

# I Have Seen

**By Karen Gersonde**

I have seen the big Great Lakes freighters in winter, hauling their precious cargo of coal, iron ore, grain and limestone into the port of Duluth and Superior in upper Wisconsin and Minnesota. Their hulls are ice covered, frozen solid from bow to stern. Their bright lights illuminate their decks, with massive icicles hanging from every inch of their massive lights. Workers on board are bundled up from head to toe, taking on a job that no one wants, that no one dares to go near. It is a job for the heartiest of men and women. It is a job that is unforgiving, harsh, relentless. And when the freighter is unloaded, they head out back into the frozen Great Lakes, go back to another port, and start all over again. These ships are an awesome sight to see in winter. Winter consumes these ships, yet they keep on going. They are the backbone of commerce for the Great Lakes region and have been for over a century. They are a magnificent sight.