



Change in the Weather

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By Cherie Langlois

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I don't know about you, but our weather here has been crazy – not our usual winter clouds and drizzle.

After an Indian Summer spoiled us with sunlight and golden maple leaves, we sunk into the usual November gloom and rain.

Then, in December (generally gloomy/rainy), temperatures plummeted into the teens and much cold, slippery white stuff fell from the sky – what folks living on mountains and tundras call “snow.”

Seriously, we do get snow here, too, but you wouldn't know it from the way we drive in the snow (poorly), or close schools at the drop of a snowflake.

It's just snow falls so infrequently, then melts or washes away in the rain, never sticking around long enough for us to master driving in it.

But this winter the snow lingered, giving us our first really white Christmas, plus the fun experience of cross-country skiing in our pastures, using two large manure piles as jumps.

Our ducks and chickens may have hated it, but my family and I loved how the snow covered up our farm's imperfections and turned the gray, sodden winter to a bright and sparkling one.

Despite some extra work like bucketing water to critters, I much preferred the snow to what followed fast on its frosty heels: torrents of rain and rising rivers.

Suddenly, instead of sledding kids and sparkling snow, we saw sad images of flooded streets and homes, people weirdly kayaking through a drowned town.

Our crawl space flooded, the sump pump broke (my husband Brett barely managed to buy another, whew!), and, though knowing better, I drove our low-slung Subaru through a flooded section of country road to the post office and back.

An oncoming truck forced me from the center line shallows into deeper water, where I thought for heart-thudding moments the current would sweep my daughter Kelsey and me into a (probably bottomless) ditch. It didn't, and we came safe out the other side, me cursing my thoughtless (stubborn?), forward momentum.

Now I'm wondering, too, about how hard it is sometimes for we humans to stop, re-evaluate, and retreat even when we know going forward is a huge mistake.

Anyway, we got off easy compared to many, and one group on our arm actually enjoyed the flooding: our ducks.

Hope you're all staying warm and dry,
Cherie

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