



Photograph by Christopher Bernard

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To California's Changing Seasons

Our Summers once meant
good times rolling in on barrel waves
All Thumbs Up

Our camp fires spoke of holiday
their smoke
followed
beauty

July meant hikes
bike rides day trips
coaster screams cotton
candy fireworks
Whatever Turns You On

Now—Summer brings a shearing sun
heat beyond reason
insect swarms with evil intent

By August the state is one long disaster flick
Hellfire steals life livelihood longing
Aid and ash stream up state and down
Celebrities turn refugee
each the other's first response

Septembers past we'd complain
about socks & shoes preferring
bare feet
innocence and ease
 light touch
 free movement

We'd prefer not to pull on the weight of Fall at all
 cloying cardigan cable knit crew neck sweaters
sweating rain gear heaviness
on heaviness
sported through pretend snow

Always sunny or about to be we cured
our depressions with
exercise Effexor entertainment
Kirkwood Northstar Alpine Meadows

Now—gray sky's gifts are cruel irony
flood after fire
mud after flood
debris flows onto burnt-out roads

We mourn as Tomorrowland slides downhill

Our California creed proclaims us
whole
perfect
in touch with Source

Our every creekbed still glistens with gold

But science locates our fault and
cinema warns of Winter growing all round
thorns long as a man's arm bearing
pestilence plague plunder

In truth the wheels of loss inch faster every night
crunch across snow toward
camps hearths living rooms

Forgiveness may be all that's left

Pushed against this dark wall of the coldest
mountain cave
we still claim that each person each cell each planet
mirrors the other
micro of the macro
and try to live As If

Rooted pose palms together facing the
west's falling sun
we proclaim at this changing of seasons
this ever-new end times at last and for
the first time:
We will not prefer death

We will bear our trembling bodies
cherish the center
remain here attuned to the movement
each Season each moment brings

Whatever the outcome,
we await the Spring.

Patricia Heinicke Jr, as a freelance publishing professional, writes mostly under other people's names, but she has had a few things of her own published, including three guest posts, two on the Plural Space blog at PostColonialNetworks.com and one at BeingCharis.com, and an essay in a special edition of *Minerva Rising*.