



The last snow of winter is always somewhat of an enigma. It marks in the mind the final transition between winter and the full flush of spring. The question posed with each late-season snowfall is whether this snow really is the last. Sometimes the last snowfall comes early. Spring sneaks upon the world unheralded. It is disappointing that the milestone of the last snowfall may have passed unnoticed. An uneasy, empty feeling, generally unrecognized, of something missing accompanies the passage into spring. Other years, the last snow comes after the spring bloom of flowers and leaves. Bright splashes of color stick up through the covering of snow, proof of the warm and sunny days tantalizing us before the fall.

The last snow of winter fell here two nights ago. A gray and drizzly day led into a cooler night. Flakes and faint flurries of snow began to fall around midnight. After an hour of snowfall I drove home passing country fields on a narrow winding road. The green of the grass could still be seen through the light mantle of snow – a curious mint color.

The next morning found an inch or two of snow had fallen covering the world in purest white. I took a walk with my camera into the whiteness lying beneath a gray sky. I want to describe the scene as silent, because that is the feeling it engendered, but in truth it wasn't silent. There were sounds of my footsteps in the snow. Little birds were chirping and playing in the snow. Perhaps a feeling of stillness would be a better description.

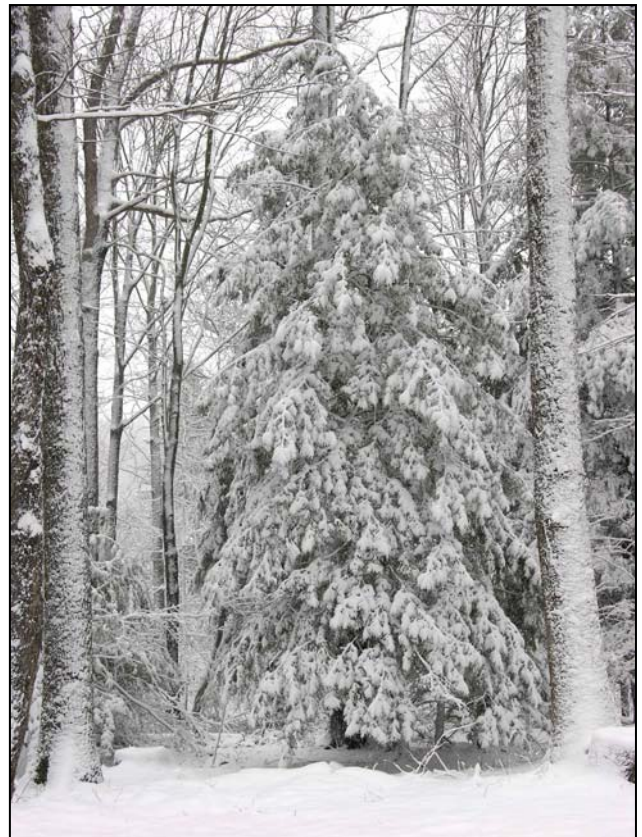
The snow was a light powder. Even the tiniest branches had narrow ridges of snow precariously

THE LAST SNOW OF WINTER

A Photographic Essay By

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perched atop them. Hemlock branches sagged with the weight of snow. Here and there brushes of green pine needles poked through balls of snow and laurel leaves covered by snow added a touch of color to the scene. This hint of color only seemed to enhance the monochromatic clarity of the surroundings – white snow – black branches.



All photographs by Ed Frank.



It was an amazing moment. The covering of whiteness painted across the forest, the texture and form of tree branches and bark etched in black, the stillness, the delicate snow ridges perched on every surface. It is an ephemeral moment as well. A bit of wind, a touch of sun, and the snow will fall from its precarious perch. The melting will begin...but for that one moment.

Was this the last snow of the season? I honestly don't know. I do know that in this one snowfall I experienced the transition from one season to the next, so on a personal level this was the last snow of winter.

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