



Coast Range Chronicles 34: “Hard Weather”

by

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January rain pounds on the roof. Wind howls and redwood branches scrape against the house. We sit beside the blazing fire, warm and toasty. But we want a taste of the weather.

There is nothing like hard weather.

We slide into rain gear and step outside. The drops are fat, heavy, and sideways. The wind is shifty and electric. Branches snap from trees and drop to the ground. Widow-makers. This trek may be unwise but we push ahead.

We scramble up a slick and muddy trail. As the pitch increases we slip several times. Soon we're soaking wet and covered with mud.

This is the strongest storm of the winter, a singular event, roaring across the Pacific in a tight comma-shaped spiral laden with moisture.

And headed straight for us.

Water courses down the trail. A falling branch nearly decapitates us. We shrug it off and keep hiking.

We reach a sandstone outcrop. The forest below is shrouded in mist. Rain and wind envelope us.

In the hard weather is something unfiltered. A higher power. There is malevolence to it. The havoc it wreaks is random and unfair. But we think benevolence lurks beneath it, a stronger force not explained by chemistry or physics. It is not something to be understood. It is something best tasted.

So we do.

After an hour, we've had enough tasting. We're wet and cold. We hike back to the house, change into dry clothes, and throw fresh logs onto the fire.

We open beers, lounge beside the blaze, and listen to wood crackle and rain pound fierce and beautiful as the front passes over us.

We're content.