The Jacqui Lawson electronic greeting card site, which might be just a bit cheesy but has nonetheless been a favourite of mine for many years, has a beautiful new card that unfolds to the tune of “I’m dreaming of a white Christmas”.

I love that card and sent it out to heaps of people, with a personalised note for each person. It features trees laden with sparkling snow, prancing horses, jingling sleigh bells and darting chickadees. It’s delightful and evokes for me all the beauty of a northern Christmas.

But don’t get me wrong – wild horses could not get me to go back to Canada for Christmas. I grew up in a land where nine out of ten Christmases were white – and cold, and dark, and where there wasn’t much you could do but eat, visit and watch football.

Today however I walked around the gardens admiring the blooming gingers, fuchsias and hibiscus; I picked a dozen ripe tomatoes; I walked in the rain; I wore a skimpy little dress; I body-surfed in the pounding waves until I was ready to fall over, I strolled along the sand with Rick and Daniel and Eve; I ate myself silly out on the balcony overlooking green fields and frisky calves. The kookaburras woke me at 5:30 am and the sun will set around 8:00 pm. It’s a miracle I’ve enjoyed for almost thirty years now!

I miss my North American family but couldn’t trade places for quids.