

Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow

Oh, the weather outside is frightful,
But the fire is so delightful
And since we've no place to go,
Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow.
Sammy Cahn

By J B Leftwich

There is nothing that invigorates a weather forecaster more than the possibility of snow in the immediate future.

As I write this in mid-December, a misty mixture of tiny raindrops and even tinier white pin heads is drifting lazily to the pavement, leaving an almost invisible dampness which amounts to nothing.

It's the most hyped nothing of the season. For days, television weather forecasters have been vying vigorously with each other on the prediction of snow.

The weather people on TV demonstrate the viable and enduring romance we experience with snow. Even residents of northern states rhapsodize over the beauty of falling snow and of fresh new snow. Romanticists, exhilarated by the beauty and excitement of snow, write poems on the subject.

. . . It's 1925, you are age six and a true believer. Santa made it just fine but left no sleight tracks in the six-inch snow. And you get your set of toy carpenter tools, but you have to postpone using them because your parents are taking you and your brother to a Christmas dinner (noon) party. You are not a happy camper.

We don't see poems about the dire consequences of snow. Nobody, extols the virtues of slush, glazed highways, closed schools, missed work days, wrecked vehicles, downed power lines, and broken shrubbery. We seem to have an unlimited capacity for submerging inevitable discomfort as we tout the virtue of falling snow.

I, too, acknowledge a romantic bent for falling snow or newly fallen snow. I deplore the first vehicles that track new snow on roadways. I dislike trekking and tracking to the street to find the morning newspaper. I love the pristine beauty, the purified and immaculate environment.

But I deplore the aftermath - shoveling, lack of traction, dirty snow along roads and streets, repair bills and for some severe injury or worse. It's a mixed bag of elation and travail, exhilaration and dismay.

. . . It's 1938, and you're home from college for Christmas vacation. It snows. You walk two miles in the snow to the post office where, yes, you find a letter from your girl. When

you walk home, you discover your footprints have disappeared.

Snow is the antithesis of tornadoes. Snow is peaceful, relaxing, seductive. Because in normal winters it falls on rare occasions, snow induces tranquility and harmony.

There are nights, even in summer months, when I clear my mind before drifting to sleep by watching an imaginary snowfall.

. . . It's 1933, I am 13 years old and trying to understand the mysteries of my grandfather. My brother, 9, and I are planning to stay up until 12 o'clock and watch the new year arrive. Neither of us usually make it past 10:00. Children in that era were in bed before 9:00 and up before 5:00. The early to bed and early to rise mantra was highly esteemed.

For some unknown reason, my brother and I think there will be a dramatic changing of the guard when the new calendar activates. We want to see it.

"You're staying up until midnight?" Granddad asks.

"We just want to see what it looks like when the year changes." we explain.

He obviously is puzzled.

"Why don't you just go outside at 9:00 and look about?" he asks. "It'll be just the same as it will be at midnight,"

As 9:00 approaches, we begin to understand his line of thought. That's when the fire is banked and the house begins to chill. There's snow, old snow, on the ground as the thermometer hovers in the teens.

At 9:00, we poke our heads out, see nothing changing, bake our feet at the fireplace, and dash to bed.

I don't see a new year begin until my late teens.

The TV weather forecasters are vying for attention. They are hoping temperatures will drop, and snow will start falling. Each wants to announce later he or she was the first to predict snow.

They don't want to be trapped by a fickle front, as they were last year, and fail to predict snow. They hate to explain their failures.

They are mentally saying: Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow.

Weather is a highly competitive business.

(J.B. Leftwich is a veteran journalist and a columnist for The Lebanon Democrat.
Email: leftwichjb@charter.net)

<http://www.ajlambert.com>