



SNOW IN AUGUST

presented by
The Rehoboth Beach Writers Guild

Snow in August

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Introduction

“Snow in August,” started out of a realization — and a longing. The realization was that when we offered group writing projects, most of the entries were nonfiction, even the poems. We’ve loved these projects and the writing that resulted, but we wondered what would happen if we forced ourselves to write differently, to write toward never-before-imagined possibilities rather than toward remembrance. What might we discover? I think of how, as a child, snow days felt filled with freedom, a break from routine, the world momentarily halted. We longed to create that experience in our writing.

Initially, we imagined this would be a published (print) anthology and so also asked local artists to submit original works using “Snow in August” as a theme. While we didn’t get enough written submissions to make such an anthology possible, we are nevertheless delighted with this result. Who knew there were so many ways to “see” snow in August? We loved the way our 35 writers stretched reality, imagined the impossible, saw metaphor and simile: rice and pearls, trauma, romance, a visit from the Gods, from the future. Climate change, addiction, racism, grief — it’s all here. And the artwork — whimsical, fun, sad, serious — it too captures the immense possibilities.

We are grateful for the gift of time and care our writers and artists put into their submissions. And as always, none of

this would be possible without Cindy Hall, working tirelessly behind the scenes to find the best way to showcase us. Her editing, her layout, her researching of the best way to display our work. In this season of giving, it is the best gift I can ask for, and on behalf of the Guild, I am grateful.

—*Maribeth Fischer*

No Two Alike

Sarah Barnett

Big mistake reading *The Story of Snow* with Joy on August's hottest day. Captivated, she studies the lacy snowflake images as if she's hunting for diamonds.

When I adopted Joy from China, she was a curious toddler whose favorite activity was exploring the pots and pans in my kitchen cabinets. Now, at age six, she races through picture books about Biscuit the dog and Pete the cat.

Joy's questions: *What does snow feel like? Like ice cream? Is it true every snowflake is different?*

Joy's read about snow, heard about snow, but she's never seen snow. After my mom died, we moved from Florida to Rehoboth to be near my sister Rose. How do I answer Joy's questions?

"Try movies," Rose suggests. We watch *March of the Penguins* during an afternoon thunderstorm. I see a movie about parenting hardships — frigid landscape, hunting for food, two parents nurturing one fragile egg. Joy loves the penguins, gravely studies the snowy landscape.

Can we buy a sled? Can we make snow? Let's go where there's snow.

I buy a winter scene snow globe — evergreens, a cardinal, a collie.

Can we get a dog?

Thank you, “Snow Is Cool” children’s program at the Rehoboth Library! Joy spends the morning cutting out paper snowflakes while the librarian reads *Frosty the Snowman*.

Later, we walk the beach on a windy day that feels like fall. “Look, they’re like snowballs,” I say. Joy chases down a couple of globes of seafoam rolling over the sand, wipes her wet hands on her t-shirt.

When is winter?

How can I explain that even in winter, you can’t count on snowfall in Rehoboth?

We hang the paper snowflakes from the mantel and drape some over the rose bushes. I consider buying fake snow. Do stores even sell the stuff in summer? Should I try to *make* snow? Not a simple process. Plus, it’ll melt in minutes.

Whatever I do, it won’t be enough.

Enough for what?

Enough to keep my daughter from speaking any sentence that begins “My *real* mother would . . .”

I didn’t get everything I wanted. I begged for trendy toys — Cabbage Patch doll, Barbie Dream House. Rose never asked for anything.

“Children are like snowflakes,” Mom always said.

Now she’d say, “Welcome to motherhood.” Then she’d hug me.

I hope Joy remembers our summer of snow.

Should we adopt a puppy?

His Yin and Yang

Anne Barney

Jack has a tattoo of the sun
on his shoulder,
with flames instead of rays.
In the center, where solar flares are born,
a snowflake fills the space,
intricate and delicate as breath.

The tattoo is his
yin and yang,
for always, he says, always
there will be those times
to sunbathe in December,
to shovel snow in August.

This sailor has stood at the bow,
believing the sun had risen just for him.
He has sailed without a map,
and often without the stars;
he has slumped on docks at midnight
and sought the end of piers.

When sorrow,
with the strength of an angry wave,
struck his heart,
he tapped his tattoo,
reminding himself
water is what carries him forward.

When touched by joy, he does the same.
It reminds him to remember
that miracles are fleeting,
the Northern Lights,
his grandson's laugh,
the pulse beneath his fingers,

and how his life was altered

that day it snowed in August.

Danny D. and Fanny F.

Patty Perreault Bennett

Danny Delusional, always pretending
Imagining, conjuring what he's intending.

His cute little freckles and Buster Brown 'do
His khakis and bowtie, pink star on his shoe.

All made him seem a believable kid,
But Danny Delusional made up what he did.

When he said it was snowing on Rehoboth Beach,
No one believed him. Too much of a reach.

Snowing in August? In 90-degree heat?
That is impossible, an improbable feat.

But Danny insisted by banging his fist
On the railing so hard that he bruised his right wrist.

When Danny Delusional started to cry
Fanny Forensic was a slow passerby.

She asked, "What's the problem?" She wanted to know.
So Danny explained that he witnessed it snow.

“But no one believes me, and it’s really true.
I know what I saw. Will you doubt me, too?”

Fanny believed him but wanted a reason
Why it would snow in the totally wrong season.

“Something white must have fallen from out of the sky,
So seeing white flakes just then wasn’t a lie.”

Fanny Forensic used her new weather app
Looking for clues to the falling white happ’

Lo and behold there was surprising news:
A white bird migration, the Rehoboth route used.

“I’m willing to bet that the ‘snow’ you were seeing
Was the feathers of birds that were molting and fleeing.”

“Of course,” Danny stated, “It was feathers from fowl.
An illusion of snowflakes, a fake storm on the prowl.”

Danny and Fanny heaved sighs of relief.
Snow mystery solved. No more Dan disbelief!



Snow in August

Paul Hoyt

The Fourth Day

Donald Challenger

The taste surfaces from distant girlhood, a spangling on lips and tongue. Clean as laundry, an icy white cousin of summer rain ghosting off hot streets. Nearly bitter.

I'm at the upstairs window, facing the bay, and my neighbor Eugene Sheets shouts up from his sidewalk. He's putting in supplies. It's like when we went to the moon in 1969, he says. It rained eleven straight days as a sign of God's Wrath. One more day, he swears, and he'd have built an ark in his driveway.

I say, Eugene, your storm door's been broke for five years, you were going to build an ark? Besides, the HOA would have come down on your hind end.

He gives me a look. Eugene is enthusiastic about the End Times. Every thunderstorm is Armageddon, every stiff breeze the Rapture. Olive, I'm 78 years old, he yells. Back in '69, I was in the prime of life. And to hell with the HOA. An ark is no permanently affixed structure. It's gonna float away, so I wouldn't need approval from nobody but the Almighty.

Well, Eugene, lesson learned, I say. Don't panic over a little snow.

That's what our weather girl on TV says: *Not to Panic*. She says it's only snowing in Delaware. She calls it Day Four of the Anomaly. Scaring you right there. People blaming New Jersey. Cars all sideways. There's even talk on a crazy radio show

about the Deep State sending black dump trucks down south of Dewey at night to steal sand for the roads.

Eugene drags groceries from his Buick and I lean out the window, pulling a sweater over my shoulders. It's not a cold snow, it's the wet, droopy kind, but it's damn chilly for August. Eugene lugs two bags of canned goods up his sidewalk, then returns to yank four 16-packs of toilet paper from the trunk.

Don't use that all up at once, I shout. If the world floods, it won't be from rain or snow. It'll be from your sewer backing up. He laughs, maniac and survivor.

When Eugene goes inside, I crane my head out the window and look right, where I can just make out the slow curve of Lewes Beach and the Point, now gilded white. Snow glides down to smack my face. If I listen, it sounds like the hushed, relentless planning of insects in summer grass.

Alston and Snow

Steve Conley

“I got it. I got it,” I yelled to Brien — who was fast, athletic, and blond, all things I was not — before stepping in front of him to snag the last out.

The girl who caught my eye had red hair, eyes the color of blue columbines, and legs seemingly longer than I was tall. Her cutoffs were short; their stringy edges random, like my hitting.

Soft hands were my strength — usually.

Distracted by the seventeen-year-old, I let the baseball pop from my glove’s well-oiled pocket to the dry top of its webbing.

For a second, it lingered, a cowhide snow cone with wavy strips of red jimmies.

Then . . .

Locals all remember August 16, 1975, because — an hour after the white, just-put-into-play ball landed in the grass — it snowed on Lewes beach.

Hardly anyone saw it, though everyone says they did.

“Hi, I’m Alston. You almost had it,” she said, pointing with one of her two white Con’s. My eyes followed her tan leg, noticing a tiny sock barely peeking from the canvas just below her ankle. Continuing, they followed the sneaker’s red and blue stripes forward, then leaped.

My heart joined them. I never got it back.

As my eyes rose, they spotted Brien, who was being consoled by four girls.

“Do you like my new ones?” Alston asked, maintaining the point. “I saw you looking at me. Then you dropped it.”

Warmed up, the new girl in town threw a fastball.

“I think he would have caught it. What’s his name?” Her nod toward Brien hurt more than the drop.

But I was 16, resilient. I recovered quickly: “He’s busy. Let’s go to the beach. We can stop at Dairy Queen. I have money.” I nodded sideways, away from the team’s scoring leader.

After DQ, we walked to my house.

That small, mid-century beach cottage was 60 yards from the dunes, where a newspaper photographer caught Alston, looking amazed and amazing, as snowflakes melted into her warm red hair.

Front page. Still runs every year.

Even in black and white it was a stunning, award-winning shot. So good that the snow was almost incidental.

It’s been a long time since super-chilled air from the ice plant bumped into a steamy, hot beach.

White, crepe myrtle flurries took me back today.

To the day Alston Branch saw snow.

Polar Vortex

Walter F. Curran

Only three days away, I asked, “What do you want for our anniversary?”

We’d spent the last three anniversaries at home, enjoying each other’s company. Taking a respite from children; medical issues; and tensions caused by politics, local and national.

Marie and I sat on the back deck, sipping coffee and munching on delicate croissants, hers plain, mine smothered in butter. Waistline be damned. Taste buds ruled. We watched the golfers on the par-three across the pond strew their shots everywhere except the green.

“I’d like to be cool.”

This summer’s heat had gotten to her more than usual. Even now, at 7 a.m., it was borderline sitting outside. By 8:00 she would be inside, hibernating, waiting for the relative coolness of the evening.

“Make it snow, Hon,” she said. “Remember when my father was visiting and a squall hit. Hiding under a canopy on the Rehoboth Beach boardwalk, he sarcastically asked, ‘Well, Mr. Weatherman, when will it end?’ You looked at your watch and pronounced, ‘Three minutes and twelve seconds.’ I knew you were kidding but the look on his face was priceless when at three minutes and ten seconds, the rain cut off as if someone shut a faucet.”

“That was pure luck,” I smirked.

She shrugged. “I like to think my hubby is special.”

Laughing, I said, “Well, of course I’m special, but I can’t create a polar vortex in August, and in the winter, no one wants one. It’s too damn cold.”

“Well, I want one.” She pouted cutely. “Give me a cold cortex any time.”

“Vortex. Polar *vortex*, Hon.”

She gave me the look.

“Yes, dear. I’ll work on it.” I smiled.

Getting up, she leaned over in passing and kissed the top of my head. “You do that, Mr. Weatherman.”

That night, I watched the national weather service comment on how the jet stream was dipping south, very abnormal for this time of year. Canada wasn’t cold, but the Arctic and the upper troposphere level were.

I watched the jet stream creep south for two days and on the morning of our anniversary, at 5 a.m., I looked out the bedroom window.

“Hon.” I shook her. “Wake up.”

“What?” She looked at the clock.

“Your anniversary present. C’mon, get up.”

On the deck, holding hands, we silently watched the giant flakes flutter down.



Spiritus Mirabili

Michael Zajic

Burned

Gale Deitch

Before I blazed out of his apartment, and before I packed all my belongings in my suitcase, and before I extinguished him from my Facebook account and ignited my freedom by changing my relationship status, and before I scorched my mouth on my first sip of latte, I spotted them outside the coffee shop window, melded in a steamy kiss, the ashes of my life snowing down on me.

French 75

Paul Dyer

*One ounce gin Half ounce fresh squeezed lemon juice
Half ounce simple syrup Three ounces champagne
Garnish with lemon twist*

‘Peixe Espada’. Portuguese for Swordfish. The name on the transom of a 50-foot Henriques sportfishing boat on A-Dock at Indian River Marina. Owner: Steve. Occupation: Dentist. Bits of a life gathered in the dock way: friendly faces, passing greetings, wind and weather the currency of our exchanges. Boat names attached to owners: ‘Out of Control’ Dave, ‘Da Chief’ Jim, ‘Undertaker’ Bill whose brand-new custom sixty-footer is a reminder that death is a growth industry.

Cut to my winter home. Arnaud’s French 75 bar on Bienville Street, one of the oldest places in a very old town. Many cocktails into a mission to make up for a lost cocktail year. The obvious drink choice is one of the classic New Orleans specialties and namesake of this bar. As my flute of amber perfection is delivered, I glance down the bar. Two more French 75’s being delivered to gentlemen. We raise our glasses in cocktail solidarity. One of the men is recording the other on a cell phone as he sends greetings to friends at home.

“Where’s home?” I ask as he finishes.

“New York City. How ‘bout you?”

“Here in the winter. A boat at Indian River in Delaware in the summer.”

“Which dock?” he asks.

“A-Dock.”

“Do you know Steve?” he says.

“Dentist Steve? *Peixe Espada* Steve?” Wait for it, I think. Unicorns do not appear. It’s not snowflakes in August, but I feel it coming.

“My best friend growing up,” the guy says, and I smile.

People ask me what I love about my adopted hometown. Easy. The people. The food. The music. And yes — the cocktails.

Not as easily explained are the coincidences. Maybe it’s voodoo or a gris-gris thing, but unlike any other place I’ve been, stuff happens. So I’m not totally surprised to be sitting in an ancient bar in the French Quarter, arm around the shoulder of a complete stranger, filming a greeting to a dock mate in my true home twelve-hundred miles away.

NOLA magic with just a hint of summer snow.

First Love (not by Beckett)

Kevin Fidgeon

It was August 29th, 1969. I was seventeen years old and had fallen in love. It was also the day it snowed in Rehoboth Beach. They said it was a once-in-a-lifetime experience. I didn't know about the snow but my first true kiss was one for the ages. Meteorologists were tripping over each other trying to explain this weather phenomenon. It remained a mystery to me but so did my feelings for Pam. Our first kiss found soft lips and willing tongues. She whispered, "Michael" in my ear and I was spell-bound.

No one could stop talking about the snow falling in August. It dominated the news and the evening newscast devoted substantial time to what was now known as "Snowmagedon." The next day the world righted itself. August heat and humidity returned and the snow disappeared.

I kept hearing "Michael" whispered in my ear while experiencing a racing heart and previously unknown feelings. Could this be love? Did I dare say it aloud? That would require courage and a willingness to take a risk — and possibly lose it. Caution and hesitancy became the safest ways.

College awaited both of us and we were separated by a thousand miles. Occasional letters and phone calls failed to maintain our newfound relationship as we slipped further apart. Our individual lives brought unforeseen changes with

the usual ups and downs. Marriage, children, jobs, travel, and personal challenges; we both came to know love and loss over the next forty years.

A snowfall would always remind me of her.

Facebook outreach found us again in Rehoboth Beach. The August heat and humidity brought back a flood of memories. We would meet for a morning coffee on the Boardwalk to catch up on our lives. Despite the forty years, we immediately recognized each other. The years disappeared; I was seventeen again experiencing the joy and confusion of that first love. It was a special moment that filled my mind and soul with what might have been. As our meeting drew to a close, I summoned up the courage to tell Pam I had loved her all those years ago. We parted with a soft kiss and she whispered, “Michael, I knew.”

They say it might snow tomorrow.



Vacation Interrupted

Susan Frey

The Cop's Wife

Maribeth Fischer

She is sitting in her office, working on her novel. Coffee in her favorite mug, the house quiet, Henry at work. A Thursday. When she glances up, distracted by a flutter just outside the window, she doesn't understand what she's seeing, and even when she does — it is snow, beautiful fat snowflakes falling across the lawn — she still doesn't understand. Snow in August. How? It's already eighty degrees. Sunlight pours in the windows.

It can't be snow.

Blossoms, she tells herself or paper or — but it is *snow*, the kind of glittery silver-blue flakes that spiral across windows in Christmas movies. If Henry were here, they'd run outside, stick out their tongues like kids, bellow into the air with wonder and joy and incredulity. Snow in August! But she is alone and for some reason, all she feels is fear. 9/11 fear. Something has happened. A rift in the world. She hurries into the kitchen for her phone and calls Henry. Voicemail. Of course. The flakes are falling faster. There's no sound of construction from the suburb being built behind them. No cars driving by. The sun is shining, but it feels ominous. Something has happened, she thinks again, and calls the station. The dispatcher, Rachel, says, "All hell is breaking loose, Dana. Can you call back?"

All hell.

In the bedroom, she flicks on the TV. Morning shows. Hosts laughing. A cooking segment. She flicks it off and sits on Henry's side of the bed, knees pressed together, heart in her throat. The blinds are closed. Time passes. Ten minutes, twenty. And then her phone is ringing and it's Rachel saying, "Henry's fine but you might want to get down here. There's been a shooting."

Her legs go numb. "Oh God, Is he okay? Is he —"

"He shot someone, Dana. It was fatal."

A Thursday in August. Outside, everything looks normal again. The grass is rust-colored. A jeep loaded with kayaks roars past. Had she imagined the snow? She had to have. Except — no! — she saw it, she knows she did. Her heart still feels as if it will explode.

It won't make sense until months later. How she'd seen the snow that morning. Of course, she will think. *Of course*. Henry had accidentally shot an innocent Black man, and in that moment, the sky opened up, whiteness spilling out everywhere it didn't belong.

sixth-day dust & rib collisions

Robert Fleming

boys ware blue
girls ware pink
men ware pants
women ware dresses

///

blue & pink r colors
trucks & dolls r toys
jill will b jack & jack will b jill
boys & girls are not made by their maker

C'mon Babe

Phil Fretz

The calendar says it's summer
But the weather guy says no
At least for now and days to go

C'mon, babe
It's cold outside,
Do you good to get a touch of winter

Forget the sunscreen
Grab your jeans
A long-sleeved tee is what you need

C'mon babe
Come with me
I'll keep you warm, you'll see

The car is heating
The sky is blue
It's just the air that's freezing

It's just a fluke
So don't freak out
Enjoy the change
Chill out

I don't know the cause
Nothing's in the press
It's anybody's guess

It's not my job to understand
I'm just your hot old man

C'mon, babe



Summer Morning, Fenwick Island
Jeff Crawford

Snow in August

Eugene Anthony Garone

At least snow doesn't fall in August. That's what I thought when on the last day of the month, the sky turned gray, and we were hit with an unexpected snow squall. Not only did I dread the surprise, but I also hated the snow, and despised going back to school the next day.

My mother bundled me up with a heavy coat, galoshes, thermal fleece gloves, an argyle wool scarf, and a hat with ear flaps that tied below my neck. Then she sent me off to school. My classmates laughed at me as I wobbled and walked. And they laughed even more when they saw my green plaid sport coat with a black bow tie clipped to the shirt collar under my Eskimo-like outfit.

I never felt like the kids my age. I wasn't good at much either. I didn't like math. And some of the things we did in science lab grossed me out. But I had the best handwriting in third grade.

My last name began with a "G" and for that reason, my desk was always in the last row in the classroom. It wasn't easy for me to see what the teacher wrote on the board. And being in the last row made the whiteboard look like the blinding snow squall we'd just had yesterday. I'm still not sure whether she put me in the back on purpose.

Most of all, I detested going to gym class. The young buff

physical education teacher hated me. Nobody wanted me on their team because I couldn't run fast or hit a ball with a bat. And being chubby didn't help my athletic ability. I couldn't tumble or roll.

Then something strange began to happen. I got my first pair of glasses. I could read music. I learned how to play my electric guitar, and I could sing. I might not be able to tumble, but wow . . . how I could rock and roll.

I was finally good at something and I looked exactly like Buddy Holly with my black horn-rimmed glasses, green plaid jacket, and black bow tie. I played my guitar and sang every Friday in the auditorium and everyone thought I was cool.

Snow in August

Ed Haggerty

“Clint,” I said, “Where I’m from no one reads the Farmer’s Almanac. I’m not sure they even know what it is.”

“Ya’ don’t know what yer missin’. There’s some good stuff in there,” he replied. “We farmers gotta know the weather and the Almanac gives us a heads up on what’s a comin’.”

“Well, we city folks rely on the forecast that comes along with the news every night,” I said. “Then we know if we’ll need an umbrella.”

“Yeah, mebbe that works in the city. but on the farm, we need to know more than that. Like for the year ahead for plantin’ or, like what happens when a fog rolls in.”

“You mean besides the fact that you can’t see anything?” I asked.

“The Almanac says snow will come after a fog. It’s a fact,” he said.

“As interesting as this is, we better get back to looking out for the bad guys,” I said. We were in Nam, on guard duty in the tower, looking out over the wire. It was a warm August evening in the Central Highlands.

A dense fog had already started rolling across the open field in front of us.

Me and Clint normally took turns on watch but that night

we posted up together because of the fog, which we'd learned the hard way was a friend of the enemy.

Clint was staring out over the perimeter. "It might just be gettin' ready to snow here," he said. "Like I told ya, Almanac says snow follows fog."

"It's a little warm for snow don't you think?" I asked.

"Well, it mightn't happen right away, city boy, but that Almanac is usually spot on," he told me.

A minute later we heard the whistling and felt the thumps that meant incoming mortars and rockets.

We were being fired on.

We ducked for cover.

One of the rice sheds near us took a direct hit. Hot ash and rice floated in the air around us.

Clint popped his head up to look.

A second later, a piece of shrapnel hit him in his shoulder.

He was hurt. Bad.

I was holding him in my arms, calling for a medic when he picked up his head, looked at the rice and debris-filled sky, turned to me, and in a whisper said, "I told ya' it would snow."

Ghost Ship

Crystal Heidel

Caroline glanced around the boardwalk, taking in the differences since she was last in Rehoboth over a century ago. Her last day in town hadn't been one she wanted to remember, but how could she forget the damage she'd caused?

She stared at the beach where the Falmouth had wrecked in 1899. The vision materialized over the throngs of people on the sand this late August day. The image grew clearer. It looked so real, Caroline felt she could reach out and touch the ropes holding the ship in place. A man sat on the rail at the stern, above the word FALMOUTH, his legs thrown over the edge, facing the shore. He was talking to a man standing at the rail several feet away.

How much heartache had she caused the day the ship wrecked? No one had died, but many lost livelihoods.

The sitting man looked directly at her. Or had he? She tilted her head, recalling that in the past he hadn't. She had memorized every detail of the wreck. It had been October. A Nor'easter had brought cold air, high tides, and snow had fallen that evening. She had stared at the ship for hours and not once had he noticed her then. Had he seen her *today*?

He mimicked her movement, then pointed frantically, yelling to the man with him. His shouts were lost to her over the distance, but she faintly heard one word.

“Witch!” The word was for her ears only; no tourists reacted.

An icy gust whipped across the sand from the direction of the Falmouth, chasing beachgoers for the dunes. They ran through the mirage, causing it to disappear.

Caroline froze. Feeling that lingering icy air gave her goosebumps. This was more than a memory of the past. It felt as if she had been there, standing on the boardwalk in 1899. And yet . . . also here today.

She’d been a witch her entire life. Had traveled long distances using magic. But never through time.

Was this “mirage” of the wreck her first foray into time travel? Could her longing to fix the past cause this? Could she transcend time? Travel back to before the wreck?

Prevent it even?

She closed her eyes. Please let me fix it, she prayed through the bitter cold.

The first snowflakes fell on her upturned face. She opened her eyes to a sky full of flurries.



Hidden Emotions

Jane Duffy

Snow, August 25

Tim Hudenburg

Allie entered her brother's house. Unceremoniously dropped her luggage. Received no fanfare besides cat odor; she hadn't yet noticed the droppings, degrees of liquidity. Well, where are you, Maxie? Pushed the door took a breath released took another breath wedging the door for circulation.

February remembered snow. Now August. Coincidence, huh? Allie opened the window caught snowflakes in her palm. Maxie, it's snowing. Not waiting for a response. Can-opened cat food left on the counter. Enjoying the sleekness of Maxie's black fur. It's just you and me now.

Glad she took the house-sitting offer until she found work. Her brother, Daniel, was in Korea. His place hers. Allie was mid-management. Competent. Southern in smile. Slight of accent. Mid-Atlantic in charm. Uncanny bursts of New England efficiency an added surprise. Still waiting for her final paycheck. She was hungry. Lost meals, time-zone switches, flights from Dushanbe to Rehoboth. Salisbury to be exact and then a bus to Rehoboth.

Committed to work. Smart enough. On the clock. We all were. Unmarried, though her girlfriends advancing into motherhood. Allie worked hard; not for praise nor reward nor anyone. Life was neater that way. Honest enough with others. She was not unfriendly, compartmentalizing people.

Cleaner that way. Open the doors you want. Definitely easier that way.

Control . . . friends chuckled over wine. No audition needed, Allie; casting needs a pretty late-thirty-something woman with commitment issues, you're her. No bad breakups, no broken hearts.

Later, washing up, staring into the looking glass in the bathroom. All those empty compartments, expired ointments, half-used rubs.

She slipped off her matching bra and panties. Her little black dress already floor-bound. Stared. A body needed tenderness. Promised those dark eyes. Opened the door and stepped outside.

Embraced pure cold. Something glasslike broke. Pangs of loneliness. No eyes on her. But if the right person were behind those eyes. Let 'em look. She went down made a snow-angel in August. Why not. Anything's possible.

Maxie, look. I'm naked covered in snow. She set her arms and legs in motion, moving what snow had collected. Work faster, she thought as shadows grew. The offer would come; the money never enough. In a week she would be somewhere else. Who knew?

But right now, there was something about angels. Something about hope taking shape in the accumulating snows of August.

The Sign

Charlene Fischer Jehle

This can't be hell. There's no humidity in hell. It's just the Delaware shore in August. The unbearable heat put an exclamation point on an unbearable year. Due to a relentless virus, neighbors, who committed no crimes, were relegated to solitary confinement. Businesses failed. Jobs were lost. Travel and social gatherings were replaced by loneliness, lethargy, poverty, and weight gain.

My husband and I were lucky. I still received monthly retirement checks. The house was paid off and we were both in relatively good health.

Despite this, Bill sank into depression after losing his job, and along with it, his identity and dignity. He poured himself into house projects, ran errands, and vowed to buy local to keep our neighbors afloat. Once a week, we splurged on take-out dinners to help struggling restaurants.

Another devastating blow topped that joyless year of Coronavirus. Bill's errands became more frequent and took longer. I became suspicious. He blamed inadequate staffing for the delays. A little snooping confirmed my worst fears. Bill was picking up more than just our weekly dinners. He was having an affair.

When I gathered enough evidence, I confronted him. He apologized, called himself a foolish old man, and said how

sorry he was to hurt me. He said he felt stressed, defeated, and it would never happen again. I told him he was right because I was leaving.

He begged me to stay, claiming that he felt worthless and had had a mid-life crisis. The younger woman had flirted. He was flattered and took the bait. He was ashamed and groveled for forgiveness. I told him his chances were that of a snowball in hell.

As I closed the bedroom door, chills ran down my spine. I climbed under the bedcovers. Maybe I was just used to his body heat keeping me warm. I pulled up the quilt feeling naïve, betrayed, and surprisingly cold.

I thought of the great years with Bill and our girls. He had been a good man. In trying times, he had made a mistake. Was I ready to throw it all away? He knocked on the door in the early dawn, standing tearfully, asking for a second chance. All night, I'd silently prayed for a sign. Suddenly, something caught my attention at the window. To my amazement, a gentle but steady snow was falling.

Snow Angel

Lynne Judd

“Here’s to you, Dad,” Kyra said as she lifted her champagne glass. “I can’t believe it’s been twenty-two years. I miss you.” She sat back on an old Adirondack chair in the screened-in porch of her childhood home in Rehoboth Beach.

“You would have loved him, Fred,” she said, stroking the head of the golden retriever by her side. The dog dropped his grubby, ever-present tennis ball and looked at Kyra. It was obviously time to play. “You’ve got it, buddy. Dad would be the first one to tell me to get off my ass and enjoy the day.”

And it was a beautiful day — a cloudless sunny sky, temperature in the mid-eighties, a slight breeze, the comforting sound of waves crashing. Perfect.

As soon as Kyra swung the screen door open, Fred flew into the fenced-in yard. She threw the ball to the far end, and Fred scampered after it, retrieved it, and returned to drop the ball in front of Kyra. This action was repeated again, and again, and again—until Kyra felt a change in the atmosphere.

Out of a clear sky came a cover of clouds, and the air quickly cooled. Kyra felt something wet on her arm and looked up. “What the . . . ?” White flakes were falling and at an ever-increasing rate. Snow? In August? She walked to the tall fence and stuck her hand out to the neighbor’s yard. Dry. She turned to her own. Snow was piling up, yet she felt

as toasty as if someone had enveloped her in a soft, fleecy blanket. “Weird. Too weird.”

“I know you love snow, Kyra. Enjoy it, honey.” Her father’s smooth, baritone voice was unmistakable.

Kyra gasped and stood still. After a moment, as she made sense of her father’s words and his gift of the snow, she laughed like she hadn’t since she was a child making snowmen in this same backyard. She flopped onto the ground and flapped her arms and legs, making a snow angel. Fred woofed and plopped down next to her, squiggling on his back. She stuck out her tongue and savored the sensation of melting flakes.

Kyra then saw the sun breaking through the clouds. She knew the snow would vanish and the day would continue — and that was just fine with her.



The Pier

Randy Roberts

Snow in August

Shelley Kahn

Carrie stood on the patchy front lawn, dripping in her tightly stretched striped one-piece bathing suit. Smoke billowed from the windows of her deceased grandparents' decrepit beach cottage, one block off the main road in the tiny beach resort filled with vacationers.

How could this have happened, she vaguely wondered, stupefied from the hash brownies she and her nowhere-to-be-found-now friends had baked and eaten, before running down the street for a quick dip in the surf. Why now? It was eight months to the day since the loss of her still bereaved grandmother on that final Christmas spent in hospice. She had counted on having the entire summer to puzzle out her next steps, having dropped out of school to care for her only living relatives.

Sirens blared as she watched her grandparents' lifetime of belongings burn. She stared at the kitchen window box, watching the carefully tended flowers as they wilted and curled in the heat, wondering whether she had left the oven on too long.

As she ruminated on the cause of the expanding conflagration, cinders flew up in the air, and she heard ceiling tiles buckling and snapping. The crackling inferno culminated in a sudden boom as the propane tank attached to the home

exploded and a large cloud of ash shot up above her and rained down as white soot covering everything, including where she stood on the lawn, transfixed by catastrophe.

A sudden calm then came to her, with the dawning realization this event had now saved her the trouble of going through all the beloved objects in the cottage she could not keep and had spared her the pain of parting ways with the memories they held for her family. She knew she would have had to sell the run-down cottage anyway, to give her any hope of a new start. The tiny spit of land she had inherited was far more valuable without a tear-down shack on it.

As the burning structure crumbled, she studied the carpet of white ash that had settled over everything. With an air of hope commingled with dismay over what had been lost, she brought her trembling hands together, blew a kiss, and whispered, “snow in August, Grandma, Merry Christmas at last!”

Super Scoops

Paul McFarlane

Eight-year-old Eddie watched Milford's PNC Bank sign alternately flash 101° and the 2:10 p.m. hour. Small sweat beads formed over his lip. His four-year-old sister, Molly, trampled his sneakers and stretched her head through his open rear-seat window.

"Mommy, over here! Hurry!" she shouted.

"Geeez, Molly, she knows where we parked," Eddie grouched. Their father reached across to open the front passenger door for their mother.

"Luckily, the bank wasn't busy," she said as she climbed in. "Are you kids ready for something cool?"

"Yesss!" Molly yelled. Eddie rolled his eyes at her childishness.

"Let's go before we all melt," their father said. He turned the car's A/C on high and headed to Route 13. It was thirty minutes to Super Scoops, a new ice cream parlor at Moore's Dairy Farm in Dover. Near their destination, a billboard depicted a cow balancing a sugar cone stacked with twenty-five ice cream scoops in its hooved hand.

Eddie read its message out loud, "Try All 25 Flavors of Mooooo-re's Super Scoops!"

"Is twenty-five scoops a lot, Eddie?" Molly asked.

"Too much for you, but not for me," he replied.

Their father found a spot in the near-full lot.

“Listen,” he said, eyeing his children in the rearview mirror. “Molly, you’re with Mom; Eddie, you’re with me. There’s a tour of the dairy before we get our treat.”

“Okay, Daddy,” Molly softly sang.

“Sure, Dad,” Eddie replied.

Inside the dairy’s cool lobby, the foursome escaped the summer’s oppressive heat. They joined eight other patrons and began their tour. First up was a video of the Moore Dairy Farm’s cows enjoying bucolic green pastures. Next, in the creamery’s milk-processing area, they learned how 20,000 gallons of milk are pasteurized each day, but only one-fourth goes into making ice cream.

“Mommy! Now can we get our ice cream?” Molly pleaded, prompting friendly grownup laughter. Entering the refrigeration area, blasts of freezing air assailed their tour group, and a loudspeaker intoned, “Can’t make ice cream without ice!” Suddenly, a turbine fan began rotating, showering them with tiny ice crystals.

“I declare,” a woman in their group exclaimed. “Snow in August. It’s snowing in the middle of summer!” Everyone lifted their faces toward the welcome precipitation.

“Daddy,” Molly whispered. “Let’s get all twenty-five flavors like the cow said.”



Balance — Hot and Cold Retreat

LaVerne McIntyre

Art and Audacity

Kathleen L. Martens

The blue shade of the ocean isn't quite right. I dab cerulean, sapphire, and a touch of black. Is there anything more delightful than *plein air* painting on the new Rehoboth Beach boardwalk overlooking Delaware's charming shore? Why did my relocation to America surprise Mother? Goodness, it's 1891. At twenty-one, the changing world for women was too enticing. No flounces or bustles to constrict me here; I've a simpler silhouette now to tolerate the steamy heat.

Art and audacity are my natural legacies. Am I not my British mother's daughter, Olivia Annabelle Clifton? Mother's both culpable and admirable as the first woman to exhibit paintings at London's gender-restricted Royal Academy of Arts. Hadn't Father's eyes inspired me from his self-portrait over our fireplace, a British Royal Navy rear admiral, an Arctic explorer? His bedtime stories thrive in my childhood memories — his ship carving through the Bering Straits, glaciers crumbling and thundering into treacherous rivers, the sky threatening with dark ballooning clouds.

I'm inspired to place a new canvas on my easel. My brush sweeps up white paint. Strokes become frozen cliffs; swipes become snowdrifts. I'm immersed in the icy blue frigid world despite the summer steam. Shivers cascade down my arms as I flip my wrist to speckle the polar panorama with swirling flurries.

Arcing swaths of white and black make sea swallows appear in the canvas sky. Congregating clouds look threatening enough that I fear a storm. Sometimes intimacy with my work makes the painted scenes manifest into near reality.

“Miss, I feel the chill.”

I turn to see a handsome gentleman and a curly-haired girl of perhaps six behind me. “It’s the Arctic, sir.”

Pointing at the glacier, the child hugs herself. “*Brrr*. Seems so real.”

A rumbling resonates above.

Looking skyward, I see ice fairies fluttering down from the blue. I hear tick-tick-tick as they kiss the mile-long boardwalk. The sun argues with the scene, then succumbs, and shilling-sized snowflakes light on my upturned face. *Impossible*. Am I fancying again, lost in the space between reality and my imaginings?

The spinning child’s squeals of joy, arms held high, tell me otherwise. I’m not in my painting. I’m not in art’s fantasy.

The gentleman lifts his child; they whirl around, laughing. Snowflakes melt on her extended tongue. “It’s *snowing* in August, Daddy!”

And I join their dazzling world, as they join mine.

Stormy Weather

Taralee Morgan

I first felt him as an icy tingle on my back. Then I felt another and another, the time between each sensation shortening with every touch. “Damn it,” I whispered while I finished the letter, my smooth pen strokes becoming bumpy as sand covered the paper. The other tourists on the beach scattered. Delight and disbelief on their faces and smartphones in their hands, they recorded the sight — snow blanketing Lewes Beach in August. As the snowfall and wind strengthened, they scrambled to their cars for warmth and protection.

I sealed the letter, addressed it, then walked to the shore. My face was defiant and angry. “Don’t worry, I won’t let him harm any of you.”

A bitterly cold wind blew from the south to announce his arrival. When I saw him form in a swirl of snow, rage overtook me. “Hades, just stop! You’ve had your six months with me, even longer. Now I want my time alone in the sun.”

He approached slowly, sporting a crooked smile and gleaming eyes. My defiance always seemed to titillate him. “But, my love, we agreed to spend this summer in the southern hemisphere.” He tilted his head and leaned into me close enough that our lips touched. “It’s winter there, so you should be with me. What would Zeus say?”

I backed away too late; his touch had cooled and calmed

me. “But I longed for warmth. I’m tired of collecting the cold for you. Soon the earth will be too hot for them.”

Hades looked toward the row of parked cars behind the snowfall. “We’ll be here when they’re gone.” He smiled as the snowfall thickened. “Besides, I’ll send the cold back to them soon.”

I rolled my eyes, “I know — another Ice Age.”

Hades extended an open hand to me, “Don’t you want to walk the world all year long with me again, sweet Persephone?”

With global warming, my power to change the seasons was diminishing. With an Ice Age, I’d lose it completely. I couldn’t let that happen again.

I held Hades’ hand as the frozen wind carried us south. I released the envelope I’d been carrying so that it glided toward a blue house in Rehoboth Beach. A Secret Service agent retrieved it from her windshield. As she wiped away the snow, she read, ‘To President Biden: How to Stop Climate Change.’

Snowed

Frances Oakes

Amanda knocked gently on the front door of the isolated home in the Delaware marshland. She didn't know whether it was the hot August sun or her nerves that produced the uncomfortable sweat dripping down her back.

Shane's mother opened the door.

Amanda forced a smile. "How's our boy?"

"He keeps asking for you." Shane's mom gave a weary smile and ushered Amanda to the living room before she left them alone.

Amanda couldn't help but pity seventeen-year-old Shane as she observed him slumped in his wheelchair struggling to control the twitching in his hands.

His eyes widened. "Did you bring the snow?"

She moved forward with a box but tripped, sending an avalanche of paper snowflakes landing on Shane's lap.

"What this?"

"Read one. Please."

Shane picked a snowflake from his lap. After he had read every encouraging note, he peered up at her with tear-filled eyes.

Amanda hugged him. "I'll be back tomorrow."

Amanda came back the next day.

Shane grabbed her hand. "Did you bring the snow?"

Amanda opened the small ice chest, scooped up slivers of ice, and placed them in a paper cone before she added the grape flavoring. Shane grabbed the small spoon and devoured the snow cone.

The following day, Amanda wheeled him outside to the back porch that overlooked the marshland. He hadn't asked about the heroin. She directed him to look into the marshland.

Shane smiled. "A snowy egret." He turned to Amanda. "I'm not getting the snow, am I?"

"No."

"I need help, don't I?"

His car accident had been a miracle in disguise and a warning of what might come. It was then that she and Shane's mom came up with their daring plan. "Yes."

A half-hour later, Amanda wheeled Shane to the driveway.

Shane's mom was waiting. "Son, are you ready?"

Shane buried his head into his hands until the most incredible thing happened. Out of nowhere, snow began falling upon Shane's body and he lifted his hands to grab the soft, wet, snowflakes. His eyes sparkled. "I'll do it." With those words, the snow suddenly stopped.

Amanda held Shane's hand as she rode in the back seat with him. The wondrous snow in August she had just witnessed was, surely, a sign. It calmed her heart that their intervention for Shane had succeeded.

Snow in August

Carole Ottesen

Back when they were in college, Martin's good friend Thad introduced him to Noelle. Though Thad and Noelle had dated for a time, it was never serious. It was Martin whom Noelle married.

Now Thad was an acclaimed artist who would be conducting Haydn's Creation at Ravinia Park's August Music Festival. Martin was excited to see Thad and splurged on tickets in the second row. It was his and Noelle's second anniversary. Noelle prepared a sumptuous picnic. On the evening of the concert, before taking their seats, they dined al fresco on the park's vast lawn.

In the intermission, Martin sent Thad a note. Later he saw the flash of recognition, as Thad, back on stage, spotted Martin in the audience. Then Thad's eyes moved to Noelle. His expression turned to stone. Noelle wanted to interpret this as intense, artistic absorption. She hoped she wasn't disturbing his concentration.

After the concert, they waited behind the stage. Noel felt a knot of foreboding. When the stage door finally opened, they saw not Thad, but a tall man who barked, "You aren't supposed to be here." His eyes raked over Noelle and back to Martin.

"Let's go." Noelle took hold of Marin's arm, but he stood fast.

"I'm Mart Stewart, an old friend of Thad's," Martin explained. "I'd like to say hello to him."

"Tell me your name and I'll tell him."

Martin scribbled his name on a scrap of paper. The man took it and disappeared.

Five minutes later, he was back. "Maestro is very tired. Patrons are not allowed backstage. You must leave."

"Is there no message?" Martin asked.

"No. There is no message."

"Well, I have a message. Tell Maestro we have enjoyed the concert."

Martin seemed crestfallen and mute as they headed toward the parking lot. A misty rain began to fall. Noelle turned around for one final look at the park. In the yellow light of the stage door, a trio appeared. Two tall men flanked Thad. They were probably bodyguards because they moved with exaggerated wariness, like mimes, scanning the empty park before hurrying to a car. One tall man opened the door for Thad. The other raced to the driver's side, jumped in and gunned the engine.

A sleek silver Mercedes whizzed past Noelle and Martin. In its blazing headlights, the rain shone like falling snow.



Frolicking

Annette Reeping

Time Peace

Rich Parfitt

Angela is waiting for me. We will have fifteen minutes of cheerful conversation during our one-on-one visit. Residents at the Sunny Years Senior Care facility look forward to these visits. They heal from them.

I've just finished breakfast. Every clock in the building ticks to me in timepiece Morse code, 'Don't be late.' Time can be a monster. There are consequences for being late, I know. I didn't make it to see my wife before she passed away. Every morning I wake up wondering whether today's the day I will find forgiveness.

I arrive at the room where Angela's waiting. Her eyes sparkle. "So lovely to see you. You're never late."

She doesn't know that's not true.

Angela smiles. "Have I ever said you remind me of my husband?"

"You have a husband?"

"We've talked about him before. Departed. Two years ago." Her eyes begin to tear. "I wasn't able to get to the hospital in time. Just like you and your wife."

"You know about my wife?"

"We talk about your wife and my husband every week, remember? They send us a sign each summer. They make it snow, so we know they have forgiven us."

“They do?”

“Look outside. They’re making it snow now.”

A strong gust of wind rattles the window screen and shakes the branches of a crepe myrtle. A cascade of tiny white flower petals swirl in the air, glistening on their way down. Some land on the windowsill, but most cover the lawn just beneath the tree.

“Angela, it’s August. That’s not really snow.”

“I know, but it’s permanent forgiveness. It won’t ever melt away.”

“You’re saying, we are forgiven?”

“Yes. I come every week, right after your breakfast, to help you remember that.”

I sigh and look at the clock on the wall. It seems to have stopped ticking as if releasing me from its unforgiving grip. Maybe I do forget our talks from week to week. But I remember time can be a monster, both a tormentor and an eraser. Not always, though. Not when Angela’s here.

Snow in August

H. Richard Piet

How long since you've seen her?

Fifty-some years, high school graduation. Said to meet here . . . front of old Dolle's. No chance in Hell she'll recognize an old fart like me . . . And same for her. Probably fat, half-blind and hard of hearing.

You never know. Might surprise you . . . Give her a few minutes.

What the blazes was that?

A pig.

A flying pig?

Yup. Should start snowing any minute.

It's August and it's not New Orleans.

Nope. It's Rehoboth, and a weekend to boot . . .

But . . . a flying pig?

How long did it take us to drive from Lewes to Rehoboth?
Walk up here to Dolle's?

Stupid question. About a half-hour.

Yup. Snow any minute . . . And who's that pretty woman?
She waving at you? She sure looks happy.



Winter on the Boardwalk

Renata Price

Snow in August

Robbie Tarpley Raffish

On the corner of Baltimore Street and 9th Avenue, on the steps of a hotel that was much older but as disheveled as she was, she waited, perfectly still, except for the motion of the Wawa cup between her mouth and lap. There was so little movement that the moonless August night rendered her nearly invisible.

The street was empty. Little happened in a beach town at 2:30 a.m. Families had long gone to bed; even high school kids had had enough.

She jumped at a scratching sound. Stomach churning, she sought the source before she exhaled. It was just a cat slinking in the shadows, hunting an early morning meal.

The respite was brief. Minutes later she was startled again, this time at the metallic crunch of a car door closing. When she heard footsteps from the parking lot her anxiety spiked. The night may have cooled a little, but she felt sweat roll between her shoulder blades.

If she stayed on the steps she'd be found. Yet she didn't, couldn't, move.

She rose, backing into the wall of the building, seeking protection where there was none. "How did I get here?" she wondered. "God, help me . . . please."

There was no answer.

The glow of a cell phone broke her prayer. A man stepped from the darkness, using the screen as a flashlight.

He cleared his throat and whispered, "Hey, I'm here. What do you need?"

Her breath caught, both at the appearance of the man and the realization that in the next seconds all the promises she had made, all the oaths she had taken, would be nullified. Yet, she was powerless to walk away.

She took a handful of dirty, crumpled bills from her pocket and said, "Snow. Whatever this will buy."

He counted the money and handed her a packet. With a tilt of his chin he said, "Careful out here. This town ain't what it seems."

"Yeah, don't I know it," she said.

She tucked the packet in her bra and walked into the darkness.

Pearls of Wisdom

Renée Rockland

Vivian stood in her bedroom doorway and clutched the pearls at her neck. *My God, I'm a cliché*, she thought as she ripped them from her throat. She watched, mesmerized, as the precious gems bounced and skittered across the hardwood floor, a squall of iridescence refracted in the mid-morning sunlight, like snowflakes backlit from the electric flame of a lamppost. Vivian wished she had her sunglasses. The intense golden rays of August streaming through the open floor-to-ceiling windows burned her retinas. And yet, she couldn't look away.

Vivian followed the trajectory of one of the creamy orbs. It rolled like a cue ball, seemingly intent on its destination until it stopped abruptly at the foot of the bed where her husband and her best friend, Celeste, were entwined on top of the down comforter — the comforter that Celeste had helped her select on one of their shopping trips to New York. The Atlantic roared just beyond the open windows, its pounding surf blending seamlessly with the growing avalanche in Vivian's ears.

She trembled, a sudden frost prickling her skin as if a blizzard had swept into the room and was pressing sharp, biting ice crystals into her bone. Vivian opened her mouth and exhaled, half expecting a steamy cloud of vapor to appear. The burning chill intensified. She resisted the urge to rub her skin raw. A

misplaced sensation against her breast, like a stray hair on the back of her neck, demanded attention.

Vivian reached into her bra and removed a single pearl. The ivory glistened, illuminated from the inside. She held it up, squinting as she admired its distinctive markings. No two were alike. Vivian had taken such care with her pearls over the years. Their softness was easily scratched or abraded, yet their composition was strong. She'd hold onto this one. A reminder.

Vivian gazed toward her husband and laughed at his hypocrisy. "Don't stop on my account," she said. "Aren't you always preaching to the kids to finish what they start?"

Vivian straightened her shoulders, then turned amid the swirling storm and left.



Enlightenment

Mariah Burton Nelson

Then the World Flipped

Ann Maureen Rouhi

Emily woke up parched in an all-white room, save for the metal fixtures. Outside, snow was falling rapidly. She rose, pushed off the bed, and looked out the window. People scurried, wrapped from head to toe. A snowplow pushed mushy piles onto the sidewalk.

Heading to the bathroom for water, Emily passed a hologram flashing time and date: 9:20 a.m.; 08/21/2054. She shut her eyes. She remembered.

The technology to preserve living matter by freezing had made quantum leaps, no longer just for human eggs or embryos. Researchers had frozen and then revived cats, dogs, pigs, and cows. Humans were next. Hospitals recruited volunteers for clinical trials—people with untreatable diseases, to be revived when treatments became available. At thirty, Emily was diagnosed with aggressive multiple sclerosis. Single, an only child, and an orphan, she signed up.

“I was out for forty years,” Emily whispered. Incredulous, she buried her face in her hands, squeezed her arms, as if ascertaining that she was real. “I’m seventy now?” she wondered, but the mirror showed her with short black hair and the skin of a thirty-year-old.

As Emily exited the bathroom, a white-clad man entered the room. “Good morning,” he said. “How are you feeling?”

"I'm not sure," Emily said. "Where am I? Who are you?"

"I'm Pete, your nurse," he said. "You're in the hospital. It's normal to feel disoriented for a while."

Pete told Emily that after the FDA approved the first drug to cure multiple sclerosis, the facility began reviving her, transferring her from one frozen capsule to another, slowly warming to human temperature. Two weeks ago, she was moved to a hospital room, where her metabolism ramped up, causing an extreme thirst to awaken her.

"But why is it snowing in August?" Emily asked.

"You were out four decades," Pete said. "A lot changed. We were bombarded with intense solar flares, which altered Earth's magnetic field. The poles finally flipped in 2048. Snow in August became normal, just like beach days in January."

Emily's head was spinning. She hadn't expected to be in cryogenic limbo for so long. She'd anticipated significant changes during her absence, but not this.

"I need to get you ready for your first infusion," Pete said as he secured an identification band on Emily's wrist.

Changing into a white hospital gown, Emily stared at the rapidly falling snow. She didn't know whether to rejoice or mourn.

Aerial Invasion

Willie Schatz

Flakes fall fearfully in the eighth month, unsure of their destination in this new, hostile environment in which they yearn to, but cannot, muster the fierceness of the one for whom this month is named, the one who built his sister Octavia a portico. Were Fortune accompanying their flights, perhaps it would guide The Fearful Ones (hereinafter TFO) to The Rest Stop of Courage, a/k/a Exit Nine on the SnoJersey Turnpike. Further, were TFO bound for Earth at their usual time of year, the route they have trod for eons, employing a guide so renowned and revered as Fortune would be the crassest insult.

What to do then, ponder TFO, suspended in their masquerade while drifting in the vastness between the places of their birth and their death. “Climate crisis!” The Dearest Leader (no pedestrian “Dear” for this one) exclaims. “We face floods and fires and heat as never before. We must hark to a safe place that will shelter us from these calamities and cataclysms.”

“Rehoboth Beach!” The WannaBeDearest says, seeking to curry favor with the electorate before the first Tuesday in November. “It claims to be The Nation’s Summer Capital. But, never having been there, who are we to judge?” “Nay, nay!” saith The Gerrymanderer, on hiatus from manipulating the huddled masses to its advantage. “I urge landing in Lewes, a *real* town with two beaches, giving us twice the opportunities

to cop rays and hook up with lifeguards of whatever gender suits us. Best of all, we *never* have to drive on Delaware One. All in favor?"

Spurred, ignited, energized, TFO utilize their patented (number 374,007) So None Ought Witness (SNOW) technology to vote on The Gerrymanderer's motion. The result? A unanimous "Aye, Let Us Try." Quickly shedding their winter coats, the Now No Longer Fearful Ones don the universe's skimpiest, sexiest swimwear and descend *en masse* to Lewes Beach, where they will luxuriate in leisure, after which they will invade Cape Henlopen State Park to purchase lifetime resident passes for their eternal existence in The Warmth of The Sun.



Snow and Shadows

Joseph Terrone

Snow in August

Elise Seyfried

When Emily was a newborn, she was cursed. Her grandmother saw it happen, saw the wild-eyed woman muttering and staring through the window at the lineup of bassinets in the hospital nursery. When her gaze fell on baby Em, the woman stopped mumbling. Cocking her head to one side, the stranger pointed directly at Sarah's new granddaughter, and spoke clearly: "This baby is cursed."

Horried, Sarah turned her attention to the serenely sleeping infant, wrapped up tightly in a pink receiving blanket. Tears filled Sarah's eyes as she whirled around to confront the witch (for surely, she was a witch). But just as in fairy tales, the pronouncer of curses had disappeared.

Sarah never told her daughter, Emily's mother, but she never forgot. Over the years, Emily experienced fewer than the usual ups and downs. She was rarely sick, never injured, excelled at school, happy marriage. Emily knew her grandmother fretted about her, and she would tease her, "Nana, why don't you worry about someone who actually has troubles? I'm fine!"

Emily was so used to her charmed life that the first near-catastrophe barely registered — a speeding car missed her by inches in a crosswalk. But in the two years since her grandmother's death, there were other incidents: a kitchen fire, a

lingering, painful rash that mystified her doctor. Emily began feeling vulnerable, and uneasy.

Andrew and Jessie saw them first, and they were both delighted and unsurprised. Looking out the cottage window at the fat, glistening flakes, Drew called, “Mom! Come quick! It’s snowing!”

Little Jessie clapped her hands. “Let’s go down on the beach and make snow castles!”

Emily was half-listening, busy gathering sunscreen and errant flip flops. “The sand does look a bit like snow, that’s true!” She loved how imaginative her children were, but she’d always taken care to bring them back to reality. No man in the moon, kids. No ghost in the hall closet. No snow in August. Just sand, and a trick of the light.

But then she stopped rummaging in the beach bag and looked out. It was snow, falling rapidly, coating the sea grass and dunes. It was suddenly dead winter, icy pellets, and a bitter wind. As her children jumped around gleefully, Emily sank into a chair. All at once, Emily understood the fear she had always seen in her grandmother’s eyes. The time of blessing was over.

Miracle in Afghanistan

Mary Ellen South

Mother Nature knew of the crisis
She looked at the souls in the August heat
Guns surrounding stranded people
Fear in the eyes of all who waited.
Abdul held his children and watched
When would the heat subside?
When would relief come?
How can we survive to escape this nightmare
What could he do to save his life
Save his family
Save his heritage and legacy.
And where were the others he loved and cherished
Brothers and sisters, his parents who knew little of the political
landscape.
In the sea of people how could he reach out to them
Should he make any sacrifices of his own family.
When would relief come?

Mother Nature watched as the people struggled
Relief could come in the form of others helping.
She saw the vehicles, the masked soldiers, the airplanes
She knew what she must do.
Send a gift — a ray of light in this sea of darkness.

Her light came in many cool, white stellar crystals
Falling on Abdul and his family
The children cheered as the miracle fell
Their tongues collecting each delicate flake.
Abdul knew this gift would provide relief
But also a camouflage of protection.

As the soldiers sought cover it created an opportunity
Where he could lead his family along the path
They could escape to freedom, they could find a new life.
As they sped across the runway toward the waiting plane
Showers of flakes continued to fall
Enough, enough — we won't get out if the snow continues.
He prayed for perfect timing.

Once again Mother Nature knew what she must do
Milky sunshine appeared, then a blessed rainbow.
Just as they reached the gangway, this spectacle stopped.
Each child happy to seek out a seat.
Abdul counted and inhaled.
How could he be so fortunate?
Snow in August — a glorious miracle.



In the Froth

Randy Roberts

Snowfall in August

Karen Strine

Last summer was the longest summer of my life. I'm a summer person who misses it as soon as it's over each year, but not last year. It was a summer of devastation for my family.

I realized that my younger sister had grown up but had her own private hell. As children, I had been the tomboy and my little sister was the quiet one who liked to play alone. I would beg her to join our friends and when she did it made me so happy! Sometimes I got frustrated when my mom said she had to come with me and she wouldn't.

I didn't always like being an older sister but I often loved it.

We both enjoyed laughing at silly things like people's names and facial expressions in our childlike adventures. She was popular in high school and ran track, and I was a little envious of her close-knit group of friends because I had to change schools in high school. I didn't have that same support system and had to carve out my own way in a new school. Luckily, she was part of my support system, sharing a few friends and even dating the same guy.

My sister could have died last summer. In a moment of despair, she decided to swallow all of her pills. I was still the big sister in it, as I had convinced her husband to get her admitted to the hospital when she told me she didn't know if she'd be alive by her next doctor's appointment.

I always believed my role as a big sister, beyond love, was to protect her.

This summer went too quickly. I didn't want it to end! Sitting on the beach one day with my sister, a sandstorm blew in, and for a second, I thought it was snowing in August. We laughed about that. My sister's birthday is in August and that's when she had attempted to take her life. As unbelievable as it seemed to see that snow, it was also gratifying to see my sister well again.

In the end, it's her decision how her summers will end.

Storm on the Mountain

Gayla Sullivan

The teachers at the local elementary school looked out their classroom windows to the west when they saw the dusting on Deer Mountain, three miles away. The snowplow operators on Trail Ridge Road still had their July sunburns from clearing summer trails. Children of tourists from Delaware and Texas and California sprang out of their beds. Delighted, they ran outside barefoot, making snowballs and putting them in freezers of rental houses. (Housekeepers would find them on Saturday morning, and shake their heads.) Hikers slung on daypacks, full of turkey and cheese sandwiches and boiled eggs and granola bars with dark chocolate chips and headed up Flattop Mountain. They marveled at the green aspen leaves — scheduled to turn golden a month from now — that bravely held up their pear shapes covered in frosty white. At treeline, where the path ahead lay exposed to the elements and bare rock and tundra lay forth ahead of them, the hikers paused at the ice in front of them. Snow and bits of frost flecked off the trees and stung their eyes as the wind shook the world at its edge.

Meanwhile, the children at the rental houses got bored and went in search of iPads, stuck in the crevices of couches filled with crumbs. The maids locked the doors and checked off one more house on their list. The snow-plow operators felt the muscle memory of how to work the controls of the heavy

equipment. They remembered to tell the new guy to look for the twelve-foot poles by the side of the road, so he wouldn't drive off the cliffside of the mountain pass. Later that morning, after the sun had risen on the east coast and warmed the Delaware beaches and the hills in Kentucky and the grand prairies of Texas, it passed over the Colorado mountains. And then, around 1:30 in the afternoon, as the teachers looked down at their lesson plans and felt a new resolve bloom deep within them, the snowy veneer melted away. The whisper of winter fell silent.

The Good Father

JoAnn Verderese

Funland was not fun. I folded myself into the miniature Ferris wheel's yellow car, Daniel across from me. His lip trembled as we circled, surrounded by a grating, endless song. Later, the onlookers cheered when his ball landed in the silver goblet. He wailed, barely glancing at the panda he had won.

My gentle three-year-old struggled with noise, people, language. Words came slowly for him, each one a triumph. Things other kids took for granted were monumental for him. I worried about the future. Would he be happy?

Today we tried the beach. He was barely visible under his sunglasses and hat, a long-sleeved T-shirt with SPF. He carried a green plastic bucket and a yellow shovel. We plodded over soft, hot sand and spread our blanket.

I slathered sunscreen over him, afraid his mother would find a telltale blotch, evidence I had missed a spot. I imagined sending her photos of a smiling Daniel, waving from the water's edge, the sun's rays enveloping his shoulders. Proof I was a good father, even if I had been a lousy husband.

Daniel sat on the blanket, sifting sand through hands sticky with sweat. "Snow," he said.

A new word, but the wrong word. Was this a win? I didn't think so. "No, Buddy," I replied. "Sand."

He lifted another pile and allowed the grains to fall to the ground. “Snow,” he said again.

“Snow is cold, this is hot.” I pressed his palm against the warm beach. I could hear waves crashing against the shore, beckoning us.

“Snow,” he said one more time.

I carried him to the water, bucket and shovel in his hands. A cold wave slipped over our feet and he scurried away, returning with a giggle. The spray splashed our faces and Daniel licked his lips, tasting the ocean’s salt for the first time. At the next wave, he jumped, gleeful. My chest welled.

He pointed toward the dunes, resembling the mounds of snow heaped on the side of my driveway last winter. He held up his yellow shovel, a mini version of the one he’d used to help me dig. “Snow,” he said again.

I nodded with understanding. Filling his bucket with water, we returned to our blanket. I poured the water onto the sand.

Then I did what any good father would do. I built a snowman.



Home

Susan Steele

The Fluttering

Nancy North Walker

It's a suffocatingly hot August evening in the attic. Mark's weary of rummaging through boxes. His T-shirt is soaked, throat parched. The beer cooler's empty. Like him. Empty.

"High School Yearbooks" is scrawled across his next box in Jenny's funky print-writing. But whose yearbooks? His? Hers?

His. He exhales, lifts one by the spine. 1981-82. Junior year. The worst year of his life, until last year. A scrap of onion-skin paper flutters from its pages like a snowflake, lands face-up next to his flip-flop. It bears a Wilmington phone number and says: "Call me anytime you need to talk."

His skin prickles. The loopy handwriting looks familiar.

Junior year. He'd watched life seep from his mom, day after gut-wrenching day. Sometimes she had a far-away look in her eyes, as if she were trying to see the future, to be sure he'd be okay. It made his chest ache. That ache had returned last year, whenever Jenny stared into the distance.

Now he carries a cannonball of sorrow in his chest that won't let him sleep or see his friends. He never imagined he'd feel so alone.

Mark closes the box. Slips the paper scrap into his pocket. Heads to bed.

When he empties his pockets, the scrap floats again to the

floor. He retrieves it, shoves it inside his wallet. The phone number swirls in his brain, hypnotizes him to sleep.

The next day, the scrap *dares* him to call the number. It whirls from his wallet at the coffee shop, at the sandwich deli, then at the gas station on the way home.

It flutters again from his wallet when his pizza arrives. Lands face up on his shoe.

He surrenders, reaches for his cell.

The soothing voice of his chemistry teacher answers. It warms his core.

“Mrs. Swenson? It’s Mark Mancini.”

“Mark? My favorite soccer team captain? Why on Earth . . . ?”

“Because my wife just died of cancer and I found this scrap of paper in my yearbook that said to call you if I needed to talk.”

“Oh dear. I’m so sorry. Please. Talk to me.”

He imagines he’s in her empty classroom. She’s seated at her desk, the huge periodic table behind her. He unpacks his pain, slowly. The cannonball shrinks to a pebble.

Afterward, he opens his wallet, smiles at Jenny’s photo, and whispers. “Thank you.”

Snow in August

Karen Wexler

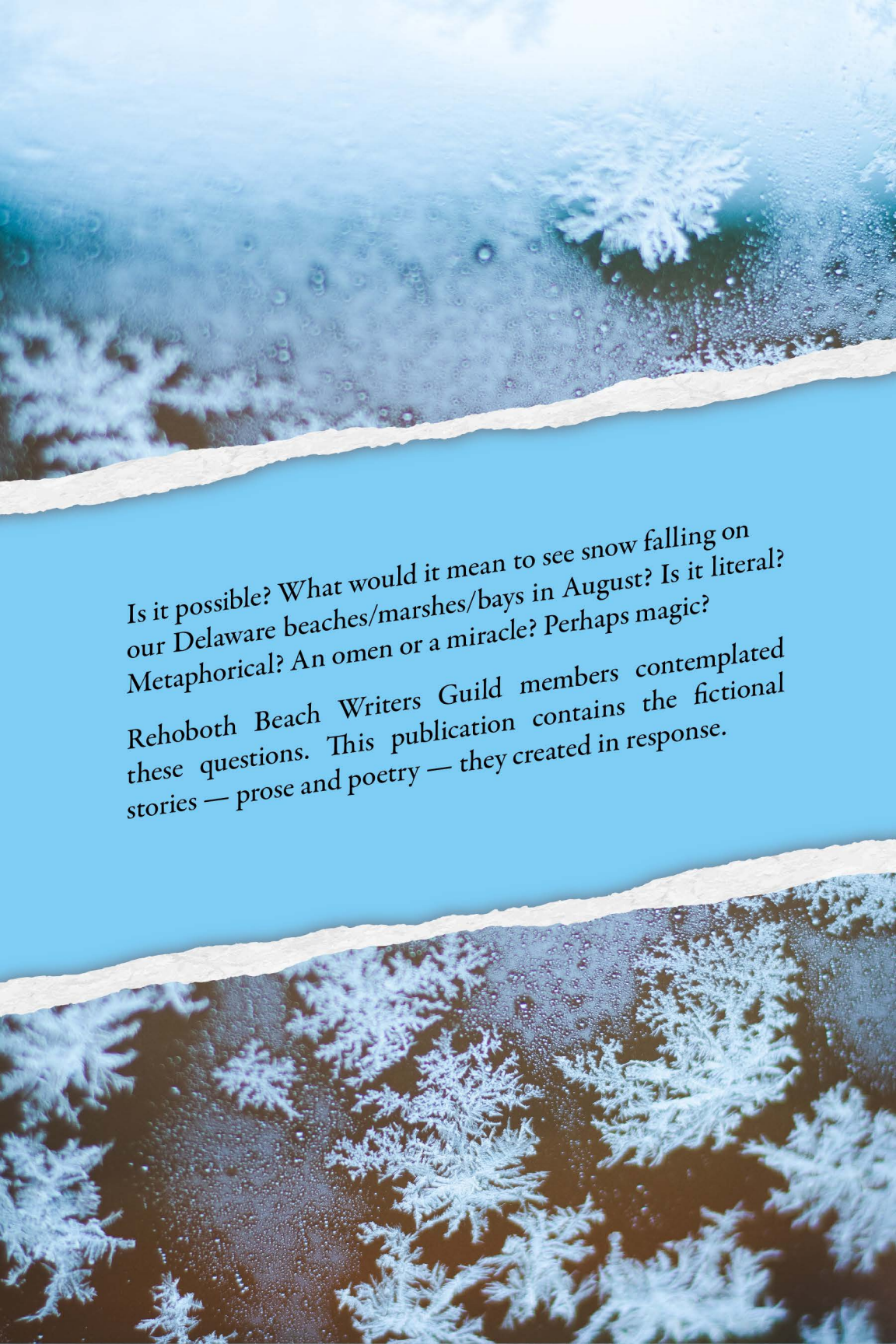
I take off my Nike tennis shoes and slip on Birkenstocks as I approach the end of my thirty-six-hour trip from slower lower Delaware where I leave children, a housekeeper, and my neurologist husband to alight in frenetic Bombay. The trip started two years back when a friend took me to see an Indian guru in the basement of the D.C. Unitarian Universalists Church where incense-laden air was filled with ancient chants and the walls held posters of half-naked holy men. Seated crossed-legged on the floor, some devotees rhythmically swayed while others sat rigidly still. My introduction to Eastern philosophy was through an interpreter translating for a dark man wearing sunglasses whose legs never stopped jiggling. "I welcome you all with all my heart." It was this guru who sent out a form letter inviting people to his ashram in Ganeshpuri.

So, I leave the States with its cold weather, clean air, and the safety net of rules that provide me the freedom to fret about inconsequential matters like appropriate clothing. This luxury is about to change. At 2 a.m., it takes all my gray matter to track my luggage with no help from the Indian airport staff. The coolies who might be able to assist are on their tea break, and nobody knows when they will return. So starts the pendulum between euphoria and despair. From the moment I step on Indian soil, spontaneous tears begin to flow as I thank

a god I do not believe in for finally bringing me home. Ending a quest I hadn't even known existed, my life in India is about to begin.

Outside the terminal, the heat and smog do not dampen the scintillating throngs of people, including a group of women in their red, green and yellow saris who have started a wood fire to cook dal. With a pounding heart, I eventually spy a middle-aged driver in a wrinkled white dhoti holding a placard with my name. Little do I know that at the end of the three-hour trip on an unpaved road to the Ashram, I will confront the foundation of my being — a challenge to the way I think about myself and the world. And, it will be as improbable, as disorienting, as snow swirling in August across my hometown beaches.

www.rehobothbeachwritersguild.com



Is it possible? What would it mean to see snow falling on
our Delaware beaches/marshes/bays in August? Is it literal?
Metaphorical? An omen or a miracle? Perhaps magic?

Rehoboth Beach Writers Guild members contemplated
these questions. This publication contains the fictional
stories — prose and poetry — they created in response.