A Cold Winter Day

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There was once a time when I went sledding. My memories of it are blurred, and this is probably more than one winter story combined into one. It was a very cold day, and the snow was falling freely. As I climbed up to the top of the steep hill, I wondered if I would rather do anything else. but the answer was no. If I didn’t go sledding, there was no guarantee on my claim to the cup of hot chocolate waiting for me at our dining room table, steaming, and all but calling my name. With each step up the hill, it got steeper, and steeper, and steeper. Finally, after making it to the top of the hill, (and leaving tracks that would last days), I looked and the hill and thought to myself, “I defeated this hill.” Then I climbed on top of my sled, sat on it, and started paddling through the soft snow, waiting for that little jerk that meant that the sled had reached a tipping point. It took a while to get that familiar jerk, but it was mostly downhill from there. Despite that annoying little snow berm at the edge of the road which sent me and my sled through the air, I hoped to set the record for the longest sled run on this hill in my family. And I did. I tried to beat my new record a few times and eventually managed to destroy my sled. It was made of plastic. Fortunately, I had another sled in the garage waiting for me. It was a lot higher quality, and its shape was optimized for maximum performance and lifetime.

After I had decided to go up the hill, I decided to kick steps into the snow for an easier climbing experience. That took me quite a while as the snow was soft and slippery. In the end, however, I had a functional, if not beautiful, staircase. By now the snow had stopped, and clouds hung ominously in the sky. I wondered if the snow would start falling, and it didn’t for a while. After only about five not-very-eventful minutes, the snow was falling at near-record speeds. Then I realized that my stairs would be filled with snow, but I couldn’t do very much. I just kicked them in a bit each time I walked up the hill. And each time I went up the hill, I packed in my path a little bit more. Finally, I managed to beat my record.

I wondered whether it would be worth it to attempt to build an igloo. I had never succeeded in this endeavor before, and never since. Anyway, I decided to attempt it, and it didn’t go well. It turns out that igloo-building requires a bit of physics and math, plus a few special tools. I tripped and didn’t hurt myself, but my half-igloo wasn’t as fortunate as I was. It was already looking like a large pile of bricks at the beginning, but now it looked like… well… a big blob of snow. But could a blob of snow be a snow fort? Maybe. If I could build the right fortifications, they would be the best one I had ever made. It all started with a plastic spritzy-bottle that had originally been filled with glasses cleaner but was now filled with water. I started adding bricks of snow and using the water to turn the bricks into ice. Soon I had the starting point for a fort.

All of a sudden, I heard a loud noise. The noise of my two siblings coming outside. Would they destroy the fort? Would they start a snow battle before the fort was ready? These were the questions that crossed my mind. I decided that it was worth it, but all that time was wasted on these thoughts, because, it turned out that they were not here for snow forts. They were there to sled on our sledding hill. Which was good for my fortress.

After a while, and nothing less than seven cave-ins, I had something I was sort of proud of. I started to dig down, and soon it was deep enough for me to hide from high-speed frozen projectiles (otherwise known as snowballs). Now I was proud of my roofless structure, so I went inside. But that was not the end of it; before I went home, I sprinkled water on everything so that when it froze everything would solidify. I realized then that it was already evening and that my cup of hot chocolate was cold. Fortunately, my mom reheated it on the stove. It had small marshmallows floating around it, and it swirled in the glass. The next morning, I went to check on my fort, and it glistened and sparkled. And then came a flying snowball.