

Snow Day by Rome Reginelli

We got three inches of snow in San Jose last night. It's the first time it's snowed since 1949. I've never seen it so cold here. We could barely get the door open this morning, and all the plants are frozen. It's not supposed to snow in San Jose. You can thank global warming for that. They like to call it global warming like it's only going to make the world hotter but they don't realize that it screws up a bunch of other shit too and we end up with stuff like three inches of snow in San Jose. Some people are calling it "climate change" instead 'cause of that but nobody has a clue what they're talking about so it's still global warming to me.

I was at my friend Allen's place and his mom was huddled up on the couch in a blanket and she was reminding us we'd, "better keep that door closed" as it rattled against the hinges. I don't know if she thought we wanted to go outside and play in the snow or whatever. I didn't. It's too cold out, my toes are practically numb as it is and we've got the heater up as high as it can go. I mean, you can call twenty-five degrees Fahrenheit "downright toasty" if you want (and my friend Lear says they get this all the time at his college) but the reality is, San Jose isn't built to take this sort of weather. We got the day off from school today. I think it's the first time I've ever gotten a snow day. Allen and I don't know what to do. We don't even have rain boots. I mean, hell, I'm at his house and even if I were at mine the warmest shoes I've got are some old fuzzy boots that don't fit right. Normally I just wear tennis shoes everywhere.

Allen's from Florida and I think this is the first time he's had a snow day, too. I think we're going to end up

playing Scrabble or whatever which is fine with me even though that's what we'd be doing even if it weren't snowing out. I mean, if we weren't going to school either, which we would have been except for the snow. I at least brought a change of clothes, and I'm probably gonna end up wearing both sets of clothing at the same time and borrowing a blanket to wrap myself in and still having cold toes. My toes are the kind that are always cold, you can set 'em next to a fire and rub 'em and they'll sting a little like the heat is getting to them but then you pull them away and they're cold again. I hope it's not a sign of bad circulation or a weak heart or whatever. My granddad died of a heart attack before I was born and I really don't wanna think about that happening to me. I have a hard enough time doing what I want to do in life with the time I've got - I don't need it to get cut any shorter.

The news says that we should be careful not to drive unless we have chains because the roads are gonna be all iced up and slippery or whatever, which means we're pretty much trapped here unless we wanna hike down to wherever we're going, and I don't have enough clothes for that. I've only been to the snow two or three times and I lost the jacket I had back then anyway. Allen went to find the Scrabble box, which didn't take long 'cause it's right where we left it on the desk in his room. We set up the pieces, asking his mom if she wanted to play but knowing the answer already - "You boys go ahead and play. You know I can't keep up with your big words," and she ends it with that piercing laugh that you can hear across the house. Sometimes I'm over and Allen's mom just bursts out and I'm like, "What's so funny?" and he'll just shrug and laugh. His mom just does that.

I feel pretty lucky when I get "zoo" on a triple word score just 'cause the Z is ten points and then Allen pulls his

usual unnatural luck out and gets another triple word score using my Z to spell “agonize” and I kind of want to punch him. I don’t get it, his luck. Never will. Partway through the game his mom interrupts with a phone in her hand. “It’s Alice,” she says and hands it over to Allen.

Alice is Allen’s boyfriend, and I like to kid him that if you combine their names it makes “Allicen” so I call them that sometimes. He acts like it annoys him but I know it really doesn’t because it just reminds him that he’s been going out with Alice for almost two years now and it’s been almost that long since I last even kissed a girl. It was hard getting used to at first, when I broke up with Diana and suddenly I felt shut out of Allen’s life because when I was sitting at home moping about having nothing to do he was out with Alice. I felt like she was stealing away my best friend, and Allen and I have been friends a lot longer than he’s known her, but, well, she’s a girl and they can do things together that we really can’t. I let it slide. He’s pretty good about it though, like last night which was a Thursday but I just went home and hung out with him after school. And now here we are, with an unexpected three day weekend and she’s calling him up to chat. I mean, they said it might snow or whatever but who believes them? It’s not supposed to snow in San Jose. Stupid global warming. Anyway it looks like Allicen are going to be going for a while so I flip my Scrabble tray down and dig around for something to read. I’ve got a book in my backpack. I’m a little disconcerted by the gush of cold air that enters my blankey-sanctuary when I move over to reach for it but that just encourages me to be quick about it. I flip around in the book. Where was I? I guess I lost my bookmark again. I’m good at that.

Anyway I find my place and read a bit before Allen finishes with his phone chat. “Sorry about that,” he says,

and this is why I say he's pretty good about it because he really is kind of sorry that he went on like that in front of me. I understand, though. If I had a girlfriend that called me up to talk about the first snow in more than fifty years in San Jose and probably the most it's snowed here since sabertooth tigers walked the earth, I would wanna talk to her too. "Hey, you wanna go out in a couple hours before the snow melts? Alice and I are gonna meet up."

Presto: there they go again. Can't begrudge them, though. It sounds like it might be kind of fun anyway. So we finish our game of Scrabble (I mount a comeback but he wins on the last turn) and reluctantly pull ourselves out of the blankets. I'm getting a little cold already and I know it's only going to get colder once I've got melted snow seeping into my tennis shoes but there's not much I can do about it. I need to get home somehow anyway. We're in the park around the corner and there she walks up, Alice in her fleecy ski jacket (she actually goes to Tahoe a few times a year so she has clothes for this sort of weather) and she waves at us and comes over. She and Allen share a hug that's sort of awkward because of all the layers of clothing they both have on. I get a brief hello and then I glance around at the impossibly white scenery, the playground barely recognizable under the frost. When I look back, they're completely oblivious to me. I chuck a snowball into Allen's back. "Hey!" he shouts, mock-angry but giggling, and pretty soon I'm dodging snowballs from the both of them.

"No fair! I don't have anyone on my team!" I protest, but that's not stopping them until I make enough goofy faces at Alice that she hits Allen in the back of the head when he's not looking.

"Aww, man, the snow went down my neck!"

"That's what you get for teaming up on me- oof!" I retort as he returns the favor. My feet are kind of numb by

now. We go on for a little while until they can't take it any more and I can see they're about two steps short of making out in the snow. I sort of lay down and make a snow angel. I guess I'm probably going to regret it 'cause my jacket isn't waterproof or whatever but I was going to be cold eventually so I may as well have fun. After all, who knows when it'll snow again in San Jose? I'm looking up at the sky, which is a sort of pale white-blue like even the atmosphere is a little bit frozen over, and I know that in a few hours and days I'm going to regret this a little bit. When I take off my dripping clothes before getting into the warm shower, or when my shoes are still wet tonight, or when I'm hearing on the news that the freeze killed California's citrus crop again, the price has to be paid for all of this. But right now, I'm just lying in the snow, marveling in the wonder of snow in San Jose, and I'm thinking, well, maybe life brings us small miracles after all.