

Information for website:  
Sunday Service, December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2009  
Unitarian Church of Calgary  
Rev. Fran Dearman

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I list the authors and titles in the bibliography, and commend them to you.—FD*

Opening Words: #424, from Job 38

“Have you entered the storehouses of the snow?  
Or have you seen the treasures of the hail?  
From whose womb did the ice come forth,  
and who has given birth to the hoarfrost of heaven?  
The waters become hard like stone,  
and the face of the deep is frozen.”

Story for All:

This story is based on an event which took place in 1142.  
The words are those of Helen Humphreys, from her recent book,  
“The Frozen Thames”, based on the forty occasions of historic record  
when the Thames River—the one in England, not Ontario—froze solid.

*Begin reading: “1142 Matilda is under siege.....”*

Winters Tales, Calgary 2009

We humans tell stories. We shape our words, and order them, and make through them some meaning. We tell stories to sort the past, to cherish the now, and to imagine new ways. The long dark nights of winter invite us to linger by a warm hearth and make room for storytelling: old tales, tall tales, new tales, small tales, tales of courage, tales of endurance, tales of hope and forgiveness.

Let us share some stories about bridges.

Our first story comes from a book by Peter Matthiessen, called “The Snow Leopard”.  
[Peter Matthiessen, “The Snow Leopard”, pp 73-74, (c 1978)]

Our second story is another reading from Helen Humphreys,  
“The Frozen Thames”, pp 158-61.  
*“1811 All is madness. The King is locked.....”*

*On to the second pair of stories.....*

Reading from Helen Humphreys, “The Frozen Thames”, pp 10-13.

This story describes bees as “the tiny buzzing bird that makes the honey”, and refers to a legend that connects bees and oxen.

*“1269 The oxen didn’t want to cross the frozen river....”*

Last story: “The Skeleton in Hólar Church”, [from the Icelandic tradition] from “Scandinavian Folk & Fairy Tales” by Mary McBride and Claire Booss.

[So be careful about the errands you run, late on a winter’s evening. There’s no telling who you’ll meet.]

## Bibliography

Helen Humphreys, “The Frozen Thames”, 2007

Mary McBride and Claire Booss, “The Skeleton in Hólar Church”, from “Scandinavian Folk & Fairy Tales”, 1988

Peter Matthiessen, “The Snow Leopard”, 1978