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### **A Walk on the Edge: Between Ice and Illusion**

This is my first time walking along a snow-covered beach - my first encounter with an ocean draped in ice and snow. To be honest, it's quite different from what I had imagined. In my mind's eye, a winter island should have been encircled by massive, pristine ice floes, their crystal-clear surfaces catching the sunlight and reflecting the ocean's blues and greens like gleaming jewels. I had always thought that even in winter, there would remain a clear demarcation between coastline and ocean - a line that would constantly remind wanderers that they were treading the edge of an island. This boundary isn't merely physical; it's psychological, repeatedly whispering the island's fundamental nature: a land embraced by water. Yet the ice and snow, along with the bitter cold, have blurred these lines, creating an illusion of spatial reconstruction. Under the white blanket, if not for the towering mooring posts at the harbor's end, I would struggle to distinguish land from sea - everything merges into an endless white expanse stretching to the horizon.



*The island rewrites its edges in winter. Here, the edge dissolved. The sea forgets its name, lets snow baptize it into a blank page.*

To me, the “edge” in a walk on the edge is not forged by the ocean but drawn by humans ourselves. I say this because of the peculiar yet fascinating contradictions I experienced during the walk. Standing at the entrance of the Prince Edward Island Convention Centre, I find myself at a literal and metaphorical crossroads Behind me lies the carefully maintained civilization of downtown Charlottetown - salted sidewalks, swept streets, and the spacious parking lot with only a few cars. Ahead stretches the untamed winter shoreline, revealing untrodden, snow-covered terrain.



*Crossing the “Mythic Line” — Trespassing into nowhere.*

Standing at the road's end feels like reaching the world's edge, as if the next step would carry me into another realm. Facing the knee-deep snow, I hesitate briefly before crossing that invisible line between "civilization" and "nature" with the enthusiasm of an explorer. Though "nature" isn't quite accurate - everything within my reach bears human fingerprints: the 2025 display, the red Adirondack chairs standing sentinel over the ocean, even the dock beneath my

feet. Yet the snow buried or softened many of these manufactured edges, and from the harbor's periphery, the ocean appeared as an infinite extension of land, crossable and conquerable, offering a deceptive sense of mastery.



*The eye-catching red chairs, silent sentinels of the harbor, stand as the final markers between here and nowhere.*

My usually restless "monkey mind" finds peace in this pristine white canvas where sea and sky become one. For a precious moment, I experience a long-forgotten sense of serenity and freedom. Despite my physically confined space, my vision roams vast and unbound. While people often speak of the "Blue mind" state induced by azure waters, this snow-draped ocean evokes similarly enchanting sensations, though the biting air, piercing wind, and the peculiar mix of soft yet firm snow underfoot created an experience wholly different from summer shoreline walks.

Summer on the island lives in my memory not as a visual spectacle but a tactile imprint. The perpetual sticky humidity, the cool salt-laden breeze caressing skin, the fierce sun leaving its burning signature. Time seemed to stretch endlessly in that sultry atmosphere, dulling one's

sensitivity to change. This gradual sensory "numbing" fed the void within me. During my teenage years, I often felt trapped, harboring an inexplicable inner pain. I blamed all my suffering on my small island home, convinced its remoteness and isolation had imprisoned me. My adolescent self's greatest wish was to escape that seemingly predictable place where life's boundaries felt visible at a glance. Only after escaping to big cities for studies and work did I realize that my prison wasn't the island, but my misaligned sense of identity. The urban life I had so desperately craved proved to be just another lonely island, albeit more glamorously decorated, trapping me in cycles of repetition and numbness.



*I once believed  
the summer edges of my island home  
were a tactile prison—  
humid heat clung like a second skin,  
salt crusted into armor.*

*Time thickened,  
pooled in the heavy air,  
refusing to flow.*

*Only much later did I learn—*

*cities are merely islands  
with sharper cliffs.*

Whether walking the island's edge in winter or summer, a subtle fear always stirs within me, though its nature differs with the seasons. If summer's fear springs from the stark boundary and the mysterious, mercurial power of the blue ocean, winter's dread stems from the vast solitude and the cold's menace. That day, as minus twenty-degree air stings my flesh, I walk until numbness claims my toes. It isn't courage but defiance - a silent negotiation with the cold: if I endure you, I prove my freedom.