

## **Acceptance (or, Blue Skies and Sunshine)**

Aaah. The weather. We revel in it and revile it; praise it and ponder it; curse and cajole it; make, it the target of our scorn and skepticism, our bewilderment and beguilement . . .

Its very mention plugs the hole in a collapsing dike of dialogue, provides fodder for a hungry conversation, and is always a comfortable filler when penning a casual note. Weather forecasters are easy prey for our ridicule ("Who wouldn't like to be wrong in his job fifty percent of the time?") and, for some (unfathomable to me) reason, are credited with balmy days and blamed for unwelcome temperatures and tempests.

Throughout man's history, he has tried to alter the weather to suit his needs: a dance to beckon the skies to spill forth their precious rain; a sacrifice to the sun, beseeching it to summon back to the heavens the deluge which floods the land; a chant to the moon, imploring it to rise full against the clouds at harvest time.

Now that man has the technology to explore the universe and probe beyond the depths from which the snows fall and the hails hail, there seems to be this inherent belief that he thus should be able to, if not tame the weather, at least predict it with the precision applied to, say, skilled surgery. For many, there is this unconquerable urge to accurately know exactly what the cloud cover, wind speed, and thermometer reading will be at any given moment.

In many circumstances, it is precisely because of our scientific advances and modern society that "we must have a correlating degree of meteorological exactitude: a pilot needs the very best information possible to guide his craft through a gale; a freeway clogged with cars on an icy day is perilous; a city of people unprepared for a storm could spell disaster. On a smaller—but no less significant— scale, the years of toil of a farmer can be -wiped out in an instant; a hiker lost in a heavy veil of fog might never find his way back to the trail. Yes, lives and livelihoods are on the line. There is no disputing that.

Yet, in the course of the daily comings and goings of most people, what occurs between the ceiling of sky above us and the floor of the ground beneath us does not have to be allowed the gravity we often accord it. Oh how we grumble when gray skies defeat blue or when the mercury doesn't rise as high as we were promised. (Yes, promised! by our local weatherman.)

And, not only do we yearn to hold the forecaster accountable to every word he utters, but we most often also want him to issue a prophesy of days lined wall-to-wall with sunshine! Then, when it is damp and overcast, we feel betrayed and disappointed. Don't get me wrong, I will be first in line to submit my entreaty for a string of luminous days that are just warm enough so that I'm not chilled—but not so sizzling that I get seared—for my hiking vacation. But if not granted this petition, my next would be that I accept with grace and good nature what I do encounter, to be able to fully embrace whatever the day does bring. Because sometimes what we least expect (and are least hoping for) ends up bringing a prodigious surprise: a double rainbow; a snowy, shimmering mantle on a distant peak; a puff-ball sparrow nestled in a nearby bush, trying to escape a bitter nor'easter; the howl of a coyote ferried on the wind.

And imagine the alternative: Would we really want to think we had an edge over Mother Nature? Would we really be happy plotting (and plodding through) our lives without the capricious twists the weather brings us? Don't wish me a monsoon on my next holiday for saying so, but I, for one, will always cheer for the Whimsy of Mother Nature . . . and figure she's having a merry chuckle on us!