

# Stark Raving Sane: On Summertime

By Catherine SWEET

Summertime, and the livin' is easy. Ah, Gershwin, you said it. The last couple of days have been balmy and warm. They have that smell of mud and old leaves and clean air. I've been getting my hopes up- thinking forward to the full-blown summer.

See, I only recognize two seasons: summer and winter. It's like yin and yang- there can only be two sides of a coin. There's winter and the rest are just varying degrees of summer. Some choose to refer to them as spring, summer and autumn. That's silly.

For me, there is winter; the yin, evil, dark, uncomfortable, wet. It wears at my will to live. It makes me weep in the dry, biting wind. The Library might as well be in Tibet, the way the Nordic air whips over our grassy knoll of a school. Prince Edward Island becomes a miserable, grey vacuum.

We are now heading into what I call Early Summer. It shares many characteristics with what is commonly called "Spring," but it is not spring. It is a mild summer, like a training bra for summer proper.

You can shed those wool coats. You can leave scarves, mitts, and hats at home. The Library only seems to be two hundred paces away, not in the Himalayas. For me, Early Summer's fog is not like winter's constant overcast. It's a cleansing, temperate steam. The rain washes away the filthy heaps of snow. The pure water that pours down University Avenue will not freeze again for seven months.

Early Summer is the appetizer. It's the hors d'oeuvre that whets your hunger for sandals and tank tops and skirts. Soon, my perfume of choice will be Coppertone. My scarf will be a beach towel. I'll be able to watch hares nibble grass at the PEI National Park. A beer on

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the patio will not involve losing a bet.

Ok, there you can see how my mind works. Forgive the phrase, but it snowballs out of control. An Early Summer thaw instantly transports me to happier times; walking on a beach, deep sea fishing, camping and meteor showers.

I can smell the rich soil of my mother scraping in the floyverbeds. The yearning to have the fragrance of the lilac blossoms outside my bedroom window at night is dizzying. Can you smell the ozone during a lightning storm?

You can see why I say that summer in the yang. It's hot and passionate and strong. It's sexy. It's bright. It overloads our senses as opposed to depriving them. Everything is bigger. Food is fresher, smells are sweeter, thunderclaps shake walls.

It's been said that Prince Edward Islanders suffer though PEI winter's purgatory to have the paradise of summer for only four months. It's so worth it.



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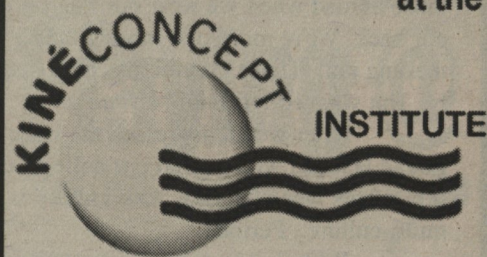
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