

“And another thing is that...”

- By Lee Russell, 22/8/15

The welcome warmth of the Sun is a perfect manifestation of the duality of Life as an Englishman.

I remember long summer days spent at the beach with friends, daring each other to increasingly exhilarating feats of courage while we rode a rubber dinghy in sharp waves beside the harbour wall. Invariably we were tipped out and dragged by the thrust of water across a bed of broken shells that ground salt into scratched flesh. But the Sun dried us quickly and the pain was soon forgotten in time for the next attempt to ride the writhing water all the way in.

Our friend, the Sun, is always there to bathe long walks in relaxing happiness, dulling minds tired of work with the torpidity of holiday heat. It forces us to slow down and enjoy conversations that ramble from one coffee-shop refuge to the next. When we've had fun together throughout the day, the setting Sun colours our world in romantic pinks, building the links that bind us together.

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Always too hot or too cold, the Sun seems unable to make me feel comfortable. I curse its absence and hide from its exuberance.

The return of sunny days carries its own melancholy with the absolute knowledge that they cannot last and cold, dark days will be returning. Old bones remember the shivers of the winter past and the Sun carries its promise of more shivering in the winter to come.

Even as I fret about staying warm I complain about the Sun being too hot. Unused to working in climate-changed, Mediterranean heat, I suffer as its rays silently burn into my pale English flesh, giving one more pain to complain about. And I will be complaining when the heat of the night has robbed me of sleep again, just as I moaned in the winter when I wished it was warmer.

If only we all had a control to dial the Sun to our preferred temperature, but how would we all agree on that?