

## **There's No Place Like Home**

**by Marie Coady**

**As New Englanders, we expect bitter cold and blinding snowstorms in winter. Recently, on a typically frigid New England day, I passed Horn Pond while sub-arctic winds blew across the water rocking my car till it was nearly airborne. As I looked out over the pond, black pools stood out among the newly forming ice and dotted the surface. I pulled over close to the waters edge and noticed those dark pools were churning furiously, whipped by the wind. They were also stirred by underground currents that come from the many springs that feed the pond from deep below the surface.**

**The ducks, geese, seagulls and that loving swan couple were huddled on those patches of black water, banding together for warmth, their heads tucked in their wings. My motherly instinct wanted to gather them all up and put them in my heated vehicle until the frigid weather passed. But I realized that would do more harm than good. They, like us, have gotten used to frequent bitter surges of weather and knew how to survive. They took it more or less in stride, just as we did.**

**People in warmer climes find it hard to understand how New Englanders can ignore the weather and get on with their day. But this winter some sections of the country, not used to cold and snow, got an unexpected taste of New England weather.**

**This past October, I was visiting friends in Seattle. Most days in Seattle have very little sunshine and more often than not it rains. Most of the time, its what the Irish call a soft rain and doesn't ruin your plans for sightseeing. But that one week in October, the sun shone almost daily.**

**Many people remarked how lucky I was to have such good weather for my visit. Everywhere I went people were friendly and remarked over and over that I had picked a great time for my visit. Some even suggested I brought the good weather with me.**

**The suggestion that I had somehow blessed the area with good weather brought with it a sense of failed responsibility shortly after I left. Within days of my departure, the rains no longer fell softly. Instead, they pounded Seattle and its suburbs. Snow followed, smothering the city beyond its capability to cope. Roads I had traveled daily to get from my friends house in Emerson to downtown Seattle literally washed away. Hillsides, of which there are many, eroded and crumbled, bringing with them houses, cars, trees, and anything else in their path. The snow not only brought down power lines, it made getting around the city impossible. Anyone who's ever been to Seattle knows its all hills. Not the kind of gently, sloping hills that dot the Boston landscape. But hills that are almost perpendicular. Driving up them on a sunny day is**

frightening; snow and ice make them impossible.

This same cold front swept across the country's midsection and dipped from Texas to Canada, introducing an Arctic drain of cold and snow to areas of the country ill prepared for it.

I was feeling almost responsible, a leftover from that Puritan ethic that proclaimed the vagaries of weather were Gods way of punishing someone. Then I remembered the tour guide on the boat we took out to the San Juan Islands. She was smug and a little too self-assured. When I told her I was from New England, she sneered and said, I hate New England.

Then she took great pleasure in telling me she'd heard on the news recently that New England was in for the worst winter in history again this year. She smiled and added; with the same annoying smugness, that although Seattle did get a lot of rain, it was never very cold and snow was a rare event.

I'm not saying I'm glad that the weather put the lie to this smug tour guide, but I hope she remembers her conversation and has matured a little in the process. We're all proud of our home turf. People from north, south, east and west like to think their area of the US is best and has the most to offer.

God knows I'm guilty of that. The more I travel to other parts of the country the happier I am that I was born and raised in New England, especially the Boston area. I loved Seattle, but I love Boston more. But now after enduring that smug tour guides snotty attitude, I try harder to understand the pride people take in brown desert, barren plains, musty swampland, lonely tundra, or the flat land of the Midwest. It may not be our cup of tea but, like the ducks on Horn Pond, to them its home.

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