

# 18/4/83

Seems I'm always tired. it's Monday (wonderful) and I'm plugging along. Deb and I had a very interesting weekend. Very busy and most curious.

For the past two weeks or so Deb has been complaining of a persistent itch and rash. this being her first encounter with tropical living (mine too). She attributed it to high humidity and heat. Not so. It seems she brought an uninvited guest home with her from the hospital. The guest was scabies. A tiny mite which burrows into the skin and clings to clothing. We spent a long three and a half days boiling our clothes and spreading lotion all over us (it burns). Even after such an industrious undertaking, we're still not sure if we eliminated them all. I have some suspicious looking spots. Gads how I hate this place sometimes. I hope we were successful. Nothing takes the fun out of life more than standing over a kettle of boiling clothing in the tropical heat. For two cents I would have abandoned the whole place, and went home.

That thought has been closer to reality than usual. For some reason, I just lose it from time to time. I can't stand it and I want to run screaming into the streets and assault someone so that I'll be sent home. I have noticed that being sent home, for whatever reason, is much more appealing than choosing to go home. I don't want to make that decision. It's too painful and difficult. I have been avoiding the question, or actually, the answer since I arrived. Yes, I want to go home. The next question is when. Dec. is not quite near enough, yet, I think of all sorts of dreadful things that could happen which would require us to go home. A serious illness or even death to a family member is a 'ticket home'. Schizophrenia sets in when you desire a calamity for a ticket home and immediately feel guilty about even thinking such a thing. My fear is that something will happen and I'll become nearly crazy with remorse for wishing it into existence. Wheels within wheels. A possible negative experience lurks behind every longing. You could really become paranoid... I think I have...

Milestones, we always need milestones. I'm looking ahead to the new PCVs who will be here at the end of next month. Following that, it will be the 6-month reunion in St Lucia. 4th of July will be a milestone of sorts because it is on the downhill side of the year. Deb hasn't heard from Min of Health about B-dos trip at the end of July/Early August (another nice break in the action, hopefully, for us both). October we have tentatively planned a tour of the islands Antigua, Saint Kitts/Nevis, and Dominica. May throw in Anguilla too. We want to see all the PC islands. There is no rush to see them this year, except that our discomfort is the most intense now. Following our three plus weeks of vacation in January and December we will return to less than 11 months of service left. No doubt we'll still need a break. We plan to take one week off every two and a half months until COS. Our money is going for a trip to Europe (or at least, England) after COS and before Christmas of 1984 (just another year!)

Why so much planning? Well the answer is obvious (at least to me). I need to have something to look forward to so I can survive the current discomfort. It tends to soften my impulsive urges to flee. I learn to endure the unendurable for a 3-week respite in SLC in December. In short it's the old "spinach before the ice cream" theory. Though I want to go now, first I need to take my lumps.

Though I am loath to choose to go home, I wouldn't blame myself much (there's a danger). Better people than I have failed to maintain it in this culture. Med students, doctors, pastors and PCVs have left simply because they couldn't handle it. They weren't bad people (as far as I know). Some of them are, no doubt, quite successful stateside. Because of my turmoil and anxiety I can understand how a person could ET. What I have trouble understanding is why (or how) some folks amble through their PC experience without any apparent discomfort. It's as though they were still in Des Moines, IA or Findlay, OH. Nonplussed by their change of culture they simply keep on going about their business as if nothing had changed. It is those people who are total enigmas to me. Granted, they are few in number but the fact that they are there at all is flabbergasting and frustrating. when you Say how unhappy you are with the current situation they just look at you unbelievably with a slight hint of sadness and say "Oh really". I'd like to punch one out, sometime.



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