

On Weather: Silent Snow

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I wake up at 6:45 with little feet pressed into my shoulder blades, my body contorted into the shape of an L as I try to avoid my black lab and the two kids who joined me in bed sometime in the middle of the previous night. I tiptoe into the bathroom to avoid waking them. I pull some clothes off the floor and brush my teeth before racing downstairs to turn on the griddle. I count out six pieces of bacon.

It's seven a.m., seventy-two minutes between this moment free of little voices and the one where we all need to be in the car ready to go.

"I smell yummy," my two-year-old shouts, likely still tossing around on the floor of my bedroom. *He's awake.*

I flip the bacon pieces and chug the almond milk latte.

"I want pancakes," my six-year-old yells. I sigh. I pull out the flapjack mix and dump in some water, whisking to the desired consistency and then pouring the mixture on the griddle to cook in the bacon grease.

I scan the refrigerator for packable lunches. No peanut butter, no sugar – school rules. I wash the grapes and stuff into Ziploc baggies, hoping today isn't the day the school is monitoring plastic usage again. I add in a squeezable applesauce, organic fruit snacks, turkey rolled up around a slice of cheese. I forgot to re-freeze the ice block the day before, so I pull out a first aid pack and tuck inside the lunchbox.

I flip the pancakes onto unbreakable plates and pour syrup over the top.

"Mommy, cut," my son says.

My oldest's voice spins as he spits out the words "snow, snow, something, snow." The forecast calls for snow pants, and I remember to shove their extra gear into plastic bags and into the front passenger seat.

Half-eaten pancakes stick to the plates as the boys leave the table and dump the Legos onto the carpet in the living room. I wet a paper towel and race behind them, wiping fingers, lips, and shirts.

We sprint out the door with five minutes until school starts, and I strap them into their car seats. Wait, one of them doesn't have shoes. I plod back into the house, look around the floor, locate boots peeking out from under the couch, and leave.

I drop the oldest off in his Kindergarten classroom, the youngest sitting at the art table tracing stencil letters. I cajole him out of the school and buckle him back in his car seat after he yells at me "I do it."

Cars rush past me as my youngest tells me a story over the noise of the radio about a froggie he wishes he had in the backyard.

I run through my to-dos in my head: review website content, finish coding two pages, approve invoices, read one or two essays for the online writing workshop, write five hundred words, toss in some laundry, fold it, pick up dog food and chocolate milk.

We unload in front of my youngest's pre-school, hugging, kissing, high fiving as he closes the door behind me.

I sit in my car, leaning against the headrest and turn off the radio. I crave silence.

I open my eyes as the snow begins to fall.

Suddenly, the city takes a collective breath. Cars slow down. I don't even slow down for safety necessarily; the world just feels like it's a little slower.

I drive back toward my house, watching the snowflakes burst open against my windshield, one by one by one.

I need to do that website, but maybe I can send it over by tomorrow morning. The dog food is important, but we still have a couple of days of dry kibble.

At home, I sit in my office, watching the snowflakes pour from the clouds. I close my laptop. It is quiet, still. Even the wind is muffled. The tree branches huddle together. The beautiful fall colors are covered; all is white. Perhaps it is the monotone that allows our brains to slow down, just for a moment. I'm not even sure what's on my list anymore. The earth builds itself up, one layer at a time, the snow a temporary accent to its molten foundation. I walk into the living room and turn on the switch that lights up the fireplace. I pull up a blanket. I take a deep breath. It is the only sound. Today, right now, everything pauses. The chaos, the speed, will return. Of that I am always sure. But for now, I watch the world cover itself in stillness.

Brooke Linville is a single mom writer in Boise, Idaho. She has been published in *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, *Idaho Statesman*, *Virginian-Pilot*, and *Women's eNews*. When she isn't looking for lost shoes or decluttering backpacks, she can be found onstage telling true stories or ruminating over her next book. Online, she lives as @brookelinville on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.
