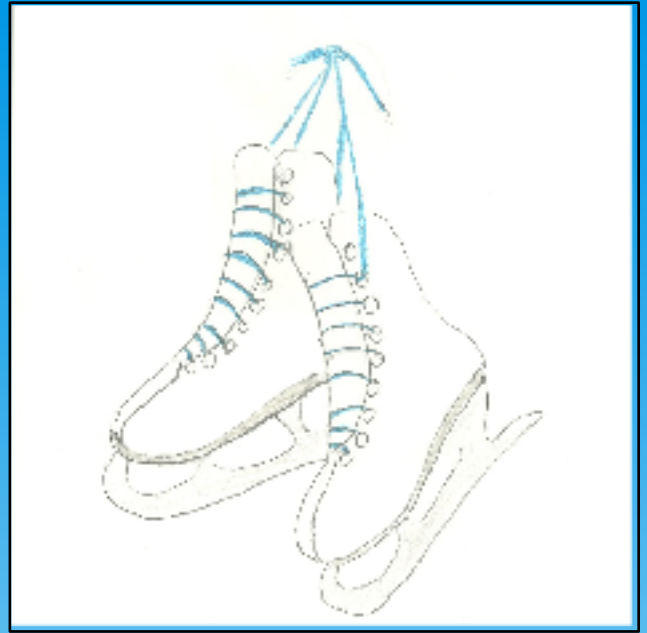


# Winter Wonders

Written and  
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“I’ll be back in half an hour,” Sheila called from the rotting wooden doorway. The wind sent chills through her face as she pulled her thin woolen coat around her. She plodded outside into the freezing December air throwing her new pearly white ice skates behind her. As she followed the frosty trail up to the pond, softly humming to herself, her sharp ears caught a faint chicka-dee-dee-dee chicka-dee-dee-dee. She smiled. It had to be Harry, the chickadee that her little brother named after himself. Harry visited their small handmade birdfeeder a lot and, because of that, she knew his shrill call from all the others. A large gust of wind made her shiver with cold. Her long brown hair whirled in her face. She wished she could have a warmer coat but dismissed the thought immediately. Her parents had hardly enough money to pay the rent on their old shack. And she had no idea where they had scraped together the money to buy her new ice skates! They had gotten them several sizes too big so that she could wear them for a few years.



Lost in her daydreaming she stumbled and fell cringing as her knee hit the icy ground. As she was cautiously getting up, her eye caught some hardly noticeable imprints in the soft ground. Deer tracks! She would have to come back later and sketch them. She carefully marked the spot by sticking a small twig into the ground. As she reached the small frozen pond, she sighed with delight. It was a perfect day. The trees were crusted with snow. The pond frozen, not a single mark on it. Bird calls reached her ears. It was her dreamland—where she went to run away from her troubles, sorrows, and misfortune. It was the single place that could give her comfort. She unlaced her boots, slid her feet in, and then laced up her perfectly wonderful new skates. Carefully she stood up, took a deep breath, and stepped out onto the ice.