

Bookends

letter written to family 12 June 2016

The mountains are covered from top to toe in clouds – just as they were on the day we arrived. Seems an appropriate bookend for the vacation. It is not even light enough to go look for animals at Oxbow. So, on to our favorite Plan B: breakfast in town. We pass Mr. Fox with his mouth full of squirrel at the stop sign.

The line at the Bunnery is already out the door. Well gee, we'll just have to have breakfast at the little French Cafe across the square. Darn the luck! The tables are Parisian-tiny and packed, the pastries taste like Paris, it would be easy to picture yourself in Paris when you are here. We have not had a bad meal in Jackson!

Heading back to the car we walk along Dave's favorite block in Jackson – Brandee from Mangelsen's gallery calls out. We stop and chat. We hear about her vacation in Idaho and having to learn back flips on a trampoline – and then stick the landing 12 times in a row before they would pass her. She was learning aerial tricks for skiing (at 41 – good for her!!) She moved here after college, 18 years ago, and says at least two or three times a week she is forcefully struck by how beautiful the area is and how lucky she is to be here. She very generously shared her take on the people of Jackson Hole, their passions, the community and camaraderie of folks living here. She gave us a lot to think about – the funniest being that folks here care very little about what your house looks like – “Poverty With A View” is normal here.

Getting in the car we decide, since the skies are still so gray and hold the promise of rain, we'll go see what the towns just over the border in Idaho are like. So we go up and over the 8200 foot pass again and drive through Victor, Driggs, and Alta. We follow a switchback road up to the Big Targhee ski

resort and are treated to an amazing view of a wide valley. The back side of the Tetons are as hidden by the clouds as the front side. The spread-across-the-valley towns are a sharp contrast to the compact core of Jackson.

We are back at the cabin at 3pm and Dave can't sit still. He decides to bring his rain gear and hike Taggart and Bradley lakes again. From here, I see the clouds come down again, it drizzles, and then the clouds break, the temperature shoots up at least ten degrees. I move outside to write. You already know the chipmunk ran over my foot. The squirrels are foraging around the picnic table. A bluebird was beating up a large insect by smacking it back and forth on the table top before carrying it off to eat. The robin lost another egg. And the neighbor's three legged cat came over and climbed up on the deck with me. Then his owner, Lisa, whom I had not yet met came to retrieve him. The fox in the area has her concerned for the cat's safety. Yelling and throwing pebbles at the fox does not scare him off apparently – so kitty gets scooped up and carried home.







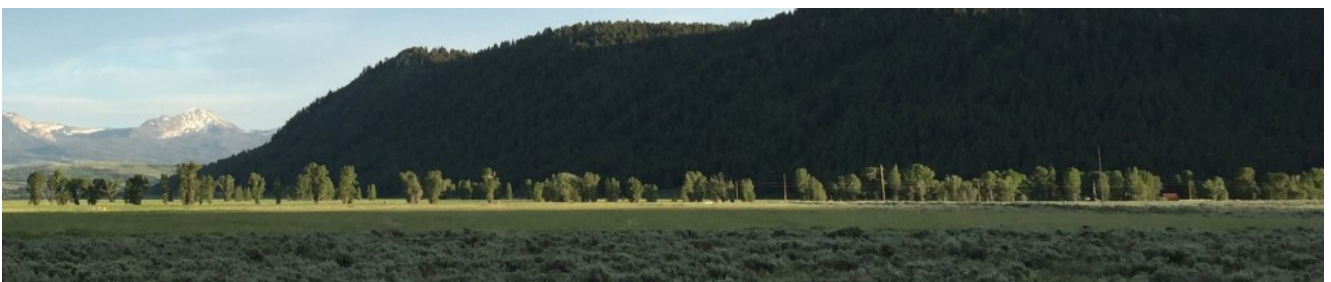
Before she left we talked a little bit about the bison and how destructive they are. They didn't eat her potted plants, but they would rip them out and toss them, or shove benches around. Once they broke the deck just by getting up on it. She still loves to see them, just not quiiiiite so close.

The thermometer says 74 but it feels a lot hotter out here! It's 6:30, Dave's hike is done and he is taking the long road home. Time to find the hard cider!

Dave rolled in at 7:30. While I made dinner he took some photos of the bison herd that has reappeared and is now camped all around a barn behind us, lit up by the setting sun.



The sky to the west is clear and tempts me to stay up and set up the telescope to see if I can see the Milky Way. In the east is the dull gray of low clouds. Unfortunately, this fantasy month comes to an end for Dave as he must return for business in DC tomorrow. That means an early flight and short night. And dreaded packing. I shall be at loose ends without my partner in crime tomorrow!



cotton wood trees dramatically lit against Black Butte