

THAT TIME OF YEAR
September 22, 2012

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I always miss summer before it is even gone. My wife teases me because I start looking for spring at the winter solstice, when the Sun first turns northward and begins its climb into more daylight. I also start counting the days until fall from the Summer Solstice, around June 21st. There is a happy time for me from the first warm days of spring until the end of June, after which I start looking for leaves to turn red. That spring time, for me, is carefree and the shadow of winter has no place to cast itself.

But we are way past that now. The nights are getting cold and frost has already come within one degree of biting all the foliage here. Oh yes, and there is red and orange in the tops of the trees. Pretty soon we will have to start going out for drives to see all the colors. And I need a jacket now when we go for walks too early in the day.

Part of me is not ready to go indoors yet and the idea of shutting out all the fresh air for six months is hard to even imagine. Each fall I don't know how I will ever make it through to spring. What will I do without open windows and warm breezes? And darkness all day long much of the time, the stealing gray messengers of winter.

I know. I will get over it and settle in to my forced hibernation. Only right now I want to mourn just a little the passing of the Sun to the south. Please forgive me. As for the suffering of all the critters as the frost inches in, I don't even want to think about. The birds on a wire with frozen feet is too awful to consider. I offer this poem to all the crickets and katydids that I love.

FIRST FROST

Listen to,
Their songs,
Disappearing.

The deep silence,
Of a billion lives,
Ending in,
A single night.

-- Michael Erlewine