

SNOW FORTS

Kids build snow forts without really knowing anything about ballistics or how to defend themselves against surprise attacks. The snowballs hit the sides of the forts and gradually wear them away until they cave in. Rather than stop the fight, they hurl their frosty missiles even harder, with no real protection except for the crumbled piles of snow at their feet. Noses are bloodied, cheeks start to puff. When the forts were still standing, there was a certain code of honor at work. Now it's getting ugly to watch.

MOTH BALLS

The moth balls in my grandmother's closet have smelled the same for forty years. There's nothing in the closet anymore. That's why the scent is so strong. I can't believe moths were ever a problem in here, or that they'd ever come back. By now every moth in the world must know about her moth balls. That's why the smart ones have tried to infiltrate the homes of younger people. Younger people don't buy moth balls. They don't keep their wardrobes longer than a few months. There's undoubtedly a moth ball association that meets twice a year to discuss the problem of moth balls, and how to sell more. I'd love to know their view on all this.

SPONGE BATHS

If minimums were less, I could complain more, but they're just enough, so I can't really say anything. For four days I've been getting sponge baths from a nurse who believes in saving water. Technically I'm clean, but I still feel dirty, even after she sponges under my arms. You have to do more than sponge. She refuses to press, to do more than dab at patches of old iodine. I feel pretty good overall, but they won't let me take my own bath because they're afraid I'll get dizzy and crack my head open on the side of the tub. Sue the hospital. She touches the pale blue sponge to my forehead and smiles as imperceptibly as a person can smile, and still have it qualify as a smile. The bare minimum. Sick or well, all my life, the bare minimum.