

## East to West to East

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I am just back from a brief visit to the West Coast, starting early Friday morning on a Delta flight at 7 AM which began with the announcement, "Sorry, folks, they forgot to load water onto the plane and so there will be no coffee" ... shortly thereafter followed by, "Sorry folks, but the video doesn't work so there will be no movie" Luckily I had a book to read and wouldn't have watched the movie anyway, but I DID miss the coffee!

That was the flight to Salt Lake City. Leaving SLC, headed to Bellingham, Washington, our flight began...or failed to begin...with the announcement, "Sorry, folks,. but we can't take off because we are too heavy." Rather than removing passengers, they removed luggage. Me, I only had carry-on so wasn't affected, but there were those aboard who gnashed their teeth as they saw their bags being taken back to the terminal.

Well, travel has become a pain in the neck, no question; and I'm sorry that we all, myself included, feel compelled to tell our tales of woe, a little like the wedding guest in Coleridge's poem.

Anyway: Bellingham, Washington was the setting (Western Washington University) for a wonderful day-long conference with an enthusiastic audience of more than 500 registrants; four speakers: David Weisner, Candace Fleming, Pat Mora, and me; and a phenomenal cast of organizers, headed by Nancy Johnson. I think the thing I always enjoy most at conferences is the chance to meet and be with colleagues. All of us work alone, as one has to...but then from time to time to schmooze and gossip is a real treat.

Great food, great scenery, great people. And an uneventful trip home. I put on my headphones and listened to a book called "Final Exam: A Surgeon's Reflections on Mortality" by Pauline Chen. The plane movie was working but it was "Night at the Museum." Did I want to watch "A Night at the Museum"? A friend of mine has a lovely descriptive phrase. She says: "I'd rather stick a pencil in my eye."

Next weekend I'll be in Orlando; the weekend after that, San Francisco. No speeches, no book-signings: just visits with good friends.

It's COLD in New England now. You want March to be spring, but it isn't. Here's a picture of our lake in Maine, in March.



Tags: Untagged