

First person singular: Enough of this winter already

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Let's say this straight out. This winter has been too cold, too snowy and has lasted far too long. I want spring and I want it three weeks ago.

Granted, I'm a summer person by nature—preferring to kayak and boogie board rather than risk my limbs by skiing or ice-skating—but even my sister, a winter person who likes the cold wants this winter to be over and done with.

I used to think her preference for winter was because she was born in January while I was born in June, but there are even people born in April who prefer winter. (Maybe it was a cold spring.)

As a kid I thought winters were almost as great as summer because if it snowed enough there would be no school and that was great. My friends and I would get our sleds out—Flexible Flyers, of course—and head out to Suicide Hill, the steep hill at a nearby golf course, the one within trudging distance.

We'd be out there for hours, until we were soaked through. It was difficult staying on the sled all the way down the hill and sometimes it was actually more fun to fall off the sled than actually make it all the way.

The single best time on Suicide Hill was the day a car hood showed up and it became our version of a ski lift. What a blast that was to go belly flopping down the hill and hitting the hood just right. Most of the time we'd hit it wrong and just lose balance right away, but when we would hit it right we would become airborne for a short while. Of course, we'd then slam down hard and I sometime wonder how any of us became baritones.

Snowball fights were fun, too, but I preferred sledding. And rolling or sliding down a hill without a sled of any kind was fun, too.

(One of the things I find so curious is that too few people in the Chadds Ford area seem to be out sledding when it snows now. There are people who go to Pocopson Elementary School and sled down Mt. Pocopson, but there should be more, especially more kids. And the younger ones could use the smaller hill at Brandywine Battlefield Park.)

Now, I don't dislike winter. I actually like the change of seasons. It's just that as I get older, winters seem to last longer than they should. Two days of cold weather, a two-foot blizzard, then springtime temperatures again.

OK, maybe not realistic and maybe not even the right thing. Nature needs the balance of summer and winter in the temperate climate and a healthy spring needs the biological action that goes on under the blanket of snow and frozen earth. Plus, as a photographer, I do enjoy capturing those winter scenes, especially the ones that make a person shiver just looking at the image.

So, I tolerate winter. It's both pretty and necessary. But I still need spring. I need to thaw out.