

## SEATTLE – REFLECTIONS

Once again, we were treated to a beautiful travel interlude in Seattle. While busy – dentist appointments, haircuts, tax preparation, retainer repairs, replacing lost luggage and packing – an afternoon walk on the beach reminded me that we live in a magnificent place. Spring-like weather, with lots of sun, crocuses and daffodils, added to that sentiment. As did connecting with neighbors and friends. I feel incredibly lucky to be on this adventure, and incredibly fortunate to live the life I live at home.





We had a fun dinner with McKenna (friend, house sitter, nanny, . . .) at Jak's, a favorite West Seattle haunt. In addition to catching up, we talked about Germany, where she will join us for two weeks in April. It is so nice to know our house is in good hands while we're gone, and even nicer to know she will be adventuring with us after so many years (getting close to a decade!)



I also connected briefly with my professional life, meeting a pro bono client at the Tukwila immigration office to do the biometrics for her green card application and having a thought-provoking phone conversation with friend and colleague Erica about mediation. I like what I do! It is nice not to be involved with all of the day-to-day details for a while, but I welcome the opportunity to dive back in when the time comes. In the meantime, I'm very happy to be included on emails and keep abreast of what's happening.

The glow of home ended for a time the next day, when it took me 45 minutes to drive to the South end of downtown! Fearing that this is the new normal with the highway 99 tunnel (it was my first time driving to Seattle since the tunnel opened), I was considering where I might want to live next. Abandoning the car, I walked 1.5 miles to my appointment. Apparently, it was the first day of ComiCon, as evidence by all of the costumed people walking around the city. Such a relief that this is not a normal commute! Walking back to the car at a more leisurely pace the glow returned. Downtown Seattle is an interesting and invigorating place to be, as long as I'm not driving.

The "cloud" returned when I got home and realized I had cracked my retainer. The orthodontist's office kindly said they would replace it, but that meant driving back to Seattle! Fortunately, ComiCon must have been well underway. The whole trip took only 90 minutes this time, I found a new parking lot and I got to drive in the new tunnel twice. My opinion: it is a good addition to the city, although it might have been better to make it three lanes and head

off the future overcrowding. I was not in it at rush hour, so I don't know if it is already overcrowded. For now, it is free. Usage may change the tolls go into effect.

We initially said that the next phase of our trip would be done with only medium-sized backpacks, celebrating and learning the pleasures of traveling light for seven weeks. Second thoughts arose as we realized some of the places that we're going will be cold and require more gear. In the end, we went back to the normal configuration of roller bags and small backpacks. And even that was a challenge. It took many attempts, and we each returned many items to the closet, before everything fit. At a few points Max asked if we just use the large duffel bags from our ski travel. Eventually he persevered, giving only a few things to the rest of us to carry. We'll see if he appreciates having less as we go along. I know that I will.

The next phase of our travels is something I am really looking forward to. Vietnam and India have been on my list of places to visit for a LONG time, and I am very interested in seeing Seoul Singapore and Angkor Wat. Steve feels the same way; Max is not so sure. It is a stretch for him in many ways and has created much nervousness on his part. We have planned accordingly and believe it will be an amazing learning and growth experience for him. Who knows, he may even decide to make his blog public!