

Harmony

Seasons Changed and Rearranged

Some people enjoy the constant warmth of the southern or western climates; others enjoy the changes that the seasons bring. I enjoy the variety of the seasons, but to a lesser extent the length of the seasons. My ideal climate doesn't exist in reality, but living in Ohio is the closest thing to it. My ideal climate is a mixture of the best in all the seasons but not with the same time frame. Spring would last two months, summer would be four months long, fall would be a little over five months, and winter would be a few short weeks!

The new awakenings of spring put a smile on my face. Seeing the daffodils begin to bud along the roadside brings the deeply buried feelings of energy and excitement out of hibernation. The days grow sunnier and longer. As the season progresses, several varieties of flowers and shrubs begin to bloom. The colorful displays of pinks, purples, blues and whites are a visual delight.

With the approach of summer, the flowery displays have now become the norm and there is not such a strong interest in their abundance as there was a few short weeks ago. But the warm temperatures and the wispy breezes are a walker's delight. On these types of days, I feel like I could walk forever without growing tired. I find that the summer evening warmth is the perfect time to sit and gaze at the stars and ponder the next day's activities. On the other hand, a powerful thunderstorm off in the distance is a display that I find fascinating. A good summer is full of sunny days and vivid thunderstorms.

The mild temperatures and changing leaves in the fall mark what is probably my favorite visual season. When driving along through the countryside and reaching a crest in the road, the colorful displays of reds, oranges, and yellows can be seen for miles. The contrasts in vividness are truly amazing. Still driving down that same countryside road, I can travel through a heavily wooded area of trees overhanging the road. It feels like a picture right out of Norman Rockwell's abundance of paintings.

Lastly, what would the winter holidays be without the sight of freshly fallen snow? The earth feels clean and at peace in the silence of a winter's night. The snow would last for a few short weeks from mid-December through January's beginning. It would be the soft, fluffy kind of snow that would not cause havoc when one walks or drives from place to place. To sit by a blazing fire with a good book, an afghan, and hot chocolate (in view of the picture window!) with light snow falling is the best way to enjoy a winter's day.

All the seasons have something good in them that I enjoy. I just wish the gloominess of a misty, foggy rain and the bone-chilling cold that hits Ohio quite frequently would find another place to take up residence!

~ Cheryl Brazie

The Vacation

There once was a group of three friends that spent a lot of time together. They went shopping together and even vacationed together. They met in school and that was where their friendship began.

One day they planned a camping vacation. They left early and finally arrived at the entrance to their campground. Out of nowhere, a bird flew in front of their truck and hit the windshield. The girls got out of the truck and found the bird with a hurt wing. They picked up the bird and gave it food and took care of it. Soon, the bird was able to make short flights, and finally it was well, but it never left them. It went everywhere with the friends while they enjoyed their camping vacation.

One morning they decided to go exploring. They found a beautiful lake. Walking along the shore they saw a crocodile and were afraid and began to run. One of them noticed something and said, "Don't run. Come and see this poor animal."

They saw that the crocodile was bleeding and had a harpoon stuck in his back. The friends moved closer and closer, speaking in soft voices until they got close enough to remove the harpoon. Finally, the crocodile began to move slowly into the water, and the friends went on their way.

A little farther in a field, they found a beautiful white horse that was running from one end of the field to the other. The friends watched. One of the friends who liked bubble gum took a pack of gum from her backpack and asked her friends if anyone wanted a piece of gum. At that moment, the beautiful horse came to her and smelled her hand as if to say, "Me, me, I want a piece of gum!" The girl was surprised, but she gave the horse a stick of gum. The horse started chewing it and as the friends walked away, the horse followed them. At the end of their day, the friends returned to their campground followed by the horse.

The next morning they had a big surprise when they found fresh fish in front of their tent. They didn't know who had brought them. Then one girl noticed the crocodile slowly coming toward them with more fish in its mouth as thanks for the help on the previous day.

It was incredible, but in just a few days the friends had made lots more friends so they decided to name them. They named the horse Turlututu, and they named the bird Risas. And they named the crocodile Fisher. One of the friends got out her camera and said she wanted to take a group picture. Another friend put a small bow tie with red and blue stripes on the bird. Lots of pictures were taken.

Their vacation was almost over, and the friends were very happy that they had had such a wonderful time and had made so many new friends. They were laughing and talking in the camp when a black limousine entered the campground. The friends were wondering who was inside. They were surprised when the people got out and asked if they could spend the night and share some food and water. The friends said, "Of course," and asked whether these people were lost.

The visitors said, "No, we're here to work. We're going to photograph and film here in the countryside."

One of the friends asked, "What kind of work do you do?" The visitors said that they worked for *National Geographic* magazine.

One of the friends said, "Then you would probably like to take some photographs of our new friends." The friend started to explain how they had met each of their new animal friends. The visitors from *National Geographic* listened with interest to the story. Before the friends knew it, their photos and story were in the famous *National Geographic* magazine!

~ Irza Flickinger

My Most Memorable Day

I knew I was headed for a hair-raising experience when I saw the pamphlet advertisement. The day I took a guided horseback ride through Bryce Canyon National Park became a memorable excursion, unlike any other. The selection of the groups and their guides, the narrow path that wound down to the bottom of the canyon, and the beautiful landscape were all I needed to hope that someday I would return again to this exhilarating expedition. A guided horseback ride onto the floor of Bryce Canyon tested my spirit and resolution.

To begin with, the horses in the corral were the biggest I had ever seen. Tied to their posts and dusty, I knew they had blazed this trail many times. Trail guides were busy preparing for the journey, talking among themselves, and welcoming the tourists. I felt a great sense of apprehension about the ride, but the trail guide assured me these horses were skilled and well trained. While this may have been true, my instincts told me to run. Everyone mounted the horse chosen for them by the guide, and then the process of appointing trail hands with groups began. I was assigned to the last group and the last guide. I felt certain this would guarantee me the expert leader.

After receiving our riding instructions, we headed toward the canyon to begin our descent. Leaving Sunrise Point, the trail was narrow with drop offs on both sides. Soon on our way, we passed a woman walking back from the group up ahead. She had been so frightened during the ride that she abandoned her horse and walked back to the corral. Feeling threatened, I determined not to speculate what might be waiting for me up ahead. With great anticipation, I watched our guide take the reins of her horse and proceed to lead us down the chancy trail. I was petrified while my horse mastered the sharp switchback with barely room to maneuver. My horse skillfully placed his feet near the edge of the trail while following behind the rider ahead of him. Slowly and steadily, my horse made turn after turn. As my heart raced and panic overtook me, I remembered what the expert guide

instructed each one of us to do, "Trust your horse; he is sure of his footing." I knew if I was ever going to enjoy this adventure I would have to do just that. Besides, as I looked around, the other horses were rehearsing the same routine. So I began to relax and trust my horse for the thrilling descent to the bottom of the canyon floor.

In any event, the frightening experience to begin with could not diminish the astounding beauty of what I viewed on the two-hour ride that memorable day. In particular, the skies were brilliant and nothing could shut out the sun's rays. We rode on, viewing some of the oldest Joshua trees and rock formations, thousands of years in the making. Majestic views, compelling photo op's, and the good humor from our trail guide made this an unforgettable day.

On the whole, the horseback ride through Bryce Canyon was a thrilling adventure. The dependable horses and cowboys were the authentic players in this drama. With the scary descent to the canyon floor and the enchanting rock pinnacles, one can see how this day was exhilarating. I had learned to trust man's oldest and most reliable mode of transportation to take me on a trip to see the world from a new perspective.

~ Linda Neal

Ice

Shimmering rainbows on every tree
Such a beautiful sight for you to see
Bright sunlight shining through
God's beauty for me and you

Icy, cold weather keeps people inside
Furry little creatures
Stay inside and hide

Light snow flakes are falling down
Rock salt and shovels
Are the only sound

I love the fresh air
That blows on my face
I need to walk
A short step pace

~ Theresa Hall

A Trunk Called the Heart

I have tickled my sister to stop her from crying.
I have played with a candle and burned myself.
I have blown a bubble that broke and covered my face.
I have talked with a mirror to get a reflection
and have even played at being a witch.
I have always wanted to be an astronaut, a poet, a magician,
a hunter, and a trapeze artist.
I have hidden behind a curtain and have forgotten
that my feet were sticking out.
I have made a crank call.
I have taken a shower in the rain
and ended up addicted to running in the rain.
I have stolen kisses and had confused feelings.
I have taken wrong shortcuts and kept walking into the unknown.
I have licked the pan of Brigadeiro candy.
I have cried listening to music on the bus.
I have tried to forget dear friends,
but I discovered that they are the hardest to forget.
I have walked up hidden stairs to a roof to try to get to the stars.
I have climbed a tree to steal the fruit.
I have slid down the banister from the top floor.
I have made eternal vows.
I have written on the school wall.
I have cried sitting on the bathroom floor.
I have run away from home, forever,
and have come back at the same time.
I have run to someone, sobbing.
I have been alone in the middle of a thousand people,
missing someone.
I have seen a sunset, pink and orange.
I have jumped in a pool with no desire to return.
I have drunk whiskey until my lips felt numb.
I have looked up to the city and still could not find my place.
I have awakened in the night, afraid to rise, shaken from nerves,
and almost died of love.
Yet I have been born again to see the smile of someone special.

I have run barefoot in the street, cried with happiness.
I have lain on the grass at dawn
and have seen the moon turn to sun.
I have stolen a huge rose from a garden.
I have loved and thought it was forever,
but it was always half a "forever."
I have cried to see friends leaving,
But I have soon discovered that new friends arrive,
And life is coming and going without reason.
So many things I have done,
So many moments I have photographed
through the lens of emotion,
and stored in a trunk, called the heart.

~ Lais Felix

Sinthominic

“Since the Beginning of Time”

As the wind blows through the trees,
Indians play their instruments with the breeze.
Some people say they can still hear them in their dreams.

“Wake up with the sunbeams
upon your face as they glare
through the window with grace.”

Sometimes you wish you were with them,
And sometimes you really are.
The rhythm of their soft cries is just in the eagle’s eyes.

~ *Chrissi Brown*

Moments at the River

I get on my bike and start to ride.
Along the way I pass the park.
I feel like I am on a journey to some far-away place.
As I go over the hills, seeing people on my left and right,
I ride down to the river.
When I get there, I sit on a log and start thinking about my past.
I watch the sunlight shimmer off the river.
It makes me feel warm on the inside.
As I watch the river flow by it calms me down on the inside,
quiets my thoughts.
I don't know why I'm happy when I am here;
it's like some incredible power here.
Words can't begin to describe what it is like to be here.
Sometimes I sing when I'm down by the river.
No one has ever heard me sing before.
When I start to sing, suddenly life seems to slow down a bit.
It's like the river wants to hear me sing to it.
The songs I sing are picked by the river.
It's like the river knows what I am feeling in my heart,
then picks out what I need.
I sing the song as I sit there on a log watching the river go by
until the sunset's rays turn into darkness.
Then I go home back over the hills, past the park, and home again.

~ Ashley Dingey

Fall – the Beginning of the End

Crisp air blows against my face
Smell the burning pumpkins
Atomic explosion of colors
Leaves crunch beneath my boots
Ghosts and goblins from dusk to dawn
Give thanks to all
The snow will fall
And the sun will go away
To rise again in May.

*~ Live Oaks Group Project:
Carolyn Colwell
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Storm

Faint whisper
Calm stillness
To all living things
This feeling you get just before
a strong rain.
Lightning
Erupts the heavens around
Turn night into day without a peep or sound
Your blue-white arms of fearsome power
can make the strongest tremble with fear and cower.
Thunder
As if a mighty stone fist striking the ground
Trembling, shaking, you can feel the sound
Rushing through your body like a tremendous wave.
With love and fear I bear witness to thee.
Your power and glory are not wasted on me.

Birthed 11/18/09

~ Billy Wagner

Summer

Summer
Steamy, Colorful
Swimming, Playing, Fishing
Sweat, Heat, Shiver, Cold
Skiing, Skating, Sledding
Frosty, Barren
Winter

~ *Sheila Hightower*