

He couldn't remember being this cold before. Not as a child playing outside in the snow, or hours spent at hockey games. The polar bear plunge was frigid, but a temporary chill before warming up again. He knew the freezing chill of a pond after falling through its thin ice one winter. Remembered waking to chattering teeth the year he'd gone camping and woke to his tent covered in ice and snow. It had taken five minutes to break out and reorientate himself with the world. This cold, though, it pulsed through his veins as death approached, skating ever nearer.



I love the colder months of the year. When we lived on the island, it was always a treat to head towards town and spot the mountain(s) covered in snow. Pictures never quite captured the wonder and beauty we beheld. The small coastal town we lived in wasn't prone to snow, but we were present when history was made one winter afternoon. It snowed for the first time in fifty years.

It's one of my children's earliest memories of snow. They remember little of their time amongst the mountains prior to island life. They don't remember the gentle nudges that wake them to bundle up and slip out into a snowy night to leave small snowmen on the doorsteps of neighbors. Nor do they remember our epic sledding adventures in a yellow raft.

There's something magical, to me, about the snowy winter months. My children, even as young adults, lure me away from my writing desk to partake in snowball fights each winter. Of which I inevitably lose because I rush out of the house in crocs and fail to remember my mittens. My children also prefer the colder months. They struggle with the humidity of our current mountain life, and are lobbying for a move to Alaska, which I repeatedly veto, but they are slowly winning me over on moving towards the coast.

I channeled our love for winter with activities my kids have heard about, some I participated

in as a child, and a few that happened to people I know. Like the polar bear plunge a family member partook in, or the time my father fell through our small frozen creek to rescue one of our dogs.

The original prompt was, "She couldn't remember being this cold before." Most of my dabbles end up with a female protagonist, but I changed it up this time. I can't tell you what this character's name is, but I envision a fellow who lived a life full of winter adventures and shared his many exploits with friends.

From beginning to end, little change within this story. I wrote two different endings, but circled back to the original, which I liked best because it gives the reader the option to decide for themselves what may have happened to our winter adventurer.

The Reluctant Author.

