

17 winters

Winter is my favorite season, or at least when it snows. Without snow, winter would just be a prickling icy time. When I was a child I analyzed snowfall until my lips stung. And going back inside always left me with an alienated feeling. The stillness, and calmness of it, the suffocating feeling that the thousands of warm clothing layers give you, and the silence of the snow, they all dissipate. The warmth of the fireplace only helped speed up that process. There were times when I watched snowfall from the very first flake until the very last gust of wind. It made me feel infinite.

Even then I knew that the beauty of such a scene and the tranquility it brought would only last so long, Snow stops and shoveling begins. Soon after comes the dissolvent, salt. After years of observation, seven-year-old me theorized that heavy snow only comes around every two years, and every year in between is full of false hope. Full of miniature flakes falling from the night sky yet still the same dry ground in the morning. Every year since then my theory seemed to have been proven wrong, every two years turned into three. Snow did not come this year, nor the last.

The winters seem to be getting warmer.

It has been eleven years since and I cannot remember the last time that I buried myself in a heavy blanket of white ice. And I cannot remember the last time that snow pellets bled through my knitted gloves. Sure there were occasional snowfalls, but almost instantly the world melted it.

Winter without snow would just be a prickling icy time. And that is all it has been During all four seasons. Not literally, of course. There are no more early nights and homes lit up like dollhouses. Nevertheless, I learned to cool the burning hands that were once freezing, that were once being warmed. It is just winter, it is just too cold tonight, and all of my memories are 11 years away, persevered in the last heavy snowfall that I experienced. It holds and enwraps the memories of my childhood that felt most like home. ... maybe my winter is in a place hundreds of miles away from me, and maybe that's the reason why no matter how much I hope, and no matter how much I love its presence, it is not and never will be, enough for it to return. Perhaps I could locate it, maybe then I'll remember. Maybe then I will cease to be homesick. And maybe then I'd feel infinite.

