

July at the tea table project has been a bounty. I doubt that the number of messages will be the same for August or any other month. This project is mentally slated to end mid-September however Seattle's weather this year has been so unusual (little to no rain and some of the hottest days on record, for us) that keeping this going longer may be practical.

The changes to the set-up have been modest. I replaced the 'Free Tea' sign in paper with a wooden one (the one day it sprinkled destroyed the paper sign). I found marked 'free') two green plastic chairs like the one that got broken and so now there are 4 plastic chairs (2 white, 2 green) and the 2 wooden ones from last month. I ran out of the Huskus root and for a while was making daylily flower and root tea but lately have not replaced that jar so it is just the Jasmine/assam pot that is available.

One of the teens revealed that the \$ that was left was more than what I found and he took it 'for safe keeping' but (of course) spent it. Card 22

A few of these card/messages require an explanation if you are not familiar with Seattle.

A) Seafair is a nearly month long festival...Each neighborhood will have a parade, and often a cultural(Norwegian, Native American, Japanese and Chinese, Black [this summer] Black lives matter and culture) local festival at different, though sometimes overlapping, times during the summer. It culminates in an Airfair show of acrobatic planes and includes the Blue Angels team- This part takes place over Lake Washington (Seattle exists between Puget Sound [salt sea] and Lake Washington [fresh water]) below in the water are held hydroplane races. All this ends on the first weekend of August. It's loud (planes/jets/and the hydros themselves (they used to be called "thunderbirds" because the engines were so loud you could hear them miles away- those engines have been replaced by jet turbines and are quieter- now only like the dentist drill on your teeth) raucous, and mobbed.

B) the road I live on is inside a park. (see Card 28) The tea table is on parkland. The road is a small two lane paved hairpin turns former horse and buggy one, part of the Olmstead Brothers (Central Park designers for example) design for most of the Seattle side of Lake Washington. It is a designated bicycle route and there are herds of cyclists daily either

commuting or joy-riding or training { totally does not look like any of these people are actually having fun }.

C] during the Tour de France the number of bright plastic coated cyclists increases dramatically. There is also, in July, a mass bicycle trek from Seattle to Portland called STP. Reports from those who have done it are mostly 'did it once- long boring – no need to do it again'. It's a bit over 170 miles and on/along the I-5 freeway.

Card 31 was written by my teenage Native American tea drinking friend after he came back from dancing in a Sun Dance ceremony in Oregon.

Card 23 & 24 (it's possible that Card 42 is their's too) These were done by a dad and his two young children- one is old enough to ride his own bike the other rides in a kid-trailer behind dad. The drawings are supposed to be from The Little Prince and though it was in English by the 1940's it was not a childhood book that I was exposed to. I didn't know about it until I started tutoring kids in the early 1970's. I was sitting at the table when they rode by and they stopped showing me which cards they had already done- shocked that I didn't know what they were drawing or where they came from. The blobby thing is python swallowing an elephant? ok.

Card 26 Turns out the group of 15/16 year old teens are heavy marijuana smokers. I have not been down on them for it and that has been both a good thing and has occasionally backfired (there is now a burn-hole in the tablecloth and one time there was ash and debris all over the table, torn cards used for 'papers' – I have had to set out the rule no smoking at the table and clean up your mess i.e. be respectful. I spend a bit of time , it seems daily, talking to at least one of the 'kids' that is possibly a topic for another time).

Card 35 I/we live in a diverse neighborhood. Really diverse- not just racial but economic too. There are million \$+ homes and subsidized row houses. Rusty cars in the yard and people who have painted the grass green to 'keep up appearances'. By chance I had walked out to the table after this man had written his card out. We talked for about 15 minutes before he showed me the card. We now had something 'real' to talk about.

As a former bus driver, I have been threatened, assaulted, etc and know a great deal about the trauma of encounters like his. So I was able to ask him

how he felt, he told me about his current discomfort and unease. I talked about how in my experience it takes a while to get more comfortable and not suspect everyone- flinching at every possible encounter with strangers. I don't know if it helped, hope so.

There are at least 3 cards but I can't spot them right now that happened one early evening. A group of 4 people were riding I offered tea and they stopped, "What is this" "Tea" ...Two men Italians, two women Japanese (I think). We sat and drank tea and just jabbered. They left.

I mentioned this to some friends who go to Italy yearly and they said that Italians would totally get this as they do it all the time- the it in this case is stop and sip and chat slowing down, just taking a bit of time.

The women also seemed to 'get it'.

The oldest man used to be the boss of the younger man and one of the women worked for the younger man and the other woman was visiting the other woman ~ along for the ride. And the ride was a long one...which I shortened by telling them a 'shortcut' back to where they began that they were unaware of.

Many of the cards have idiosyncratic spellings, and syntax I have tried my best not to change any.

Last thought for the month on this project- there is a suspicion of the table, often a "why?", the gift (if it is a gift, or if not a gift an offering with no strings) itself seems suspicious to them. There are some who resent it. I'm not sure if I can explain that, even to myself, but instead of just an offer there is the idea that I am claiming something, part of the park for myself, or that in some way the table and chairs are exclusionary. For those who have expressed this kind of things to me I have not found a response that can correct it.

The cards of July

(again not in the order of 'submissions' because weather and people reading them has shuffled them too much for me to know how to put them back in order. I try not to read them every day, that way it seems to me like the messages really are shared with everyone and not just for me.)

1. On a moonlit walk taking back the lake on Seafair weekend this spot rocks. Thank you

2. Even after /all this time,/ the sun/ never/ says to the earth/ "You owe me".../ Look what happens with a love like that – it lights up the whole sky!- Hafiz
3. This oasis is the perfect antidote to the blue angels. (smiley face)
4. Sparkling beams through the crotch of the trees/ diamonds sink to lake bottom. Deep along shores of slippery stead.
5. Greeting from Teresina- Brazil, (two more names) (a pointy nosed smiley face)
6. If the punishment must fit the crime, must the reward fit the good deed?/ How does one repay truly genuine altruism?
7. To someone/ far away./ I am smiling pondering your joy./ Sending my heart to share your pain.
8. You are so lovely- the nicest view of Rainier and tea too./ I'll work on a better poem for next time I go jump in the lake.
9. Check the view of Mt. Rainier from this very spot at 4:30 AM good times Smile w/ Chaddy
10. It's a super view of Mount Rainier @ 4:30 AM/ With the one I love.
11. A business card with the pencil writing "thank you"
12. Minh Pham was here July 28, 2015/ 7.21 pm
13. A little tea/ a fast bike/ a little cup/ a fast life/ a little love/ a fast forward/ to warm us up/ and lots of strife//a giant sun/ a slow ride/ a giant hill/ a slow me/ a giant lake/ a slow Sunday/ It's such a thrill/ a simple cup o' tea. (names)
14. I'm grateful that you put this little oasis out for us to use. Thank you!
15. Thank you for your generous and truly refreshing tea and conversation! (name)
16. My first biking in Seattle and feel so lucky to stop by HERE! Thank u for the nice treat! (name)(sunface drawing and word balloon [Seattle heat])
17. Yours truly!/ THANKS 9 years old (name)
18. (circle around "this tea cup") is a gift sitting in the quiet thanks be to you.
19. "Now I know what they mean by eye contact."
20. Beautiful. Thank you.
21. Keep up the good work.

22. Someone left \$1 and some change/ seems strange *I wrote this*
23. (a square) Is it a box or a sheep
24. (a drawing of a tea cup and saucer, a drawing of a cat, and larger drawing of a blobby thing)
25. This space make me feel un-alone. What a treat to start the day- 6am, in middle of bike ride. "tenth of the tour"
26. Michael smoked weed off this paper/ Truuu, tea was extra good
27. Thank you for the tea/ so sweet of you! (Japanese script) Vielen dank. (two names one western alphabetic the other Japanese)
28. Just got done treating invasive trees in the adjacent woods. This tea was such a treat in this heat -/thanks/(name)
29. This is better than an octopus' garden! (drawing of octopus with tea cup tea table and sign 'Free Tea!')
30. (drawing of Mt. Rainier) Generosity/ and/ kindness/ abides/ and/ abound
31. Live with peace, love, harmony, happiness, and value.//If you take away money, clothes, people, and anything that makes us believe that we need materialistic things to live. You're lost./What would have? (reverse side picture of a skateboard)
32. Exam/ wegbegu/ ma benocunege (I have no idea what this is or in what language anyone help?)
33. Thanks for the tea! It made our bike ride so much better (heart and two bicycles "sister bike love" heart)
34. Thanks for the tea! It was a perfect mid-ride break! You rock! (smiley face)
35. I was robbed at gunpoint last month in our neighborhood. Your offering of tea & space helps remind me it will be OK. Thanks for helping me heal. (reverse side a drawing of dragon monkey head -Chinese-like)
36. (large drawing of dog head) Save Jenny Dog//Jenny was here/jennydog.co (reverse side)Seattle animal shelter want to euthanize me. My people are fighting!
37. Last weekend. I went camping. On the final night. Entering my little tent. I sat down. On a bee. In the dark. Sting and buzzing under togs ensued. Now, in the 'itchier than hell' phase. I come to our glorious field. To this table. And I see....before I set.... a lovely bumble bee. A repeat? No I

shush him/her away. And sit to write about it and sip some tea. (drawing of chair and a bee)

38.(large drawing of tea cup and saucer with three stick figures holding cups)

39.Thank you for the tea Jay! I will be back. Have a great day! (signed and though it seems this person knows me I don't recognize the name)

40.(in cursive) Thank you for the tea (smiley face)security gal

41.Daddy,/ We hope you have a good visit in Dublin./ Bring me something when you come home. (name)

42.Thank you for the delicious tea (three names a 2 yr old a 4 yr old and dad- a 4 year old [I'm guessing] drawing of a person and a drawing of their bike with a kiddy trailer on the back)

43.To Amber-/Every time I see a little baby girl I think of you. Every time I feel a lonely pang in my heart I think of you.

44.What a lovely spot! Thank you. My dog wolfie and I are visit with my friend (name withheld)

45.365 days ago my mother touched death. She pushed it away and is still with me with strength. With tea and view, thank you for this space to be grateful and think on all that life brings.

46.Thank you for this beautiful gift! Was very much enjoyed.

47.Jay you are chill. Butt

48.When I try to have the thought/ it escapes me./ When I asked to fall in love/ I felt lonely. Once I heard their sounds/ the birds surrounded me. / Ask for nothing and you have found me.

49.The lone buttcheek of mountain ascends,/ a vast clench of lava stuck in the air catching last moments of ancient sunlight./ A nude beach, lover lost amidst the tailings, struck now, as though a forehead glistened with an effort to climb./The rump of walking, roving out west, a look over the Pacific at gold delivered to the edge of the day./ It's time for those ass-pants/ and a yoga-mat. GRACIAS!!

50.recently I've been thinking a lot about 'Life' with a capital "L" and 'life', the way we live. I find one beautiful, and the other tragic. Sitting by the lake, watching the birds and the beats, enforces my views.

51.Wouldn't this earth *(I think- this writing is very very small and the style is hard for me to read)/*

- be a better place if everyone could give- share like this venue./ Cheers
52. See to understand..../then/ to be understood (name)(on reverse side) Took a wrong turn and ended up here with my best friends/ Thanks
53. (big drawing of a cat) Thank you we needed this. We are having hard times. (heart, heart, heart- name)
54. Walking this morning I realized, however difficult my days may be, there will always be the woods to walk in. (heart)
55. Miles of asphalt under the tires. Left after sideways thick rain streams knocked down the felt birdhouse./ Her wet fur wrecks of urines- why didn't I stop when she longingly looked out the window?(spelling theirs)
56. Thank you (child's printing name and heart)
57. (music notes)dada dum dooo/ I believe I took music classes for a house around here. I now play drums and guitar. Thanks for the start! (name which could have been any of my students too many with the same name)
58. (drawing of a sun/mountains/cat with cup) poem on the street.tumblr.com/ Tea for me/ Tea for two/ Tea for you/ Take a tea to me/ and I will take a tea to you/ tea's the warmth of others/ made in a kettle (reverse side)take a look; Poemonthestreet.tumblr.com/ Poems written for passerby in Portland, OR
59. A spot of tea cools me down on a hot! summers day/ Turn my back...it is a mirage? Swirls of heat off the field of grass/ an ice cream come, alas (reverse side drawing of the mountains with names labeled)
60. I've ridden past this spot a dozen times & likely will a dozen more time before my time in Seattle is up. I have always had the inclination to stop, so here. I am!!(smile)/ I hope that all the people who are dear to my heart know that I think they are significant. Your tea service demonstrates this idea towards humanity. (reverse side) peace, love & Happiness.
61. Today I woke up and saw my life though the leave I always have. Tomorrow I may do the same; I'll never know. Until the day tomorrow is not a day in my life, but a remembrance of what I was. Until tomorrow was nothing but what I will miss today.(their spelling)
62. Thanks Jay/ what a nice day/ hate to be away. but / here I am. By the way./ Raaaiinnnierr/ up hill from here. (name)
63. Few of us can do great things. Yet we can all do small thing with great

love...We pass this way but once. May the world be a little better for our passing.//Thank you for this opportunity to relax and appreciate a beautiful place, while sipping tea. (name)

64.(drawing of mountain) herbal tea clasp clang/ I sit down, view mt.

Rainier/ sip a smoky tea./ (field- haiku) { *this is theirs not my parenthesis* }

65.I'm moving to Europe and can't wait. (name)