

Highway 1

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It's been "raining"—SoCal style—since Thursday. Five days of light drizzle punctuated by the momentary down-pour and interrupted by lengthy periods of sunshine bursting through dark skies and fluffy cumulus clouds. Just enough wet to give the gardener an excuse to cancel and mercifully bring construction next door to a temporary halt.

But that's not how it was. For nearly five weeks, we've had glorious (simply spectacular!) weather: Blue, blue skies with nary a cloud and summer-like warm days; the kind of weather that makes staying on hold worthwhile. I stare out my window upon water droplets glistening on fresh-cut green lawns, budding roses and blossoming orchids beneath awakening jacaranda and towering palm trees, as I patiently listen to muzac knowing that when the customer service representative finally answers, he'll ask where I'm calling from. That'll be my cue to ask where he's located [Atlanta, Detroit, Minnesota, Calcutta?] and then, "How's the weather there?" With my computer or billing or shipping problem yet unresolved, I'll listen as the agent describes the cold and the gloom that surrounds him and I'll wait for him to ask, "And how's the weather where you are?"

It's fantastic! And it's 80 degrees! I'm heading for the beach later today!

In fact, I did head for the beach as I spent a week touring the coast with my folks along Highway 1. Dad and Heide dug out from under the snow blanketing their driveway in Villach, nestled within the Austrian Alps and headed for Portland, OR to visit my sister in late December. Forced to circle at 20,000 feet because the pilot was not granted permission to land during the raging ice-storm—the worst to hit the Pacific Northwest in 40 years, my parents gratefully headed south two weeks later for a welcome winter respite.

And true to its mythic reputation, Southern California offered spring and fall tied into one, with a good measure of summer sprinkled on top. I bragged shamelessly how "it never rains" and pointed out trees that only just recently turned amber, just as others were sprouting fresh foliage. The Pacific, often a murky green, now appeared almost tropical as the clear azure waters reflected the crystalline skies and never-ending sunshine. Sunsets, comprised of brilliant reds and oranges that cast a purple hue upon the coastal mountains, demanded daily reverence (and oodles of snapshots).

In short, the weather was dazzling and defied description even with superlatives. I tried to lie and claim that it was "always so" in Southern California, but the sun and skies and water were so extraordinarily perfect that even I, a SoCal native, was in such awe that my lie became transparent.

But the weather turned a few days ago. Just in time for me to hunker down for the tax season. Surely, it'll be sunny again by noon?