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Friday, January 26, 2002. Martha flew from Cincinnati and I from Atlanta to meet in Los Angeles. She brought me the most wonderful present. For a long time I have had a balance problem, which has been exaggerated by the drugs, they have me on, as well as intolerance to standing. She brought me what some would call a walker but I call a wonderful stroller: a lightweight four wheel vehicle with a commodious seat, easier to push than a grocery cart. It will make the trip a breeze!

We picked up our rental car and ventured out on Los Angeles infamous freeways, which exceeded our expectations. Even the HOV lanes were 25 miles an hour. It took over two hours to drive to Claremont. Oh well, it was an experience. We could have flown into Ontario but there was no direct service for Martha and LAX looked better. Contacted granddaughter Constance and soon were being given a guided tour of Pomona's campus. It's very attractive, southwestern style, architecture, nestled among the other Claremont colleges. Constance has what seemed to me a huge dorm room, but then today dorm rooms have to have room for computers, refrigerators, microwaves and so forth that were unheard of in my day. We went out to a delicious French dinner at the Harvard cafe and heard about her classes, which include Arabic. Spent the night at the Claremont Inn, an older Inn being renovated, and when I put the key in the lock the entire lock came out so we had no fear anyone would break in during the night!

Saturday, January 27 2002. Flew out of the Ontario airport, connecting in Phoenix to a prop plane into Flagstaff where Exton met us to give us a tour of his campus, Northern Arizona University. I immediately noticed a lack of oxygen at the 7000 feet of altitude! Here the architecture is brick and there are mountains all around. He is majoring in Advertising and Electronic Media and loves it although it seems to have its own vocabulary. He proudly introduced us to an alternative rock band he had promoted that had come to NAU for a concert and showed us his dorm room, which was full of electronic equipment. We went out and ate Italian at Oreganos and stayed at an Embassy Suite Hotel.

Sunday, January 27. Got to the airport early enough to catch an earlier plane than scheduled and had a speedy connection across Phoenix, so got to LAX much earlier than expected. This gave us time to call my niece Betsy Krementz who came to the airport and we had a fine three-hour visit. We hadn't seen her since my mother's funeral some years ago. At last it was time to go to our plane and we got a wheel chair for me and with Martha coping with the on board luggage made our way through emigration to Qantas. Soon we were clad in our complimentary pajamas and tucked into our beds for the 10:30 departure for the 14-hour flight to Sydney. I ignored dinner and went to sleep as soon as possible.

Monday, January 28. Never happened as we crossed the International dateline.

Tuesday, January 29. Woke up some three hours before Sydney and got to enjoy Qantas' solicitous service. A wheelchair got us through customs and immigration with little difficulty and we were met by Swain and taken to the Regent Hotel where we have a room with a view of the Opera. I went immediately back to bed but Martha went out to explore the world. I managed to get up for a small lunch and a short walk down to the circular quay but soon was back in bed, wiped out by jet lag. Martha took the Bounty dinner cruise without me.

Wednesday. January 30, 2002. Woke up delighted to feel myself finally in Australia and after a bath and breakfast we set out for our walking tour of 'the Rocks' This is the oldest part of Sydney, where the convicts were brought, and had to make their homes among the rocks they found. Their crimes were very petty and some of them were mere children but these were the original settlers of Australia. They arrived on January 26, Australia Day, a National Holiday. The tour was billed as leisurely, but our guide really sprinted through it. I kept up pretty well but the stroller is not designed to do stairs and Martha kindly helped with that. It was all very interesting as she pointed out the oldest building in Australia (from about 1860) and some of the old sailors hostels and temperance societies for the sailing vessels that came in to trade were not known for their sobriety. She had a book of early prints and pictures to show how life must have been for the first settlers. She showed us some of the original shops and where the bubonic plague had broken out. We were shown the Bounty, built for the movie 'Mutiny on the Bounty', and then walked up hill to the 'better' part of town where the Victorian gentry built their homes and the soldier's built a

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handsome Anglican church with lovely stained glass, but by now my legs had given out and we caught a cab back to the hotel. After a rest we set out for the opera house where we had a package that include the opera and dinner. I was surprised to find that the opera, built in 1959 had no provision for seniors. No escalators, and only a few behind the scenes elevators only available with a special escort! In addition our dinner was not in the building as my dinner with John had been some 15 years ago but some 2 blocks away! So we clambered down the steps and walked back toward the city to what turned out to be a lovely restaurant right along the quay and had a delightful dinner at a window overlooking the harbor where we could watch the ferries coming and going. We learned this morning they all have the names of the original ships that brought the prisoners here. My dinner was oysters and a delicious snapper. Then it was back to the opera and a production of the Marriage of Figaro. Our seats were in the middle of the stalls and very comfortable with stadium style seating. A nice feature were English subtitles above the stage to translate the Italian words to this farce of Mozart's so it was very enjoyable. Afterwards everyone queued up in an orderly line for a taxi unlike the crowds you find in say New York after the theater!

Thursday, January 31, 2002. We spent a leisurely morning having some Reflexology in the hotel's spa and finally checked out and caught a cab to the IMAX Theater to see the story of Ernest Shackleton and the Endeavor. I had seen this before and, of course, had read the book and been to Antarctica, but Martha and I both ended up shedding tears at the end. It is truly the most remarkable adventure story that ever happened.

Leaving the theater we turned into the restaurant next door, Zenbu, hardly noticing what it was and found it was fusion eating', a truly remarkable experience. Zenbu means 'all' and represents an encompassing way of life. Their ethos is to bring all of life's abundant goodness to all people in a natural and balanced way. This means complimentary neck and shoulder massages as you enjoy the various oriental dishes they serve. Their philosophy is that life is a journey with no destination and happiness depends on understanding this. We can never be happy in the past or the future but only now where we find ourselves. Embrace life. If you ever find yourself in Sydney I recommend a lunch at Zendu.

Through all of this, it had been raining on and off and we finally found a moment when the rain stopped and hurried off to the Aquarium, where they billed themselves as one of the world's greatest. There were two interesting tanks, one full of penguins and another full of sharks. The sharks swam over and around you and you see their horrible mouths full of teeth. They also had a tank on the barrier reef.

Then it was on the airport and the four and a half hour flight to Darwin way on the northern coast of Australia. I slept most of the way. Swain met us in a stretch white limousine and took us to the Carlton Hotel.

Friday, February 1, 2002. We decided to walk to the museum, but only few minutes in the heat made that seem like not a good idea at all. The hotel recommended a mini bus and this was great fun. The bus was driven by quite a character who told us about one of the passengers, who was going from one bar to another, who he described as one of Darwin's real characters. The guy had a funny hat, which the driver said he even slept in! The bus picked people up and dropped them off every few blocks and you really picked up a lot of color with it. It was much more fun than a taxi. The museum was small but interesting. A room devoted to Aborigine art and then we went up to a higher level where they had some ceramics and then a maritime exhibit of wooden sailboats found in this part of the world. The museum's collection is much larger but they only have room to display a small part of it at a time. We had lunch in the museum restaurant. Caught the mini bus back to the hotel so Meg could have a nap and Martha went exploring on her own. I feel badly I can't go with her as much as I would like.

Saturday, February 2, 2002. Russell from Billy Can Tours picked us up in our four-wheel drive van and we set out for Kokadu Park. Russell had been a teacher among the Aborigine and was actually adopted by one clan so he is very knowledgeable. Distances are long in Australia and particularly in the Northern Territory so he broke the trip for us at the Adelaide River where we took a boat ride to see the jumping crocodiles. They lured the crocs with hunks of meat on poles

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and they would leap out of the water to take the bait. The crew had names for each of them so it was all fun. At last we came to the park and Russell soon stopped and produced a picnic lunch: Cold cut buffet to make sandwiches and a salad (enough for an army). He told us how they were having a very dry wet season which is bad because many of the fish need the seasonal flooding to re-oxygenize the water and help them breed as do many of the other species. On the other hand some of the species do better when they don't get flooded out. As for the tourists, it is better for us since the roads are not flooded and we can go wherever we please. We stopped at Manukola where wallabies darted out of our way and even saw two wild pigs to see the art gallery there of pictures many thousands of years old. The Aborigines have been in Australia for thousands of years but when the white men came many of their clans were destroyed by culture or design. As a result they now prefer to live apart where they can practice their customs undisturbed. As a result you drive through this huge park, which they control, and where many of them live, without seeing a sign of them. No houses or anything. We did see some children playing in a flooded roadbed and that was it. But their rock art remains, some very ancient telling stories that are only partially explained to white men. Above the art were some red squiggles, drawn by the spirits, warning that this was an unhealthy place. Nearby, today is a modern Uranium mine! We stayed at the Crocodile Hotel. The hotel in Ubirr, was built in the shape of a crocodile and is part of the Holiday Inn chain. The body of the beast is a lovely garden. Russell barbecued us a dinner at one of the grills in the garden which we ate in the air-conditioned splendor of our room.

Sunday, February 3, 2002. We drove to Nourlangie Rock to see some more Rock Paintings: A large Narmrgon, or Lightning Man and a Nabalwihjbolinj, who throws yams at women to kill them. We took a scenic plane ride on Kokadu Air to see the great escarpment that divide the enormous Kokadu Park from another enormous preserve called Arnhem land also controlled by the Aborigine. You really can see how vast an area this is. We also got to see two lovely waterfalls, Twin Falls and Jim Jim Falls.

Then on to the visitor's center where we saw a great film on what happens during a year when there is a real wet season. There were various other exhibits, which seemed geared to children. There was also a slide show of birds but it didn't compare to the first film. Martha and I were on our own for dinner tonight and ate in the hotel dining room.

Monday, February 4. We drove to the Aborigine Center which was very interesting with lots of exhibits showing how they lived with a last wall of pictures saying all they wanted was to be left alone to practice their customs in peace.

Russell then took us to the Yellow River where we transferred to a four-wheel drive truck to get to our boat for much of the road was flooded. There isn't much to the Yellow River for it soon runs into the South Alligator River. Masses of Pink Lotus are along one bank and fresh water mangrove. We entered a beautiful swamp and saw many birds. Fish eagles, where the male sports a handsome gray chest while his larger mate is black all over. Many Jesus Birds who seem to know how to walk on water. We even saw one large crocodile resting along the bank.

Then we drove for some time until we came to an unmarked unpaved road and drove down it to a rough path that led to a lovely secluded lake and picturesque Mouline Waterfall. Russell bought our ham and cheese sandwiches down to the lakeside. He and Martha dove in for a refreshing swim but I was afraid that if I got in I couldn't get out over the slippery rocks. So then we had to hurry back to Darwin for short night. It had been a lovely three days.

Tuesday, February 5. Woke up very early for we had to leave for the airport at 4:30 AM. The flight to Cairns is so early for it is scheduled to coincide with a connection with the flight to and from Singapore. When we were almost into Cairns I woke up to breathing problems and they had to bring me supplemental oxygen. I now know they only pressurize the planes to between 6 to 8 thousand feet! This is going to put a real a real damper on my style of living unless I can get it fixed!

We checked into the Tradewinds Esplanade Hotel and set out to find a doctor who turned out to be almost across the street: Dr Ian Cole. He checked out my heart, which is fine, and then looked at the drugs I am taking and suggested that the Vioxx, which I take as an anti-

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inflammatory for my spinal stenosis, might be the culprit. We discussed our plans to go to New Guinea and he did recommend we not go to the highland lodges we were planning. He also felt we should carry supplemental oxygen for the un-pressurized planes over the mountains to get to the Sepik River. We tried to find some oxygen we could rent but the one place in Cairns was not going to rent it to leave the country. So very reluctantly we have decided to cancel the trip to New Guinea. I am so mad!

However, there are some interesting things to do here so we will not go home immediately. Cairns is a resort town on the Coral Sea on the north coast of Australia. It is strange to be in a seaside town where the temperature must be close to 100 and the beaches are deserted because of the poisonous jellyfish that infest them 6 months of the year. However Cairns seems to have everything else a resort city needs. Our hotel is pleasant and we have a waterfront view.

Wednesday, February 6. We took an excursion to Cooktown across the peninsula. It's a long drive over mountains of eucalyptus trees, some open and some rain forest. The driver entertained us with a running commentary about what we were seeing of the geology and so forth. Much of the area is ranch land and the cows are allowed to run loose. This the driver found scary as the cows can run into the road and do a lot of damage to a vehicle. Since there is almost no traffic and little or no garages and so forth it is a real fear. You are really on your own in the bush. We passed a car pulled over and our bus pulled over to offer assistance as it seems every one does out here. We stopped at the Mt Carbine roadhouse for refreshments. The MT means mining town not mountain and we also placed our order for dinner for we will stop here on the way back. We crossed the Palmer River where there was a gold rush in 1870. There has been a lot of gold mining in this area. We drove and drove and the last 60 miles or so were unpaved. Almost into Cooktown we passed Black Mountain a curious mountain of black rocks, which is probably an old magma core. There are many legends about the mountain and some unusual lizards and small animals have been found here. 800 people live in Cooktown which has been destroyed by a cyclone every 50 years or so and is due to have it happen again. In 1770 Captain James Cook set out to study a transit of Venus and explore the Pacific. After he made a landfall at Botany Bay (Sydney) he headed north and hit the Barrier Reef and badly holed his ship, the Endeavor. They managed to patch the ship with sailcloth and beach her in the cove here and spent 48 days repairing her. The aborigines watched and when Cook asked them what that curious animal was that was jumping around the aborigine answer was 'I don't understand you' which to Cook's ear sounded like Kangaroo, which it has been called ever since. At last the ship was repaired and Cook climbed a small grassy hill to study what course he had to take to leave.

We had delicious prawn and lettuce sandwiches at The Diggers Inn, which is Cooktown's Soldier's Memorial House, and then were shown the various memorials in town. The large memorial fountain to Captain Cook has animal heads where the water comes out and, of course, there is a statue to the Captain himself, which our driver always corrects that he was just a lieutenant at the time. We were shown the spot where the ship was beached and then taken to the top of the grass hill where Cook made his sightings. You could actually see the Great Reef lying just offshore. It was very hot and humid (probably 110 degrees) and when we got to the museum I was sweating from every pore. NOTHING in Cooktown is air conditioned because usually there is a good breeze but today nothing is stirring. By the time I got back to our bus rivers of sweat were pouring out of me. I did not get out again! The original plan had been to bus one way and fly back but the plane was not available so we had to bus both ways. I was exhausted by the time we got back to the hotel. My days of bus tours are long since over!

Thursday, February 7. Woke up feeling just awful but nothing was going to keep me down today! This is the day we are going to swim on the Great Barrier Reef, something I have wanted to do for a very long time. A bus picked us up and took us to the Ocean Spirit, which is a huge Catamaran, which in turn took us out to Michaelmas Cay a small sandspit almost at the edge of the continental shelf. The well-organized crew kept us busy in multi languages teaching us everything from emergency procedures to scuba diving to snorkeling and a slideshow played over TVs in the lounge.

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The Cay itself was delightful. Sooty terns lined the water's edge giving the effect that the islet had a beard and inland were hundreds of other birds nesting and flying around. We were confined to just a small section of the island but that was fine. Close to us among the sooty terns was a pair of crested terns in their perky black and white outfits escorting an adorable white feathery chick toward the water. I don't know why they were the only ones but they were.

We put on our snorkels and fins and headed out onto the reef and it was wonderful. There were corals of every color and shape and huge fish as well as some of the smaller reef fish. It was an incredible sight. When we got waterlogged we came in and went back aboard for a buffet lunch. Then I took a semi submersible ride. Martha and I were supposed to take this together but I thought we had miscued and got on an earlier ride than scheduled so we took it individually but it too was wonderful as they took us into the lagoon where we saw turtles feeding and giant clams and our guide was able to identify the various coral formations. The whole cruise was a first class operation and we had a wonderful time.

Friday, February 8. Martha got up early and went ballooning. I slept in and had a lovely relaxing day doing nothing.

Saturday, February 9. Today we were tourists! We went to Kuranda. It was a reservoir in the mountains and a railroad was built to give access to it. The difficulties building the railroad up the twisting mountain valleys were tremendous. The train was vintage 1930 cars (not air conditioned, of course) but even worse all the view was on the right side and we were on the left, so the scenic train ride was somewhat of a bummer. Once on top we were shunted from one tourist thing to another. Where the bus left us off we were given about 20 minutes to shop. Martha and I found an opal shop that wasn't full of tourists and found her a most interesting black opal stone. Then we went on to a small zoo area where we saw some adorable koalas and then snakes and kangaroos. Lunch was buffet and then we got to get our picture taken holding the koalas and patting the kangaroos. One Joey had jumped in his mother's pouch and his feet still stuck out. Then we got put in some army ducks, amphibious boats, for a trip through the rain forest where our guide pointed out the various trees we were looking at. We ended where we had a performance of Aborigine dancing and then the aborigines demonstrated how they throw their spears and boomerangs, and blow their didgeridoos. It may have been touristy but it certainly covered everything we should have seen in Australia! We were supposed to ride a sky rail train back to Cairns but a severe lightning storm last night had put much of Cairns and indeed much of the east coast of Australia out of business so we rode the bus back to the hotel.

Went out and ate at an Indian restaurant for dinner. It was a nice change from the hotel fare we have had.

Sunday, February 10, 2002. Sought out the Cairns Bridge Club and played in a 6 1/2 table game. Were second and won 17 Australian points! They break for tea in the middle of the game. It was an International game for there was also a couple from Japan there. Instead of bidding boxes, they write the bids on a tablet. Also the convention cards were in a different format. When they scored it was in the number of tricks taken not the score. Thus, 2 hearts, down one was 7 tricks, while 2 hearts making 3 was 9. The club shares it's quarters with the Cairns gem club.

We went to Verdi's, Cairns version of an Italian restaurant, for dinner to celebrate our win.

Someone wrote in the newspaper that every ethnic group except Eskimo was represented in Queensland and the next day an Eskimo walked into the newspaper and announced, "I'm here!"

I ran out of enthusiasm so from here on Martha's journal has been added to finish the journey.

Monday February 11, 2002

Up early for a drive to Cape Tribulation. We went by a specially designed four wheel drive articulated bus. As usual, as we drove north we picked up other passengers at Port Douglas. We drove north along the very scenic coastal road and had a morning tea stop. Mom and I decided to have ice cream instead of the Daintree tea, locally grown. Mom had waffle seed, which had very tiny nuts in it, and I had sour sop. Both good. We drove to the Daintree River, and had a river cruise. There are 26 species of mangrove in the Daintree National Park, and our guide pointed

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out the more distinctive ones. There is a big variation in the root structures, some are small and very frequent, some long and spread out. There is one species called looking glass mangrove, which has flat ribbon shaped roots, like shelf fungus, but vertical. When it rains, water is held in pools by the roots, and the aboriginals used them like looking glasses. There is a cannonball tree; the fruit looks like a very large ball hanging from the branches. The park covers 1400 hectares. Nice river cruise, but as it was very late in the morning, no wildlife to be seen.

While we were on the river, the bus crossed over on the cable ferry, and we were dropped off on the north side to rejoin the bus. We had lunch at a private property next to the park. They had a large double roofed tent set up to provide shade and shelter when it rains. It felt very hot as soon as we stepped off the bus, and it wasn't any cooler under the tent because of the sun beating down, and also because they were grilling lunch just to the side and the heat was also coming in. Mom went to sit on a bench in the shade of the tropical rain forest by a stream. There was a very nice golden orb spider web there. The spider is quite large, and had made a large web. I went for a short walk in the woods. The path was crunchy gravel; some of the plants to see were labeled, but mostly not. It is lush jungle, lots of vines. I was near several city people who were quite nervous of everything. I told them a bit about spiders and they calmed a bit. At the end of the trail is a loop, which I took by myself, and I came on a large fresh dung pile full of semi-digested fruits and seeds. It was cassowary dung, but I didn't see the cassowary. Just as well, they are very large, and can severely harm you if disturbed. Still I was very pleased to have been close to one, as they are very rare, only 50 to 60 in the whole Daintree area, and an endangered species.

Walked back to the tent, cooler in the rain forest, still hot under the tent. Mom asked me to check if the hotel we were staying in is air-conditioned. Our guide said he was 98% sure it was, but he had never been there. Lunch was good, a steak BBQ, with trimmings just like in the US, cole slaw, potato salad, pickled beets, corn, green salad fixings, and melon slices, soda or water, tea or coffee. The tent cooled down once the gas grill shut down.

After lunch we were dropped at the Coconut Beach Resort, which is just before Cape Tribulation (named by Cook as marking when his troubles began). The resort has a delightful setting, located on a hill. We had a villa cabin built on posts. Mom called it our tree house. It was nicely furnished with lots of screen windows, fans, a large screened wall looking into fan palm leaves, and no air conditioning. Since the whole resort is in the shade, it was still much cooler than outside. Mom faded for a nap, and I went on an explore of the grounds. They are set up for environmental groups. There was a building called the round house, where you could have programs, with some literature and preserved samples of some of the local insects. Next to it was a small pool, they call it the cascade pool, which is not much larger than a large spa. It is made to look like a stream pool, with ferns growing in it, pebbles on the bottom.

Down the hill, and across the road, is the restaurant, called the long lodge, which you reach by a boardwalk through the forest. It is also very shaded, and is located about 100 ft back from the beach. I walked to the beach, which is white sand. There are some rock ledges right at the end of the sand, beautiful beach, and of course, no one on it. It is hot there, and at this time of the year no one goes in the ocean because of the stingers. Behind the restaurant is a lovely large pool, irregularly shaped with tiles and boulders and plants all around, two sloping areas where you can wade in.

I went back to the room and after a while I got the shuttle to come and give us a ride down to the pool for a swim. It was peaceful there, but difficult for Mom to get into the water as there are no steps. The sloping area has stones set in it, which gives texture, but makes it tricky to walk on. We did enjoy the swim, and Mom wanted to recline in the shade and read. I went to move one of the 6 recliners, and found it is bolted down. The others, which were in shade, were occupied. So Mom sat on one of the hard, straight wood chairs and read. I sat reading by the edge of the pool. One of the other guests of the pool had a banjo, and he got it out and was playing it quietly for a while. It was very peaceful and cool. After awhile, a noisy group of Americans came and disturbed our peace. We decamped for the shuttle and our room. The resort is really set up for walking, but they were very nice about coming with the shuttle. Just there is no phone (or TV) in the rooms, so I had to walk to reception to request the shuttle, not a problem for me.

We had dinner at 6:30 in the lodge. In the middle of the building is a pool with barramundi fish, and water turtles, which was nice. They played very soothing music, and a nice breeze came in through the door near us. I left at 7:45 to take a night walk in the rain forest, given by someone

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last name of Mason. I wore long pants tucked in my socks, hikers, a cotton tee shirt and my yellow nylon shirt, my hat, and lots of Aussie bug repellent. We walked for a couple hours with frequent stops. We all had flashlights, and the trail is well beaten, but you had to keep a good lookout for roots to step over.

Our guide showed us a golden orb spider (not nearly as magnificent as the one from lunch), very large grasshoppers, huntsman spiders. There were 5 in the group, 2 from Colorado, 2 from Switzerland, and me. Our guide was doing a study for a scientist, and had 3 live traps he set each evening and checked twice on these tours. We caught 2 Melanesian rats, 1 Cape York rat, and a bandicoot. The 2 rats are smallish, one is brown, the other gray, and have been in Australia 300,000 to 500,000 years. They think they floated in on some debris. We also saw two types of lizards, called dragons, asleep in their trees for the night.

He gave us a close up of the stinging bush. It has tons of fine silica needles all over its leaves, which each contain a toxin. If you brush it, it is extremely painful, and the effects can last up to 6 months as it takes that long for the toxins to be slowly released and the needles extruded from the body. This plant has been pointed out to us several times in Australia. We came back to the van, and drove down to the estuary to spot crocodiles. Didn't see any, but saw a large hermit crab, a magnificent strangler fig tree, a green-lipped tree frog, and a small shark swimming near shore for baitfish. The bugs didn't bother me on the walks, and I was sweaty but comfortable as evaporation works well here to cool you.

Back to the resort I had a shower at 10:30. I slept well, even under a sheet for a while, as there was a nice breeze moving through the cabin all night. The resort serves a good continental breakfast buffet. We read in the room in the morning, then I ate lunch, Mom wasn't hungry. I had an excellent vegetarian open face sandwich and ice tea. The bus picked us up at 1:30 to continue the drive to Cape Tribulation. We were well rested by our sojourn; it was good we had broken the trip into two days.

The bus drove about 5 kilometers up the Bloomfield Trak, a very controversial road that has been bulldozed into the rainforest. We only went as far as the Emmogene River (a creek). The road wasn't very bad, but apparently it is wretched later on. The road constantly has slips and collapsed areas, and it washes lots of mud out that can damage the Barrier Reef. Lots of controversy over it, still on going, but it is one reason the other road was put in overland to Cook Town. We drove to Cape Tribulation and walked on the boardwalk through the forest the short distance to see the beach. It is very lovely, and I walked about 400 m through the forest to a viewing platform. There was a tree being strangled by an umbrella tree. Like a strangler fig, it too sprouts up in the branches and sends roots down, but its roots wrap directly around the tree instead of running up and down the trunk.

We went on to the highlight of the trip, the viewing tower over the rain forest. It is just on the edge of the Daintree National Park, and is a 6 story high tower you can climb. We had tea, followed by an excellently guided nature walk on the boardwalk. He explained that a large tree had fallen 3 weeks ago and opened up a hole in the canopy. He pointed out what the plants were expected to do with this bonanza of light, as very little light generally gets to the forest floor. Also, he pointed out that a lot of plants had dropped leaves with the water stress, since the rains haven't come. We learned about the rattan vine, which swoops all over the place until it finally makes it to the light, also some other vines, which are more, kinked. Everything is about getting to the light. We saw where feral pigs have rooted around, they are a huge pest, and have proven very difficult to control. The boardwalk was full of steps, but Mom did ok just walking. I carried the stroller so she had a place to sit. It all worked out. At the end I climbed up the tower, for a too brief view of the various levels of the rain forest. Spectacular, I could have spent a lot more time there.

Couple hour drive back to Cairns, where we checked back into our hotel, and then went out to Yanni's Greek Taverna. A lively place, we both had a Greek salad, Mom ordered souvlaki, and I ordered black mussels. They were excellent in flavor, in a tomato sauce, but after I realized several of them had not opened in cooking I stopped eating them. They gave us an adjustment on the cost, and offered a dessert. I wasn't very hungry by then, so couldn't eat all of it. The damper, beer and salad had filled me. Back to the hotel, I was relieved not to have any ill effects from eating the mussels. Those I had eaten were fine, and the dish had tasted so good. It was a disappointment they hadn't cooked them all long enough.

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February 13, 2002. Checked out of the hotel for a 12:50PM flight to Narita, Japan. So nice to depart on a long flight at such a civilized hour. We had some extra check in to do, as we had to pay for the oxygen, which was to be provided for Mom on the flight. \$300 Australian. Discovered that Qantas had not informed Delta, so there were some calls that had to be made. We weren't sure if we would be able to go home to Atlanta without a stopover of days in Japan. Flew to Japan anyway, Mom needed the oxygen twice during the flight for a half hour each. 7 1/2 hours. She slowly got very grey, and her color improved amazingly with the first breath of oxygen. We were met with a wheelchair, got our bags, went through the crew immigration area, and then went to the money exchange. Cash is serious stuff in Japan. You have to fill out forms, the picture on your passport is checked, and the banker does fancy hand things with the wad of money. It is a leisurely process. The two men in front of me were each converting about \$US2000 in \$100 bills to yen. Interesting. We checked into the Hotel Nikko Narita, via the shuttle. For dinner I had a Japanese meal, pictured in plastic food in the case out front. Mom had a bowl of soup.

February 14, 2002. The next morning we went down for breakfast. I had a bowl of oatmeal, Mom an omelet, and we each had a glass of fresh squeezed orange juice. It really tasted good, best orange juice we had had in a long time. It was also a \$US10 glass of orange juice for each of us. Prices in Japan are very high. That modest breakfast cost 3300 yen, which is over \$US40. We checked with Delta to see if the oxygen was coming in, and they thought it was and we went to the airport to check in. Delta only charged US\$75 for the oxygen. Went to the business class lounge. They came to pre-board Mom rode and us a wheelchair down the jetway to the plane. We walked on the plane and the guy with the wheelchair vanished. The stewardess came over and shooed us off the plane, because they were messing around setting up the oxygen and were prohibited by regulations from having passengers on board at such a time. There we were in limbo land, couldn't go back to the waiting area, forced to wait on the platform. Mom sat down right there by the door to the outside stairs, and commented that it was sure a come down compared to the business class lounge. It was cold there in Tokyo as well, about 40 degrees. Finally we were permitted to board. After take off they came by to ask if Mom wanted the oxygen, she wanted to wait awhile. About 2 hours into the flight she decided ok, so they came and opened the valve on the bottle, Mom put the nose clip on, and took a nap. An hour later the stewardess came to check the bottle, and it still read completely full. I thought something was wrong, so I started to look closely at it. The stewardess had opened the main valve, but not the flow adjuster, so Mom was getting no supplemental oxygen. By now she was pretty pale. Amazing how her color improved once I got it flowing. The bottles lasted about 2 hours and Mom had to change the nosepiece each time, as the stewardess isn't allowed to change the attachment from bottle to bottle. So neither of us got to sleep for a long time that night, but we got home all right. There was a long wait at immigration, because the several people ahead of us in the assisted line (not Americans) didn't have their papers in order. The immigration officer was pleased to have a simple "Welcome home" with 2 returning Americans. Home at last.