

# The Long and the Short of It

Category: Longing

written by R. Lynn Barnett | February 5, 2026

I long for the days when I didn't need to worry about food recalls. I barely recall the time when I wasn't concerned about them, but I now look for recalls right after my morning coffee. (Maybe I should look before.)

I long for the days when the phone rang and I'd think, "Who's calling to say hello?" rather than, "Who's calling to tell me who's in the hospital?"

I long for the days when people would call and ask, "How are you?" in a light-hearted way, rather than with the tinge of gravity they use now, since my husband's cancer diagnosis of last year.

I long for the days when I would pick up the phone and instinctively answer it, even if I didn't recognize the number, rather than letting it go to voicemail—due to so many spam and scam calls. It seems so phony (phone-y?) but necessary these days.

I long for the days when a "positive test" meant a positive pregnancy test, not a positive flu or COVID test.

I long for the days when "pet" meant a dog or cat, not my husband's latest PET scan.

I long for the simplicity of *I Love Lucy*, when problems were neatly and completely resolved in 30 minutes.

I long for a day when I can walk outside—even with long sleeves, a wide-brimmed hat, and sunscreen—without thinking, in the back of my mind, about a skin cancer recurrence.

I long for a day when people count their blessings and not their carbs.

And that's the long and the short of it.

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