

August More Voices: Heat

Category: Heat

written by Paul Gross | August 1, 2023

Dear *Pulse* readers,

Many years ago, while seeking employment as a musician, I spent part of a summer in Minneapolis, a town I associated with cold winters but which, it turned out, also endured hot summers. My quarters had no air conditioning and I was sweltering, so I purchased a fan, which didn't help much. For some reason, my place just wouldn't cool off, even at night, and there were moments when I felt I might suffocate from the heat.

It took me a few days to discover that my residence had storm windows which were shut tight. Until I opened them, I'd been living in a broiler oven.

The heat also reminds me of my first apartment in New York, a tenement top-floor walk-up with a tub in the kitchen. The summer sun baked the roof and toasted my shabby dwelling, and the stifling heat kept me damp with sweat. It didn't help that I spent the summer nursing a crush on a co-worker who didn't think I had romantic potential—so my misery, internal and external, was complete.

My current home is not air conditioned, and my life partner is tolerant of my thriftiness and aversion to gadgetry, so in the summer we rely on fans and a shower before bed. The summer heat in New York usually gets intolerable for about fifteen days—and when we're lucky, we're away and miss a part of that spell. So we manage, although with the worsening climate crisis, it may be matter of time before we give in to air conditioning so that we can sleep, knowing full well that we're simultaneously contributing to the problem of climate change.

For quite a while, the scientific community has been issuing regular alarms about our climate. Now that there are wildfires, deadly storms and record heat waves to exclaim about, it seems as if the evening news is finally catching on. Nothing brings the message home like Phoenix, Arizona's recent record thirty-one straight days of temperatures over one hundred ten degrees.

That summer in Minneapolis, the temperature never got up to a hundred, nor did it during my summer of unrequited love in New York. I can't imagine a daily temperature of one hundred ten degrees.

There were twenty-five known heat-related deaths in Maricopa County, home to Phoenix, during the first three weeks of July, and Maricopa County reported 425 heat-related deaths last year.

So heat isn't just uncomfortable and scary, it's also lethal.

Is this summer's heat impacting you, your physical or mental health—or your level of worry about climate change? Tell us about it. This month's *More Voices* theme is [Heat](#).

Share your story using this [More Voices Submission Form](#). For more details, visit [More Voices FAQs](#). And have a look at last month's theme, [Pills](#).

Remember, your health-related story should be 40-400 words. And no poetry, please.

We look forward to hearing from you!

With warm regards,

Paul Gross
Editor