

May 18 and 19, 2007

West Virginia 2007

Early morning gently pulls the darkness from rain-washed Lynchburg streets as we point the little red Cavalier westward. Jim and I both need a day away from the cares of our world and two days in West Virginia seem like a wonderful prospect. Within minutes the black tree silhouettes turn to green and the earth is ready for a new day. It is early enough in spring that the weeds have not yet conquered roadsides and pastures so the countryside still looks freshly combed and groomed. Oh, such a beautiful world we live in!

Heavily loaded trucks groan up the hills as commuter traffic whizzes around them. The mountains are wearing their cloud-camouflage but we still know they are out there standing guard. Clumps of ivory irises share beauty rights with brambles of pink and red roses. Newly-up gardens promise good eating ahead. Blackberry bushes are still blooming out in the woods so I understand why it is so cool this morning. Kelly Sanden always called these late spring cool spells "Blackberry Winter". I sure do miss Kelly. He was a great brother-in-law. Yellow honeysuckle and crisp white daisies playfully climb the hillsides along our way.

We have often traveled these roads together in the past five and a half years but each trip is unique, revealing new beauty and interesting sights. Purple and white Dame's Sweet Rockets assert squatters-rights in the lawn of an abandoned farmyard. Near Eagle Rock we pass a bottom-land farm and can row the emerging corn crop. I wonder how the crops are faring in my native Northern Illinois. We plan to see them in three weeks. Visiting there is great but coming home is even better.

Along the tracks in Covington the dirt is graded smooth. This is the spot where a grain train derailed two months ago. Volunteer corn has a perfect medium for growth and the city fathers here should plan for a bumper crop. Today's rain is just the thing for all that corn.

A rainbow stretches across the sky ahead of us near the West Virginia state line. This is the first early morning rainbow I have ever seen; then, in a flash, it is gone.

As usual, Moss Run, my second favorite place in all the world (Our home takes top billing.), works its magic on us as we sit beside the tracks and let the peace of this place seep into our very beings. Songbirds chirp a “Good Morning!” to us as they flit overhead.

You know full well that Jim has his camera on duty as a train passes. Forty-five minutes later Jim is still busy with his camera, this time at Alleghany. White pigeons coo their approval as another coal train rumbles by.

We eat our lunch at White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, and watch several trains pass by as we wait for the two-hour-late eastbound Amtrak. A young woman leaves, on her way to Atlanta, but her little boy stays behind with his great grandma. This is not a good plan in his book and he sobs as he and Great Grandma drive away from the station.

After a welcome warm supper at the Bob Evans Restaurant, we settle in at our motel in Lewisburg. It is still raining.

Saturday morning dawns bright and clear and we scrape a thick layer of ice from our windshield, then head out into pea-soup fog. Soon the fog is history.

We spend almost three hours soaking up more peace at Moss Run as hawks play tag on thermals. Dainty yellow and pink wildflowers wink at us among the rocks and all is well in our world. Too soon it is time to leave --- well, maybe not. We are hungry and there is a definite lack of greasy spoon establishments at Moss Run. Wendy’s, here we come!

Sun-washed meadows showcase white daisies as we head back to Lynchburg. Fresh-mowed hay smells so good and reminds me of my childhood as bright yellow buttercups and black cattle decorate the lush green pastures. I believe the sun is working overtime today to make up for its disappointing performance yesterday. Red poppies, blue bachelors’ buttons, and white daisies lend a brilliant splash of color to portions of the center median near Roanoke. I store these sights in my memory bank so I can retrieve them on some future dreary day.

Soon the best place on earth appears in view, our own home. It has been a good trip but home is still best. I am so blessed!

