



Seth Kinter, one of six winners of Connecticut Sea Grant's diverse youth scholarship. Photo: Judy Benson.

Seth Kinter is an English major at the University of Connecticut, focusing on the intricacies of writing and its connection to real-world experiences. Growing up by the water, he spent many summers at the beach with his family and in his free time, when he's not lost in a book, Seth enjoys hiking, spending time with friends, or simply relaxing at home. One day, he hopes to travel the world and explore the breathtaking natural wonders the planet has to offer.

Looking back on a New England boyhood as climate change disrupts the seasons

By Seth Kinter

I grew up in a little trailer tucked away in a forest with a small stream at the dead end of my road in southeastern Connecticut, thinking of myself as a typical New England boy.

Spring would come, marking the beginnings of growth and life. The gray, rainy Northeastern days kept me inside, staring out my window, watching the rain slide down the glass. I would wait for the sun to peek out from the clouds, drying everything away so I could play on the swing in my little backyard.

The world outside transformed into a lush green paradise. The air filled with the scent of blooming flowers and the sounds of chirping birds. I remember the joy of finding the first crocus peeking through the last remnants of snow, a vibrant purple promise of warmer days ahead. Now in



my early 20s, as the effects of climate change have become more pronounced, I am nostalgic for the way the dramatic contrasts in the seasons defined my youth.

When summer rolled around, my hair turned blonder, always scrunchy from the salty beach waters. At Eastern Point Beach in Groton, my mother would read her book, sitting on a flowered towel overlooking the expansive waters beyond, always keeping an eye on me as I swam waist-deep in Long Island Sound. Summers were filled with sunscreen, running along sandy and sometimes rocky beaches and enjoying nature.

The days were long and lazy, punctuated by the sound of seagulls and the laughter of other kids. I can still feel the warm sand between my toes and the cool relief of the ocean waves. We would wrap up

the beach day with the sun setting in a blaze of orange and pink behind us. In fall, I watched as the trees turned from vibrant greens to regal golds and oranges. Colder days were expected, a natural part of the cycle of life. There was comfort in knowing the world followed a pattern, a predictable rhythm that guided our lives. The air would grow crisp, and the sound of leaves crunching underfoot became the soundtrack of our days. My family and I would rake piles of leaves just to jump into them, the smell of earth and foliage filling our senses. The evenings were spent by an outside campfire, roasting marshmallows and sipping hot cider, and the warmth of the flames was a cozy contrast to the chill outside.

Then winter came, and for a few days, snow would coat the once-green lawns. School would be canceled, and my days were filled with building snowmen with



Eastern Point Beach, a Groton City park, seen in the summer of 2024, holds many fond memories for Seth Kinter. Photo: Judy Benson

funny faces, igloos that never had a roof because that was far too complex for me, and making very poor-looking snow angels. The chill in the air and the crunch of snow underfoot were the hallmarks of my New England winter. We would bundle up in layers, our breath visible in the frosty air as we sledded down hills and had snowball fights, our cheeks rosy and our noses cold.

The nights were quiet.

The world was hushed by a blanket of snow.

The moonlight cast a magical glow over the landscape.

The changing of seasons was like the turning of pages in a beloved book, each chapter bringing its own adventures and wonders. Each season held its own unique charm, its own set of rituals and traditions that marked the passage of time. There was a deep, abiding comfort in the cyclical nature of it all, a reassurance that no matter what else changed, the seasons would come and go in their familiar rhythm.

Today, we still have the four seasons, but I think we have all noticed the differences are more muted. Patterns have been scrambled.

This past winter really highlighted this change. As fall faded into winter, I was

greeted with an eerie, unsettling warmth. Sixty-degree days warmed the air and waters around me, bringing the smells of summer when it should have been cold and crisp.

One day, a snowstorm hit with a ferocity that left me bewildered. More snow followed, burying the world in a thick, silent blanket. Just when I began to adjust, a week of warm weather returned and the snow melted away, only to be interrupted by a sudden, five-minute snow flurry that turned everything white again.

The predictability is seemingly gone. You wake up one day, finding it warmer than normal, and feel a fleeting relief that the cold days of winter are over... in December. But that relief is tainted by an undercurrent of dread. The warmer weather, though pleasant on the skin, feels like a harbinger of something deeply wrong. It's as if nature itself has become unmoored, lost in a disorienting cycle that defies the natural order.

A creeping sense of doom settles in.

Is the world no longer following its ancient patterns?

This warm winter wasn't just a fluke. Snow has become less common over the years, a trend corroborated by NBC Connecticut in their article "See how the snowfall this season compares to the last 25 years," published on March 19, 2024.

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"The 2023-24 season had the 3rd lowest total in the last 25 years," the article states. "The 24-inch total is well below the 25-year median of 45.5 inches," a figure attributed to the National Weather Service.

If we rejoice in these moments of warmth, we accept this uncanny new normal that climate change is causing. I hope these recollections of my childhood will ignite memories that many others also hold dear and spur us to action.

In a few years, I and my fellow young adults may become parents. The thought that our children may not be able to have these same memories of distinct seasons is deeply saddening.

Will our children build those beloved igloos, running into the house to show us their creations? Will they sit by the television early in the morning as snow coats the world, waiting for their school to pop up on the news station, signaling a snow day?

These questions hang in the balance, and their answers rely on our awareness of our own impact on the environment. The time to act is now before these cherished moments become nothing more than distant memories, impossible to recreate.



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Opportunities for sledding and other snow activities in Connecticut are becoming rare with climate change.
Photo: Connecticut Sea Grant