

Is it June already?

June is here, but it sure doesn't feel like it. Lilacs and sparkler crabs are ripe with color and the trees have found their verdant hues of green, but somehow it doesn't feel like spring has taken hold here yet.

Everyone is glad for the rain, but persistent grey skies are leaving me in an emotional funk. I'm ready for some real sunshine, aren't you?

On yesterday's evening news a woman in Plymouth described how she watched a dark funnel of black clouds touch and then bounce off the ground, barely missing her where she stood. Tornadoes in Minnesota? We left earthquakes in California to come to tornadoes in Minnesota?

When she was asked why she didn't run, she said it was so stunning and so sudden that she didn't think to move, she could only watch it. Well, there you go; the proverbial "deer in the headlights" scenario, which is why, I guess, you see so many of them lying on the side of the road lately. It's so sad.

Here's a thought: "What part of a tornado ripping through your house does house insurance not cover? The wind damage, flooding, or the house being moved off its foundation and blasted into smithereens?"

You have to think about these

Musings of a transplant

Maria Stolz

Howard Lake

mariastolz@ix.netcom.com

things particularly after watching insurance companies' stellar performances dealing with Katrina victims. I think to myself, "These natural 'acts of God' are only going to get worse from here on out, until the world wakes up and realizes that it has a perennial fever and it needs some looking after."

Despite the lack of sunshine or spring per se, I have seen white pelicans, snow geese, trumpeter swans, loons and egrets in waterways or winging over our lakes. I have seen red tanagers, robins and woodpeckers playing on my backyard lawn. I have also seen water fowl saunter across county roads in single line armies with little webbed feet or animals skirting by on all four legs.

One day on his way home from work, my husband was having a high old time gyrating to the sound of music on a long, empty county road.

He was enjoying the sights and smells of country, minding his own business, when all of a sudden the

most gorgeously colored long-tailed pheasant passed across his eyes, brushing the windshield. And not two seconds later another, probably the female, followed behind thwacking into the radio antennae.

What if he had the windows open? He might have had both of them ending up in his lap, and he with a mouth full of feathers. Yuk!

The countryside is alive with feral rabbits, skunks, raccoons, possums, squirrels and chipmunks, which apparently have no fear of mortal man.

One night, while crossing a huge expanse of grass in the backyard with a flashlight in hand, two little field mice ran right across my feet and scared the "you-know-what" out of me.

In all my time living in California, I never in my life came across so many species of birds and animals up close and personal. Just last week, coming home from a cabin trip to Lake Kabekona, two American bald eagles flew overhead, close enough that you could almost touch them. Only in Minnesota.

I'm still waiting on the grocery store for Howard Lake.