

ELAINE CLERC

KEEPING WATCH

Acrylic on canvas \$150.00 11 x14 inches

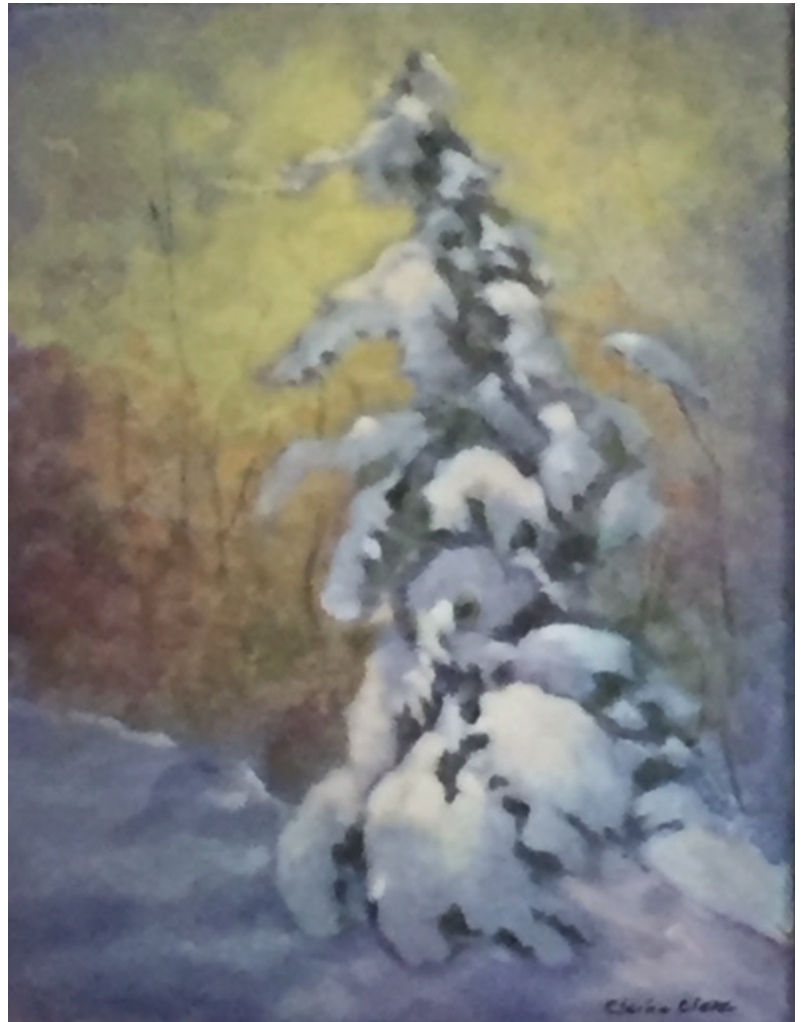
Celebration of Winter

Most people would not choose winter as a favorite season, especially when living on the prairies. To many, it evokes the thoughts of having to stay indoors to avoid the freezing cold weather. However, I think that winter is worth celebrating. I actually love winter.

There were so many facets to winter that brought enjoyment and excitement during my childhood years. We would lie down in the fresh snow and make snow angels. We would continue to wave our arms up and down to see who could make the biggest wings. I also remember walking to school and not being able to see the houses because the snowbanks on the side of the road were so high. Or so I thought then. I now realize that they were not as tall, as I was short. Of course, what would winter be without a snowball fight? The snow has to be moist, not crisp, to shape the snow and that only happens when there is a milder winter day. Skating, and tobogganing, also filled many hours when we were not in school.

Now as I paint winter scenes, I notice more the colors of winter. Whether we live on the wide-open prairies, or in the city of Winnipeg, our Manitoba sunrises and sunsets can take your breath away. The vibrancy of the colors is astounding. Whether we look at a sunrise or a sunset the clouds can range from soft and calm or full of action and energy. Shades of orange, pink, magenta, yellows, blues all are captivating as they are splashed across and fill the sky. Even the snow takes on different hues of pink, mauve, cerulean blue, depending on the time of day and the angle of the sun. These nuances, I never noticed as a child.

Recently we have enjoyed walking through Bird's Hill Park and other forested places. This particular day was just after a fresh batch of snow, and later in the afternoon as the sun



was going down. I saw this tree which was the inspiration to do this painting. It reminded me of a sentinel standing in the forest guarding the rest of the smaller bushes and trees. Maybe it was saying to them. "I am your protector." It was one of the bigger, more impressive trees. It also reminded me of a person stooped over but trying to stand up straight. I was tempted to knock the snow off and watch the branches spring back in their upright position, but I did not want to spoil this perfect scene.

When I saw the golden sunset sky peeking through the forest trees, and casting its light on the tree, I knew why I loved winter so much. That for me was worth a celebration.

This painting is called "Keeping Watch" and is done in acrylic.