

And this week...

I have never lived through a rural blizzard before.

In cities, it snows like crazy, the winds come up, should the electricity fail, your building's backup generator typically powers right up and, by the time you get outside, the snow has already been plowed into dirty frozen drifts by the side of each roadway and zebra crossing, and everywhere you walk is a mess of gritty slush. It is pretty for a moment as you watch it from your window, a pain when you are out in it, but a tiny part of that particular week's daily life. Nature's winter vagaries are an inconvenience to city dwellers.

A country blizzard is a more substantial matter, lovely and terrifying in equal measure and bringing an entire county to a screeching halt. When the wind dies down my garden is beautiful, serene under an ever-thickening blanket of snow, with intricate patterns of ice forming on the leafless branch of every tree and the exterior of every window along with a myriad of icicles hanging from every eave. In quiet, the landscape is peaceful, and I have been admiring it off and on since I woke up. There has been one car on the road since seven this morning and the only sign of life was a poor squirrel scampering to safety, having been dumb enough to venture out in the first place. His tracks were hidden in under five minutes.

Contrary to every other house in my neighborhood, set next to each other in neat little rows, my corner plot house is set at an angle, which means that today's 80 MPH gusts are having a field day toying with us. The noise is terrifying -- with each major gust it sounds as though shingles are being ripped from the wall bearing the brunt of the wind, and as though part of the roof is about to be torn away. When the wind blows the snow looks as though it is falling horizontally rather than vertically and occasionally as though it is snowing in every direction at once. The mysterious cracking and thunk-ing that the house generates during

all of this, are making the cats very unhappy. I am not so happy myself; truth be told.

Due to the great resignation, though a backup generator has been purchased, there is no one to install it until March 16th, not very helpful in getting me through this particular winter temper tantrum of Mother Nature's. So far, we lost power for about twenty minutes this morning and have had (yes, I counted them) twenty four micro-cuts in the five hours since then. What is a micro cut, you might well ask? It is when the power cuts off and immediately comes back on leaving you to constantly reset the clocks and listen to all of your appliances power back up including the modem, which usually manages to restore internet service just as the power cuts off again. I have given up on the clocks for the duration and have already grown quite annoyed at the cheerful noise the printer makes each time it comes back to life.

I have made myself the promise that, should the power go for good, I will deep clean the kitchen to keep myself both occupied and warm from exertion. Also, since I have a gas stove that will remain unaffected by circumstance even if I have to cook by candlelight, a hearty stew of chorizo and soldier beans is on the hob now making the house smell delicious and should get me through the worst of it. I hope that those of you going through this as well are equally lucky, safe and warm until this mess is over.

Before all snowy hell broke loose, this is what I cooked this week that made it to the blog:

[Stone Soup](#)

[Mushrooms au Poivre with Pearl Barley Pilaf](#)

[Spice Crusted Tuna](#)

[Flavors of Banh Mi Pork Chop](#)

[Broccoli with Fish Sauce](#)

[Shrimp with Kaffir Lime Leaf-Ginger Chili Sauce](#)

Blizzard Bean Stew