

Not in Kansas Anymore

The crocus and daffodils are poking their heads through the dirt signaling that earth is reawakening from its winter slumber. Spring is traditionally considered the season of renewal and rebirth. Still, I am surprised about how much change surrounds me this spring.



Not just changes in my life, but in the lives of people I know and in the lives of people I have never met. The swirl seems deeper and more fraught with emotion than in recent years. While some of the changes are eagerly pursued and some begrudgingly tolerated, there are others we try to resist.

One of the changes in my life was moving my son and his belongings from Missouri back to Wisconsin, then bringing my son back to Kansas City to head off for boot camp. With two trips in two weeks between Wisconsin and Kansas City to help effect the change my son has eagerly pursued, I was frazzled from stuffing too much to do in too little time. I realized during one of the drives that it was already March, soon summer would be here, and then summer would all too quickly slip into autumn.

In the midst of all the change, the worry, and the fret, the days were slipping by. Suddenly I feel like I needed to stretch my arms wide and grasp hold of time, of life—including all the change that is around me. (Don't worry, I kept both hands on the steering wheel. I was driving after all.) I was reminded of the Japanese term "ichigo ichie." As I understand it, the phrase refers to the idea of every moment being a unique occurrence in time and that we should treasure each occurrence.

Life becomes more meaningful when you realize the simple fact that you'll never get the same moment twice. --Anonymous

Too much time is spent “just getting through” the moment, the day, the situation. And life is tough, sometimes too raw and brutal for words. But each moment is a gift that I don’t want to take for granted. I want to hold on and be in that instance. Then release it to be in the next.

So, we’re not in Kansas anymore. In a sense, we never were. Every day, every experience is unique. Whatever changes you are experiencing, whatever swirl you are in, don’t wish away the time. Take a moment to recognize the uniqueness of the moment. Remember to “be.”

Frosty Mornings

During one of those trips to Kansas City, I headed out for an early morning walk before another long day of driving. Passing my car in the lot, the fine layer of frost brought a broad smile on my face. I just revised the scene in my novel where I describe vehicles blanketed with frost, the result of the overnight dip in temperatures after a warm Fall day. This was the same situation--just in Spring.

In writing the novel, I often weave in small details like this to enhance the setting and firmly establish imaginary Fox Springs in the very real southeastern Wisconsin. Most Wisconsinites have scraped frost and brushed snow off a car at some point.

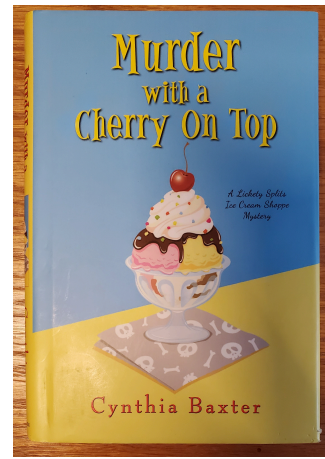
Lucky for me, by the time I returned from my walk the sun had melted the frost of the windows. Of course, as a prepared Wisconsinite, there was an ice scraper and a snow brush in my car. Perhaps those two items will play a role in a future novel.



Book Review

Murder with a Cherry on Top by Cynthia Baxter

No matter if the weather is cold and dreary (like it is today while I am writing this) or sweltering warm, you're going to love this debut cozy mystery featuring an ice cream shop. After 15 years away, Kate McKay returns home to Wolfert's Roost to help her ailing grandmother and launch her own business, Lickety Splits Ice Cream Shoppe, which is unfortunately across the street from



a bakery owned by none other than Ashley Winthrop, her high school nemesis.

Not long after Kate opens her ice cream shop, she gets into an all-too-public argument with Ashley. When Ashley is found stabbed to death in her bakery, it's no surprise that Kate is suspect number one. Aiding Kate's release from jail is her former high school heart throb Jake Pratt, who left town on prom night without saying a word.

Can Ashley navigate the ghosts of high school while clearing her name? Tag along for the fun in this easy read. It's a sweet treat.



The article I mentioned in my previous newsletter has been accepted for publication. I will share more details in my next newsletter.



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