

Morning View Kentucky  
26 November 1958

I am sorry, Mr. McCarthy,

that I have been unable to write for so long, but the critical illness of an ancient aunt living alone in a distant city has complicated things considerably in recent weeks.

I had never expected to welcome winter cold, however this year I have eagerly looked forward to its arrival, hoping it would dispel the astounding confusion brought about by our unseasonable warmth.

Throughout tree patch and pond-field, animal and plant life alike greeted the recent week end of 80 degree weather as though it were the advent of spring.

Buds, particularly those of black oak and hickory, swelled gaily and were rapidly approaching that point of expansion which would have resulted in their freezing at the first touch of cold. A thoroughly befuddled peach tree proudly flaunted one lone, pathetic bloom which quickly shrivelled into blackness on the next frosty night. My oyster log, equally confused, assumed the high temperatures to be those of mid-summer, and put forth a bountiful crop of the luscious, pearly, terraced mushrooms.

Insects, only briefly dormant in egg or cocoon, emerged to crawl and fly about as in springtime, until icy blasts terminated their abbreviated and dislocated lives. Perhaps there will be fewer insects next year because of this strange mishap to their schedule.

Birds who should have been long since enjoying the comfortable safety of the southlands, remained in this area by the hundreds and brightened the days with practice of their spring songs, rather than sounding only their subdued autumn call notes as is customary on southward migration.

Responding to danger signals of which they alone were aware, they resumed their journey in flocks and little groups throughout the day and far into the night Tuesday. It is my guess that Wednesday's blustering cold found nearly a thousand less birds in tree patch and pond-field than had been there twenty-four hours earlier.

In the pond itself life was perhaps the most completely disrupted by our summer-autumn. Sustained throughout actual summer by a superabundance of fresh water and food, the large-mouth bass were