

## High on a hill it calls to me...

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This is the view from the home of friends in San Francisco with whom I have just spent the past few days. So I have been playing hookey, not working, though now that I'm back, it is catch-up time; 300+ emails were waiting for me on the website.

I go there at least once a year to see these same friends. The wife is an artist, and one time when I was visiting I took her to meet Ruth Heller, extraordinary illustrator who lived there, and who showed us through her studio before we went out to lunch together. We had all three hoped for more such get-togethers but Ruth died, sadly, before we could make that happen.

I do love SF. The weather is so much milder—I returned late Friday night to fresh snow in Boston, with more flurries today; and they are predicting below zero temperature in the morning—but I doubt if I could ever leave New England, especially with grandchildren here. And so many good friends.

Week after next I will go up to Maine, to the farm, and hole up for a little while to get some work done without distractions. My friend Kay, on sabbatical from a university teaching job and working on a book, will come with me, and we will set ourselves up in two different offices in the house and plug away.

Alfie stayed at a new kennel while we were gone. This one sends him home with a little report card that comments on his eating, sleeping, and playing habits while in residence. It deemed him...yes, they really used this phrase..a "party animal." I'm going to take that to mean what it used to say on my children's kindergarten report cards: "Plays nicely with others."

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