

# Alec Soth's Archived Blog

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December 17, 2006

## Snow Week

Filed under: [snow](#) — alecsothblog @ 4:33 pm

Last [Friday's poem](#) by Lynn Emanuel has a terrific line: "I'm a conceptual liver. I prefer the cookbook to the actual meal." This is probably something most artists can relate to.

In my case, I'm a conceptual admirer of winter. I love the idea of winter, especially snow. I don't go cross-country skiing. I don't own snowshoes. I just like the idea it.

This feeling is strongest when I'm away from home. In college (on the East Coast) I was obsessed with this passage in *The Great Gatsby*:

One of my most vivid memories is of coming back West from prep school and later from college at Christmas time...

When we pulled out into the winter night and the real snow, our snow, began to stretch out beside us and twinkle against the windows, and the dim lights of small Wisconsin stations moved by, a sharp wild brace came suddenly into the air. We drew in deep breaths of it as we walked back from dinner through the cold vestibules, unutterably aware of our identity with this country for one strange hour, before we melted indistinguishably into it again.

For as long as I've been a photographer I've planned on doing a snow project. Every fall I dream up schemes to winterize my camera and photograph 'the real snow, our snow.' But one taste of that reality has me running indoors and looking at other people's pictures.

Today is December 17th. There is still no snow on the ground in Minnesota. But I'm declaring this snow week on the blog. Perhaps this will function as a sort of rain dance. Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow....

### 3 Comments

1. I'd imagine that the Minnesota relationship with winter is somewhat like where I am in Toronto. I feel no love for the depths (and length) of winter but its coming in the form of the first clean piles of snow still has a certain magical significance for me. I have been out a few times the last number of winters on those bitterly cold but brilliantly blue-skied winter days — when snow and ice are crisp and glittering and bare willow branches practically glow.

But I think my experience being mostly with 35mm makes that sort of excursion a much simpler undertaking in terms of equipment, speed, and of course the reduced need to entirely remove gloves when it's well below zero with a bracing windchill coming off a lake.

Now if only winter daylight didn't disappear so rapidly.

*Comment by [DavIn](#) — December 17, 2006 @ [5:15 pm](#)*

2. You mean the pic of you at the top of the page is a stunt double? I feel deeply let down.

*Comment by [guybatey](#) — December 17, 2006 @ [5:28 pm](#)*

3. I fear that we will no longer have the type of winters that were normal for the upper midwest. I miss it. I continue to hope that it will snow before I have to go back south for school.

*Comment by [Ondine](#) — December 20, 2006 @ [10:05 am](#)*