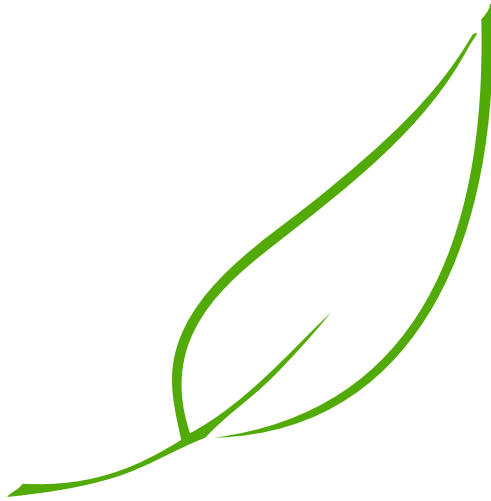


GOING POLAR

by Ken Bradbury



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Characters: Oscar and Madison. The setting is the North Pole.

MADISON: *(as both huddle together, shivering)* What are we doing here? Just tell me what in the heck we are doing here!

OSCAR: Okay, that's about the hundredth time you've asked me that. Just be quiet and keep the fire going.

MADISON: This is nuts. This is so totally nuts! I said "a vacation!" ... and here we are about to freeze to death at the North Pole.

OSCAR: Come on, Madison. We always take those boring vacations ... to the beach, to the mountains ...

MADISON: Beaches are good. You don't freeze to death on beaches. Mountains are nice. No polar bears. This is the stinkin' North Pole, you idiot! You said, "Look! An ad for 'Extreme Vacations!' Excitement! Thrills! Danger! All in one vacation package!" It didn't say anything about frostbite and killer seals. We could die up here!

OSCAR: Yeah, but think of the great pictures we'll get.

MADISON: Of death? Death is not a good picture, Oscar. It's all out of focus. And I've heard it hurts.

OSCAR: Gimme a candy bar.

MADISON: We're out of candy bars, Oscar. We ran out two days ago. We're out of sandwiches. We're out of luck.

OSCAR: Fingernails?

MADISON: I ate the last one yesterday. The fire's going out.

OSCAR: Whatta we got left to burn?

MADISON: Ice. All we have left to burn is the ice. Go ahead, Mr. Explorer. Try it.

OSCAR: Hey, we still got our igloo.

MADISON: Which is now melting. Who ever told you to start a fire in an igloo?

OSCAR: Seemed like a good idea.

MADISON: Look, we've got to go for help.

OSCAR: The tour company's coming for us.

MADISON: In five days. They dump you out here for a week. I mean at least we won't starve ... we'll freeze to death first.

OSCAR: (*begins to crawl*) Okay, if you're gonna gripe, let's go for help. (*stops*) I'm stuck. What's the matter? I crawled in this igloo. Why can't I crawl out?

MADISON: Because the igloo is melting, dummy. The hole is smaller 'cause the whole thing is sinking.

OSCAR: So gimme a push.

MADISON: Where?

OSCAR: Out.

MADISON: I mean ...

OSCAR: Push! Just push!

MADISON: (*pushing against Oscar's rear*) Are you trying? Come on! Help a little!

OSCAR: I can't help! I'm stuck.

MADISON: Well suck it in or something! I can't ...

OSCAR: (*with a loud "Oomph" he goes flying out into the snow*) That hurt.

MADISON: Whatta you see?

OSCAR: Snow.

MADISON: What else?

OSCAR: More snow.

MADISON: Good grief.

OSCAR: Whatta you think I'd see, Wal-Mart? There's nothin' but snow out here. That's what the North Pole is! It's snow! Come on out and see for yourself.

MADISON: (*reaching*) Gimme a hand.

OSCAR: (*pulling*) Man, you're heavy.

MADISON: That's because I'm frozen. Ice expands. (*and with another "Oomph" Madison comes sliding out*) (*getting his bearings as both squint against the glare*) I can't see anything! It's all ...

OSCAR: ... white. Nothin' but white. White whiteness.

MADISON: I'm terrified, Oscar. I started out curious then I went to "confused" then to concerned and scared and now I'm in a state of full-blown terror.

OSCAR: It's gorgeous, isn't it?

MADISON: What?

OSCAR: Snow on snow on snow... nothing but ice and snow for as far as the eye can see. This is what I call living.

MADISON: I'm standing here in a state of complete panic and you're describing the landscape? I can't take it any more, Oscar. I have decided ... (*reclines upon the ice, then*) ... to die.

OSCAR: (*looking at him for a long pause, then*) You don't seem to share my enthusiasm, Madison.

MADISON: Don't talk to me. I'm trying to die.

OSCAR: You can't die. We've got five days of vacation to go.

MADISON: It's not polite to talk to the dead. Go play on an iceberg. I'm busy dying.

OSCAR: Would it make a difference if I told you there's a polar bear coming our direction?

MADISON: You fooled me into this stupid death-causing vacation. Don't think I'm going to believe any more stories.

OSCAR: He's really very large ... and looks hungry.

MADISON: Look at my mouth, Oscar. I'm not laughing. No ha-ha. This is the frowning mouth of a man trying his best to freeze to death. Now leave me alone. Go eat some snow.

OSCAR: And he's getting very close.

MADISON: I'm not listening. (*a beat, then*) What's that smell?

OSCAR: Polar bear. They stink.

MADISON: Go away. (*a pause, then*) That really stinks.

OSCAR: Comes from eating seals.

MADISON: (*sits up, looks, then*) That ... is a polar bear. That is a full-sized, completely grown Travel Channel polar bear. Tell me I'm dreaming.

OSCAR: You're dreaming.

MADISON: You're lying.

OSCAR: I know. He's sort of beautiful, isn't he? I mean in a "look-at-the-tasty-kid-who's-about-to-become-my-Happy-Meal" sort of way.

MADISON: He's getting closer.

OSCAR: They can't see well ... they go by smell.



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