

May 2020

My Dear Readers:

A warm welcome to my new readers and a cozy hello to my faithful tribe. My newsletter is my way to have an informal chat with you all, to share observations about my day and about life, and occasionally to share a new recipe or two. Let us begin.

I live in the Pacific Northwest, and one of the glories of living here are the mild winters. Sure we get the occasional bit of snow, but within a day or two all traces of the winter wonderland have usually vanished.

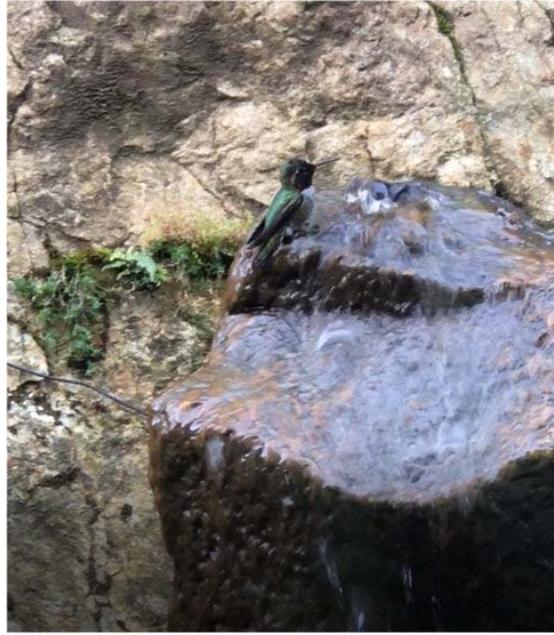
Well, this winter we had an unseasonably frigid cold snap. Temperatures plummeted to well below freezing and stayed there for several weeks. Now I can hear you folks in the east scoffing, "That's not cold weather," and I agree with you. In the grand scheme of things, it isn't. We shot the TV show *Bomb Girls* in Toronto, and Don and I lived through four Toronto winters where -20 C (-4 F) occurred with regularity. Add the wind chill factor ripping off Lake Ontario, and *brrrrrr!*

But I digress. This winter, temperatures dropped, and the sky opened up and dumped seventeen inches onto our fair city in two days.



I was nestled on our comfy sofa reading when a flurry of movement caught my eye. It was a shivering hummingbird, desperately attempting to get a few droplets

of nectar out of some shriveled blossoms clinging to a large, snow-laden bush. The bird found purchase on one of the branches and perched, its head tucked down, and its little chest rising and falling as if it were tired and weary.



I looked it up and found out it was an Anna hummingbird and that they don't migrate in the winter because they can survive our mild winters. *Our mild winters!* It was a frickin' blizzard out there. I hopped in my car, grateful for my studded winter tires, and drove to the hardware store, where I purchased a hummingbird feeder. When I got home, I boiled water and carefully added the correct amount of sugar. Once the mixture cooled, I hung the feeder in the bush.

The hummingbird came and drank deeply, gratefully, and I sat in the living room, peeking over the top of my book, happiness filling my being.

During the frigid cold winter, I had to change out the sugar water twice a day, because it would freeze. The hummingbird didn't bother flying anywhere. It just hunkered down in the bush, only moving from its perch to drink from the feeder or to chase another hummingbird away.

I got worried for the other hummingbird, so I purchased another feeder and hung it further away from the house. But still I was wrestling with the problem of keeping the solution from freezing. I tried insulating it. Didn't work. I attempted to hang a light but couldn't find an outdoor socket close enough. Finally I hit on a solution. I had hand-warmer packets left over from when I lived in Toronto. So in the morning, when I put the new solution out, I would activate a hand warmer and tape it to the bottom of the feeder. It would keep the solution from freezing all day long.

I know this seems like a long and convoluted story, but there is a point to it. You see, with the coronavirus, now we are going through something like that unexpectedly long, cold, and possibly deadly winter was for the hummingbirds. However, the hummingbirds made it through that winter, and now my yard is no longer shrouded in copious amounts of snow. My garden is in bloom, beauty is all around, and flowers are swaying gently in the breeze. To top it off, brightly colored hummingbirds are all around. They have built their nests here. They bathe in the fountain outside our kitchen window. And, when I sit in the sun, I hear their contented chirrups and the *whir* of their wings, and it makes me happy.



Outside my window

So when I get sad about missing my family and friends, when I get scared about people going hungry, unable to feed their children, and out of work, I do what I can. I make donations to our local food banks, hospitals, and businesses. I send daily prayers of gratitude to all our essential workers. I stay inside so I don't add to the burden. I don't venture past the confines of our yard. I do what I can, and I tell myself: This, too, will pass and someday be a distant memory. We will once again be like the little hummingbirds building our nests, looking to the future with hope and flowers blooming all around.

Wishing you and your loved ones safety, good health, food on your table, and hope in your hearts.

Much love,

Meg xo

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