



Emily Emails You...

Howdy! I am writing from California! We did it! Florida to California. We are alive, we are well, and we are happy to be here.

This newsletter tracks us all the way through Idaho. I will pick up in the next newsletter with our trip to Oregon! Which I inexplicably cannot stop misspelling as Oregan.

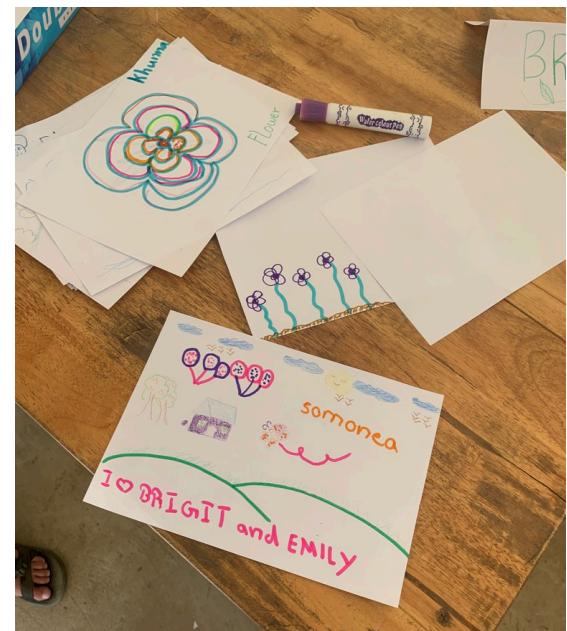
In an effort to condense my newsletter, I have omitted the ‘who we have met’ and ‘what we have eaten’ sections. Instead, I describe some of our friendly meetings in the ‘where we have been’ sections. I did not include one of our meetings which I think is worth sharing – we met a family who is really doing the ‘Instagram famous’ RV lifestyle! They have three young kids and a huge bumper sticker advertising their Instagram @theflyinghens. Check them out if you are interested in seeing an RV that makes ours look like a doll house.

I did not include the ‘what we have eaten’ section because we’ve not had too many notable food experiences lately and I didn’t see it necessary to have a whole section to let you know that we have, on multiple occasions, eaten burgers for breakfast.

On the last page, you will find before & after pics of the inside of our RV. Go ahead, peek inside. And thank you for reading! I love making this.

Questions, comments, concerns, requests?

Reach me at emilyemailsyou@yahoo.com or 770-500-0801



If you're able, please donate to the GoFundMe that I have linked in my email. My dear friend Brigit created it and she writes very succinctly about the powerful impact that the Khmer New Generation Organization (KNGO) makes in its community, Bospo village.

In January of 2020, Brigit and I went to Cambodia for our professor and a small group of classmates to connect with organizations working in various ways to lift people out of poverty. We spent a week at KNGO, where its founder, Sun Saveth and his wife Sari, housed us and served us delicious meals. Brigit and I were in charge of art lessons (see above). KNGO works to better its community by providing after school classes for the kids in the village, buying groceries for those who can't afford them, and building houses for community members.

KNGO needs help as they are struggling to secure funding to continue their services. This a true on-the-ground organization full of kind-hearted people who are making significant change in the lives of their neighbors. Please consider donating and know that your money is going straight to a powerful effort.

The above pic is a view of the village and the pic below is of the school.



Where We've Been



22. Davis, SD. We spent one night here, which was awarded 'best Hipcamp in South Dakota'. Cinda, the owner, greeted us with homemade bread and a jar of jam and she even let us pick which flavor of jam we wanted! She also encouraged us to take tomatoes and lettuce from her garden. She was so kind and deserving of her high rank in the Hipcamp world.

As we drove through SD, we were influenced by excessive billboard advertisements to stop at The Corn Palace in Mitchell, SD. This building, born in 1891 and finished in 1921, features murals made of corn and other grains. The murals cover the outside of the palace, and there are other corn art pieces inside! The whole façade of the building is corn.

Corn art/structures weren't so rare at the time, they were a way for a city to show that they had a healthy agricultural landscape. This, though, is the only remaining corn palace.

Half a million tourists journey to the corn palace every year. Johnny Cash has performed here, as well as Willie Nelson. And, believe it or not, the space inside is mostly dominated by a basketball court.



Thanks to a recommendation from my great aunt Suzi, we also stopped to see this statue titled 'Dignity' in Chamberlain, SD. It is certainly powerful to stand before this Native woman, towering boldly over the expansive landscape. To the right of her, in the background, is a big red billboard that screams, "Beef. It's what's for dinner". There's a metaphor in there, somewhere.





23. Buffalo Gap National Grassland, SD. We spent one night here, on National land, which means camping is free! (For up to two weeks). There were lots of RVs/trailers on the edge of this landscape. It was unreal, as my mom said, “it looks like you’re on the moon!”



This was the view from our bed. It was an incredibly windy night, our RV rocked us to sleep... I had to have Sam assure me multiple times that it would be physically impossible for the wind to push our RV off the side of the cliff.



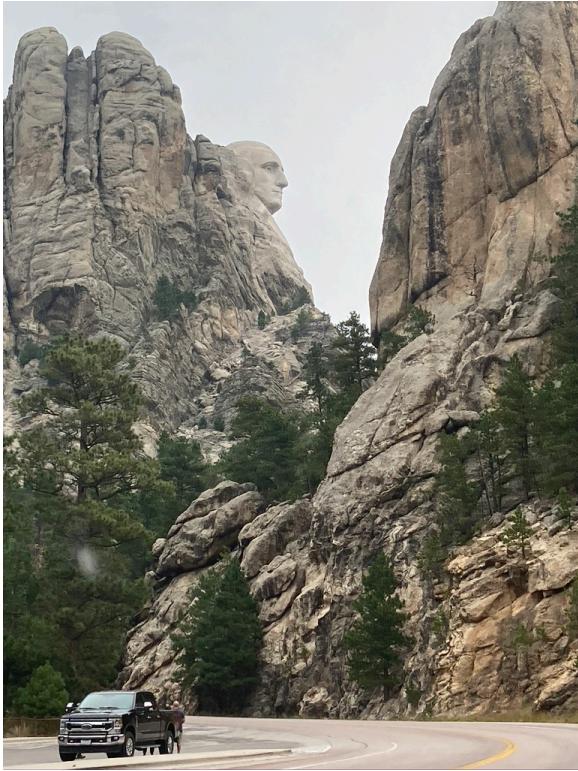


Bison poop (hand for scale)

We spent a morning at the Badlands National Park. To the right, you can see where we parked and ate breakfast. One of my favorite parts of this lifestyle is being able to stop anywhere that's legal and cook a hot meal!

We had fun exploring this unique terrain, and the gloominess and quietness of the day made for a surreal experience.





We saw the most amazing miracle as we were driving through South Dakota. I said, “Sam, is it just me or do those rocks look a lot like faces??”. He was able to see it too and even pointed out that the two faces on the right are about to do a kiss! Nature never fails to amaze us, it’s all about keeping your eyes open.



24. Ten Sleep, WY. We spent one night in Wyoming and camped at Ten Sleep Brewing Co. – which doubles as a campsite and a brewery!

This was a neat place that I recommend checking out if you are ever in Wyoming. They put on a lot of events, and unfortunately we were one day too early and we missed the Wyoming singer/songwriter competition! Could have been my time to shine.



25. Billings, MT. We spent one night on this hazy land. A dog barked all night long.



26. Boulder, MT. Pretty pretty. Cooking with a view. What's in Sam's pot, you ask? Hot dog and baked beans ☺





27. Darby, MT. Finally, our much anticipated trip to Darby, MT. This was the first plan that we solidified back when we were creating our travel timeline. It has been a focal point of our journey, all thanks to the kindness of the Archambault family. When my parents told their friends about our upcoming travels, they offered a free stay at their remote cabin, which was an immediate ‘yes’ from us.

While we were in Chicago we asked Trevor and Easton if they could meet us in Montana in 2 weeks, and they bought the flights and made it happen!

The cabin was described to us as “rustic”, and while it did not have indoor plumbing or running water, it did have electricity and cozy beds and incredible views and a vast DVD selection. To us, this was peak luxury.

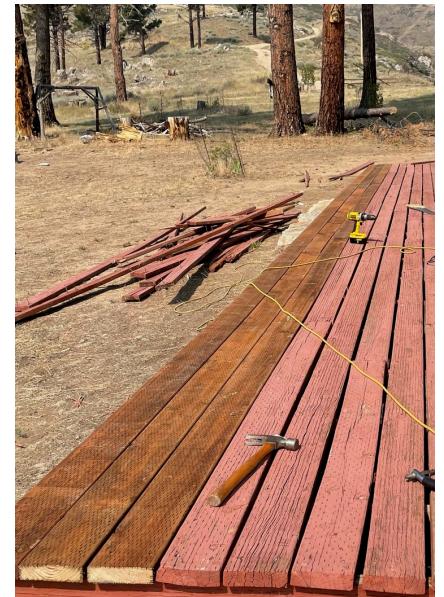




To say thank you for entrusting us with their home, we did some light labor.

Chris let us use his pick-up truck, which was a god-send, because the cabin is a 20-minute drive up a mountain with steep incline, narrow roads, and a long way down to fall, and doing that in the RV was an anxious time for us all.

During and After





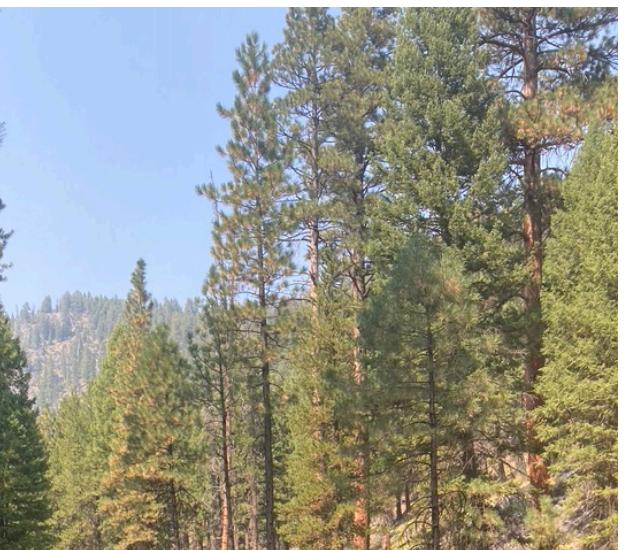
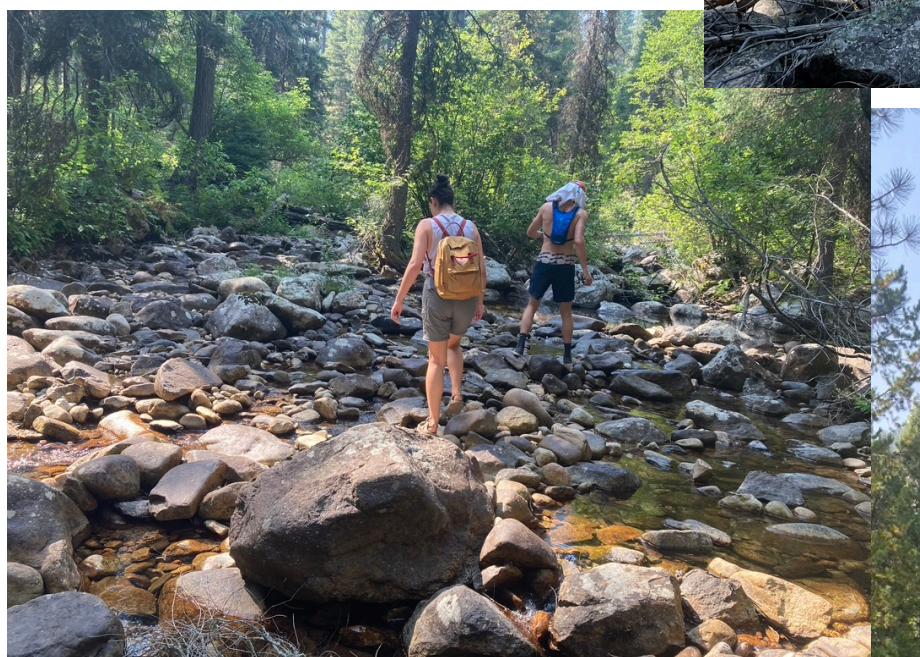
After a long day of labor, hiking, and going to the local hot springs, we were happy to just chillax.

I mustn't fail to mention that the stars here were fantastic. We were lucky to be here on the new moon, making them extra bright and glorious. The TV wasn't the only thing we watched.. we also watched the milky way and Elon Musk's satellites slowly zooming around.

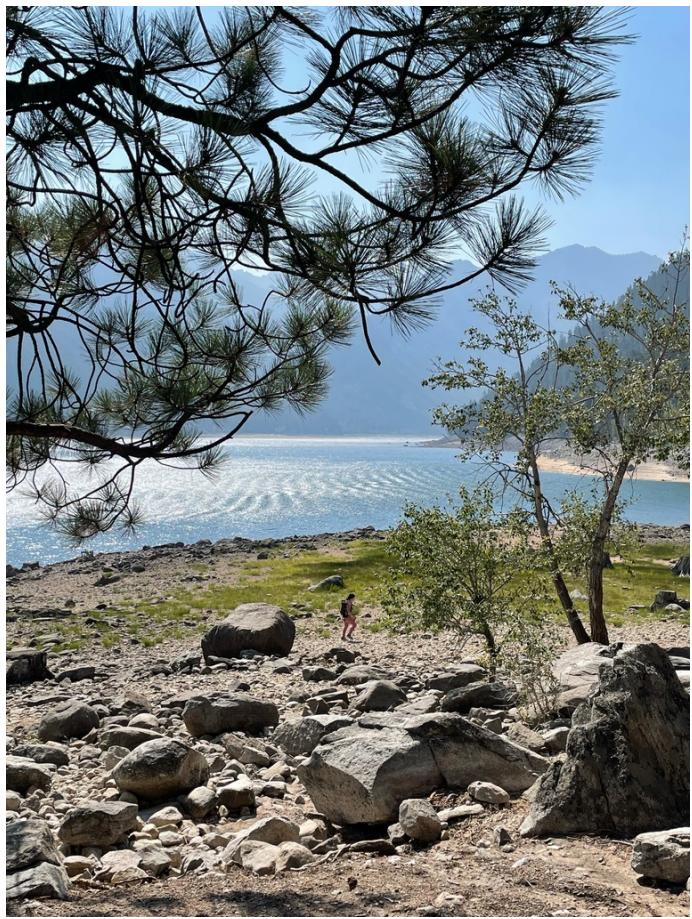
We enjoyed the flattop meal experience. Pancakes in the morning and various local meats in the night.. what more could you want?

Fun fact from Margaret, neighbor to the cabin, the views you see here are largely a ranch owned by the guy who owns Intel, and he is, thankfully, never going to develop it.





Superb hiking. Baker Lake & Boulder Creek in the Bitterroot National Forest.



Sasquatch
sighting!!!!
←←←

We spent our last day at Lake Como, which was a relaxing day after our strenuous hikes.

Just stunning. We read our books, we ate our sandwiches, we drank our one beer each. And Trevor and Sam made a waterfall!

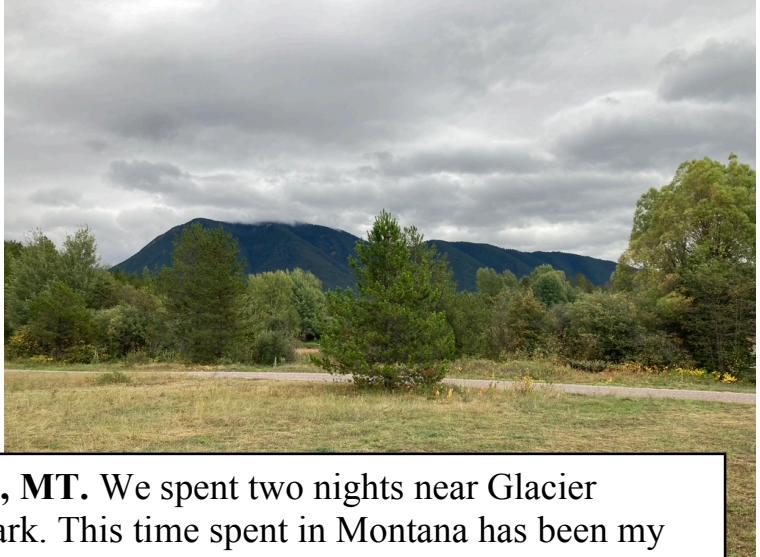




This was an unforgettable experience. Chris and Lisa, thank you a million for sharing your home with us. What a gift! If you ever need any more housework done...please call us ☺

A special thanks to Shannon and Margaret, the neighbors who kept us hydrated (with their hose) and clean (with their shower). It was lovely to meet you both and get a taste of your idyllic life. Margaret sent us with enough pulled pork for three meals, local pears, and delicious homemade zucchini bread. Thank you for welcoming us and caring for us, and if you ever need a house sitter... please call us ☺

Trevor and Easton, thanks for being our friends and for providing the majority of our in-person human interaction for the last five weeks ☺



28. Coram, MT. We spent two nights near Glacier National Park. This time spent in Montana has been my first encounter with the effects of the western wildfires. On our last day in Darby, the smoke was so bad that you could smell it.

These two pics↑ show the first day we arrived in Coram, and two days later when we left. You can really see how the smoke affects the visibility.

We went to Glacier National Park, which multiple people have recommended as their #1 place you must see while road-tripping through the west, and it was kind of a bust. We went on a super smoky day so the views were hazy and hiking was hard on the lungs. Also, the park is massive, and apparently, the eastern part of the park is super cool while the western part is only pretty cool. We went to the western part. But, now we know, and we will be back!



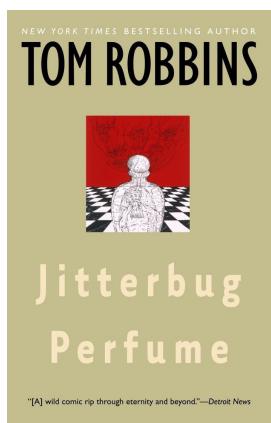
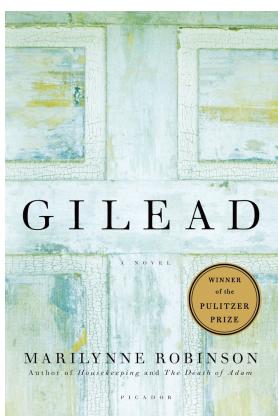
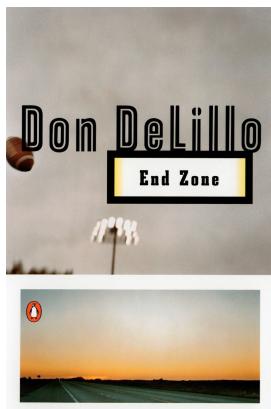
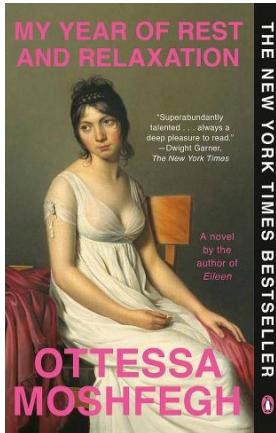
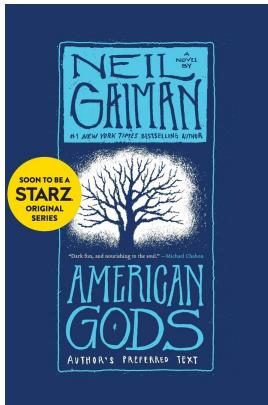
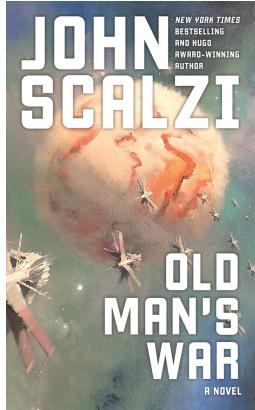
29. Libby, MT. We had our first semi-unsuccessful Hipcamp experience. The host, Lloyd, said he “didn’t mean to post the listing”. We arrived and had no idea where to camp and couldn’t get in touch with him. The above picture is us taking a guess and parking on his neighbor’s land. Finally, Lloyd’s sister helped us out and told us to stay in the same field as his horses. This was both a scary and awe-inspiring experience, as the horses came by to see what was up with us. Ultimately, the horses gave us no trouble and we had a nice stay at Lloyd’s accidental Hipcamp.



30. Naples, ID. We spent two nights at this awesome Hipcamp, right next to Goose Poop Drive. We were so close to Canada!

This was a fun stay, and really changed my mental image of what Idaho is.

What We've Read



After a zealous trip to a Barnes and Noble in Missoula, Sam walked away with several novels from the \$5 shelf – “you can’t afford to *not* buy it”. He is now reading *Old Man’s War* by John Scalzi. It takes place in a futuristic universe in which humans have colonized many other planets, and senior citizens from Earth can volunteer to become genetically enhanced soldiers.

I finished *American Gods*, which ended up being a very fun read. I have this book because it was assigned in a religious studies class I took. It’s one of those books that is totally enjoyable and consumable if you have minimal knowledge about various religions and mythologies. But, if you know a lot, there is so much treasure to discover! I’m excited to learn more about the tales that Gaiman draws from to craft this crazy book. Now Sam has to read it so we can watch the TV series.

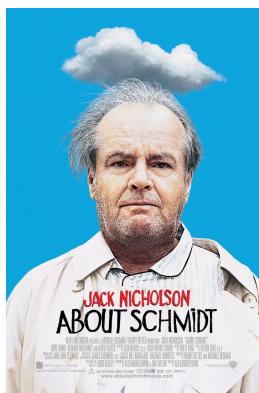
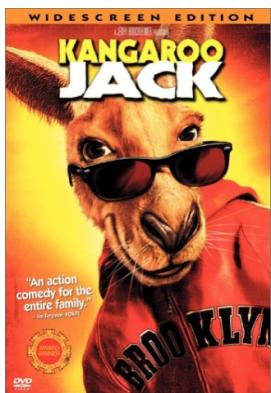
I read *My Year of Rest and Relaxation* by Ottessa Moshfegh. Easton lent this to me, and after seeing her absorbed in it, I too became absorbed. This book is messed up! The premise is – our mentally ill narrator decides she will heal her trauma and become anew by sleeping as much as possible for a year. To do this, she enlists the help of a psychiatrist who doesn’t hesitate to prescribe her many, many, medications. None of the characters are likable and I was mad at the ending but nonetheless, I was engrossed.

Next I read Don DeLillo’s, *End Zone*. DeLillo is one of my favorite authors and I enjoyed reading some of his earlier work. Even though the book is about football (not my usual go-to), I was not disappointed. The narrator illustrates his experience on his college football team as well as his growing obsession with nuclear warfare and catastrophic destruction. DeLillo is somehow able to create hilarious and endearing portraits of a college football team, while also asking probing questions about how we imagine organized violence.

Next, *Gilead*, by Marilynne Robinson. A nice change of pace, this novel is slow and beautiful. It is a long letter from a father to his son. The father is a small-town preacher and he is dying, he writes to his seven-year-old son some of things he wishes to impart on him. He muses on life, religion, forgiveness... emotional and sweet and calming, I recommend it!

I started *Jitterbug Perfume* by Tom Robbins but I don’t think I can keep reading it. The writing is annoying me. If anyone has read this book and thinks it is worth seeing through, please let me know!

What We've Watched



As I mentioned, the Archambault's had quite the DVD collection at their cabin, and it was great to watch movies on something bigger than an iPad. So besides watching a ton of *The Blacklist*, we also watched these very high-brow films. Here are my short reviews: *Kangaroo Jack* – hilarious. *Rise of the Planet of the Apes* – Franco as scientist? Doesn't work. *The Mummy* – unrealistic! *About Schmidt* – too depressing, couldn't finish it.

What We've Learned

Thanks to an informational poster on the wall of the Archambault's outhouse, we learned that Meriwether Lewis (of Lewis & Clark) died by suicide.

We heard on the radio that dogs can tell when we do something on purpose or by mistake.

Sam taught me that deer have white butts so that they can easily follow each other when they prance through the woods.

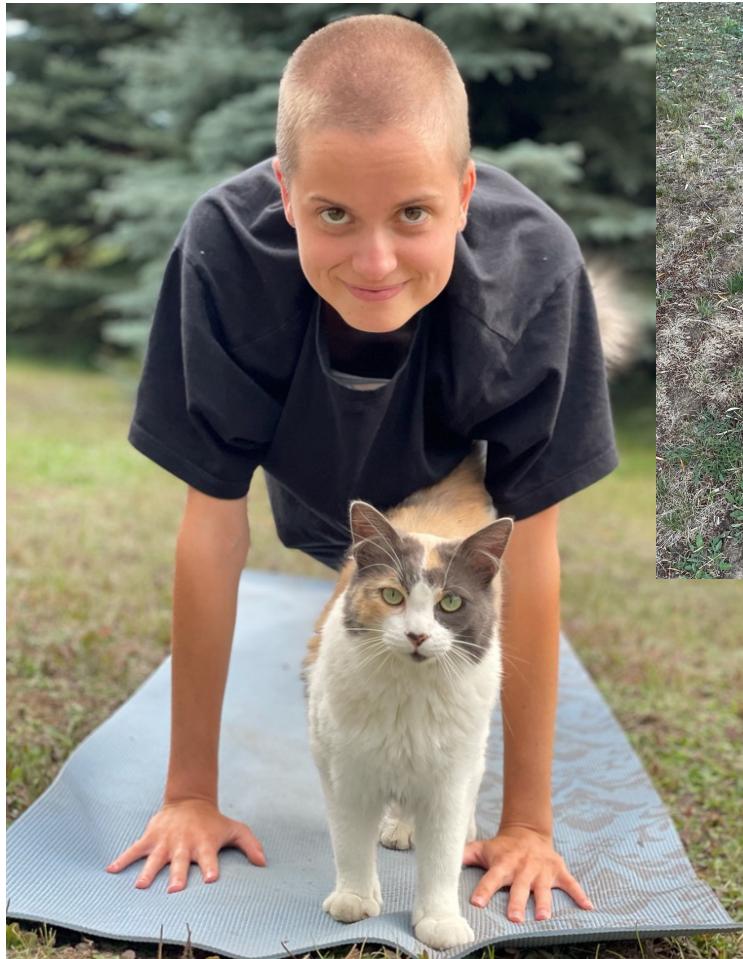
We learned by watching other people empty their poop tanks that it is smart to wear gloves whilst at dump sites. We now have our very own poop gloves!

I learned that Sam is a ninja at killing flies that get into our RV. He can catch them mid-air.

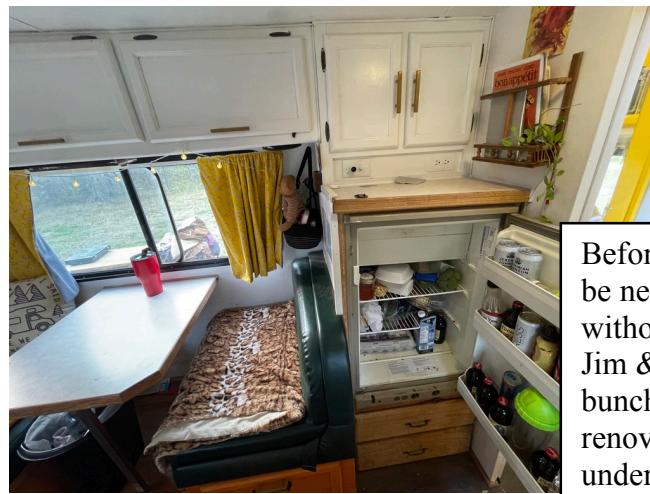
Sam has been learning a lot from his Toyota Motorhome Facebook group, which he is very active in. We saw an RV the other day and he recognized it from the group! It is fun to feel a part of this community – we ate at a diner one day and there was another Toyota RV parked in the lot and we watched the couple walk out and take pictures with our RV.

I have been following a newsletter that I really enjoy (Maybe Baby by Haley Nahman) and she spread the enlightening information that Oprah, as in Oprah Winfrey, was actually born Orpah, but people often mispronounced it and Oprah stuck.

Animals!



What our RV Looks Like!



Before pics above. Our RV would not be nearly this cozy and stylish without the help of Sam's parents – Jim & Nancy. Sam and Jim did a bunch of repairs and a top-to-bottom renovation, including fixing the rot under our bed. Nancy helped with painting and she crafted our awesome black-out curtains. Sam and Jim ripped out the green couch and Sam built our extended table space.

