

*It may not snow today  
or tomorrow, but snow it will.  
Everything you need to know about  
that most Canadian of chores,  
shovelling the white stuff.*



# THE ART OF SNOW REMOVAL

written by  
*Kim Gray*

*Everything you need to know  
about that most Canadian of chores,  
shovelling snow.* By Kim Gray

LET IT SNOW,  
LET IT SNOW,  
LET IT SNOW.

**E**very winter and after nearly every heavy snowfall, I notice her through my front window as she clears the makeshift skating rink in the park across our street. I'd offer to help, but my neighbour Patti—bundled in snow gear and barely recognizable—is lost in the rhythm of her own private shovelling world.

If you inquire, Patti will tell you she shovels because it needs to be done, because it's great exercise, because she feels fabulous—even euphoric—once she's finished the job. And because, frankly, she used to just “go play” in the snow as a child living in Montreal but now, as an adult living in Calgary, she needs a grown-up excuse to pile on the layers and embrace winter's arrival head on.

On the one hand, Patti's rink-shovelling ritual is a deeply private affair. On the other, this classic winter chore binds us all as Canadians. Whether we celebrate it or not, the act of shovelling snow is embedded, both in the past and in the present, in our collective psyche. *Scrape. Pause. Scrape. Pause. Scraape*—the rough yet comforting rasp of snow shovelling is an indelible sound of life in the Northern Hemisphere.

For example, Canadian poet Lorna Crozier, who was born in Swift Current, Sask. and currently lives in Victoria, B.C., has warm childhood memories of watching her father shovel snow in the frozen winters of her home town. “I'd be watching from the window and the whole world would be blue and hushed with snow, and everything would be silent except the scraping of my dad's grain shovel as he cleared a path from the front door to the wooden sidewalk. He wasn't the perfect father, but he was always there for the first big snowfall,” recalls Crozier. “I loved watching his strong arms and shoulders as he worked his way down the walk, throwing snow into huge piles on either side. I loved feeling that he was ensuring that we had a safe walkway from the house out into the world.”

Then there's Calgary writer Will Ferguson, who remembers undertaking this quintessential Canadian chore himself as a young boy, having been raised in northern Alberta