

Winter Riding

By Rachel Howland #16981

I could not resist riding today. It was Valentine's Day and I needed to do everything I could think of that involved LOVE. So I rode. It was a beautiful, sunny 52-degree day. I put the space heater up to my bike to get it warm, cozy, and cooperative. I got all my long underwear and my chaps on and headed out. The first 10 minutes were wonderful. The cool air was relieving the sweat I had worked up putting on my leathers and getting my bike out of the driveway. Driving on the city streets was fine. All was great in my little world. I intended on taking one of my usual routes out of town and onto the back roads.

I got out of the city limits, then, it hit me...the wind! It came blowing across a barren pasture nearly knocking me off my bike. I battled the wind; looking like a biker who had had too many beers. I was swaying in the wind and thinking; I am not loving this. This sucks! I stayed on course, heading towards a small town. I wanted to skip going back in the direction of the open fields. I thought of my options. I would circle back to my house. This meant going by a small lake. There would be trees and houses blocking some of the wind. The wind now was colder, but not as brutal in force. Once I made it past the lake, I would just catch the big, unstoppable gusts. My face was frozen in a look of strong concentration and dread. I had snot-icicles hanging out of my nose and I imagine some flew off. I always think of the movie *Dumb and Dumber* when that happens. At stop lights, people stared at me with the usual look of wonder and curiosity...however, it was hard to smile with frozen boogers on my face. I made it home, got warm and tried to relax my muscles after the wind battle. It wouldn't have been bad if the wind had not been a factor. Living in town, it is difficult to judge what the wind will be doing further down the road. Next time I get the desire to ride in the winter, I will investigate the weather conditions a little more thoroughly. Plus choose my route a little more wisely.