

## Jérémie

Hi,

My name is Jérémie, and I'm about to tell you my story.

But before we really start, I would like to invite you to get closer to the railway in front of you. Please be careful when crossing the street as this area can be tricky at times.

Once you have crossed the street, you can rotate to the right. Now I invite you to focus on what you see from there, especially what you see passed that road right in front of you.

As you are looking at this peculiar landscape, you can't help it but think of the crazy harsh winters back home.

These mounds of soil remind you of all that snow, plowed and accumulated into empty parking lots, especially higher after every snow storm.

You laugh as you recall the absurd height that some of these piles would reach. Once in a while, as tall as the 3 story apartment building that you can see on the other side of the street, to the right. You would climb on top of these buttes at night and just gaze into this never ending desert of snow. Mesmerizing, extremely beautiful, hostile.

You remember how sometimes these artificial mountains were white and some other times gray and muddy. You remember how the sight of dirty snow made you feel uneasy. As if you could see all the layers of dirt and pollution that gathered over time, and in such an obvious way.

This also makes you think of the gray and bleak mornings without a ray of sunshine, and the lingering humidity in your boots, either because your feet got too hot, or because you stepped by accident into a puddle of melted snow. In Québec we call this type of snow "slush". We never really use this word to mention something positive. Slush is wet, it gets your car and pants dirty in no time, it infiltrates your shoes, it floods the sidewalks of Montreal when the temperature goes above 0.

You imagine falling off one of these piles of snow, tumbling down, spinning and swirling until you reach the ground. A bunch of snow got into your winter coat and for a moment, you can't breathe. It's dripping between your shoulders, making its way down to your kidneys, stopping at

the elastic band of your underwear. Your face, already frozen from staying out too long, is also covered in snow. You try to wipe it off but you forget to take off your mittens. The rough material only scratches your face, adding to the discomfort.

You decide to get into your car, you turn on the engine and resist the urge to blast the heating at full power. You know that if you do, you will only get cold air blowing into your face for the first ten minutes. You need to be patient.

As you wait, you dream about having a luxury car that has the heating directly integrated into the seats. Then you start thinking about somewhere else. Somewhere else in the world where the winters are not so merciless. You don't have a specific place in mind, not yet. But just to think of a new home elsewhere makes you feel better already.

From the seat of your car, you look far ahead, you can see mountains. This sight also makes you feel better. The gentle undulation of these hills is soothing. Of course, the leafless trees make this forest look eerie and uninviting. However, you are able to picture these mountains in the peak of summer, green and alive.

Eventually, you will move overseas, in a city smaller than Montreal. You will realize that you appreciate living closer to nature. You will notice that your priorities are slowly shifting. You won't feel like you need to rush through life any more in order to "become something" or to "be somebody". You will start to enjoy doing things for yourself. You will start to enjoy going to the museum or the restaurant or the cinema dressed like whatever, not caring anymore about what others think. Or at least, not as much as you used to.

You will realize that everytime you go to the forest, you feel at peace. Your heart rate slows down, your thoughts are clear, you feel whole. This is new and exciting. It is intoxicating.