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## The Value of Sensing

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### The Value of Sensing

As much as I cherish the warmth that begins to return in springtime, I usually feel with regret that the winter passes without my having really felt it. I take my existence in Minnesota winters for granted. I don't chop firewood and later feel its heat spread around a room- I walk into my dorm building and warmth greets me, but its source is invisible and distant. This abrupt transition makes the indoors feel like a world totally separate from what's happening outside. So I don't find joy in the warmth- I don't revel in it, but rather quickly move on with my day.

On mornings after a snowfall, lots of folks in my neighborhood come outside at around the same time to shovel. Our experience of the weather unifies us as neighbors. We may not get our news from the same places, have any hobbies in common, or have any mutual acquaintances, but we live in the same climate.

When we reach the top of the hill, I can see tall storm clouds in the east. They combine with the sunset to cast a purple glow on everything. How could something this momentous happen in the sky without it meaning something special? I've been waiting for a moment like this, but now that it's here I worry that it will pass without my having fully grasped it. However, as long as I remember it I feel like it still exists somewhere, motivating me with the comfort that someday I will wander into such a haven again.

Near the wildflower field in my grandparents' front yard, I crouch to look at the dandelion puffs. Far away I know there are stemless dandelions and pineappleweed in

boulevards that encircle a sports dome. The other park department employees and I weed-whacked them, the only strips of life in that mountain island of asphalt, concrete, and fast food. The only ground that absorbed the sun's heat instead of reflecting it back at us. We didn't need to cut the grass in the parks because it was too dry to grow, so we found another green thing to kill. But next to me in the field the dandelions are safe and the air is calm.

In a nature reserve near my home, goldenrod and beebalms signal the end of summer. I feel like this shouldn't happen yet, but I know I saw many flowers blooming and fading in the course of the season. Later, full of luggage, I drive on the road that leads to the heart of campus, and the field to my left is full of goldenrod. The hydrangeas outside one of the dorms are the same color as the ones my mom will be looking at that day. When I turn on the radio, reporters tell stories from the state fair. I want to step outside and feel that it's still warm out, still summer, and remind myself that being in a different place doesn't mean everything has changed.