Baby, it’s Cold Outside! Part Two.

- Hypothermia is a particular problem at temperatures around freezing (32°F) with wind and rain: cold temperature, windchill, and wetchill combined. This is called hypothermia weather, because so many underestimate it. Even in the summer, sudden storms with the combination of wind and rain may cause hypothermia at temperatures as warm as 60°F.
- In bad weather, proper clothing is your life-support system.
- Waterproof raingear protects you (somewhat) from wetchill.
- But even in truly waterproof raingear you will get wet. We all perspire, and clothes get wet from condensation.
- Most clothing, when it’s wet, conducts heat like water. How many times faster does water conduct heat than dry air? 240x! Therefore your clothes must be warm when wet!
- And, as nice as down parkas may be, they are flat and cold when wet (even so-called “waterproof down); and cotton clothes (such as blue jeans and flannel shirts) are even worse; not only are they useless as insulation when wet, but they wick water; only wool and some synthetics (Capilene, etc.) retain some warmth when wet.
- So, when going out, remember the Three W’s.
- We suggest that you always carry with you two large plastic leaf bags. These are light, cheap, and provide quick and simple protection against wind and rain. Just stick them in your pocket.
- With what you have learned here, and with some simple and inexpensive clothing, you can be comfortable even in hypothermia weather.