

## in Maine

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I wish I'd thought to bring my camera this trip because though it is gray and bleak here today in rural Maine, (and snow still in the woods in places) daffodils are bursting forth and blooming; the yellow is especially vibrant in this colorless weather. Mt. Washington is still snow-covered and cruel looking in the distance. A friend of mine died on Mt. Washington, in 1994, when he was hiking, and caught by, and unprepared for, bad weather. It has happened often, sadly, on that mountain. Yet it is breathtaking in its stark, hard beauty.

I have a very old (1940) home movie...now transferred to videotape.... of me on the beach in Honolulu, playing with my grandmother who is visiting from Wisconsin. Idyllic scene. Water lapping gently. Cloudless sky. Toddler laughing, holding her hat in the breeze. Soft sand. Smiling grandmother.

And behind them, on the horizon, moving slowly, inexorably, is the outline of the USS Arizona. It carried 1200 young men. They all died at Pearl Harbor a few months later.

What would the world be without such contrast? Or literature? What would we write about, or read about, if there were no tragedy against which to measure joy?

Would we gasp at the sight of daffodils, if we had not come through a winter?

Tags: Untagged