Martha and Belinda's Excellent Adventure: Part 3

Belinda Darcey

Day 3: Purgatory, CO to Colorado Springs, CO

Back in the car at 6:46 pm - a new record. Martha's puffy eyes and my ominously scratchy throat - the first signs of stress since leaving California. But we still have seven more days with an average of seven hours of driving per day, before we reach Vermont, so we're in serious denial mode.

Breakfast at Jake's Cafe: eggs, hash-browns and toast plus the usual double takes. This was not the first time that Martha's short hair and androgynous, baggy clothing had puzzled a stranger. (Depending on her mood, they might receive a stony stare in return, or a "How ya doin" in a voice deep enough to only confuse them further. She's somewhat kinder to kids. It's their brainless parents that send her into orbit.) Moments like these remind us of precisely why we are avoiding driving through the Deep South.

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The Pet Shop Boys and Sophie B Hawkins (rumored to be dating Jody) got us through the morning. I think we're hitting the wall so to speak. We've upped the cruising speed to 75 mph, and we've been dipping into the cooler every 10 minutes. It's jammed with our favorite little beverages: cranberry spritzers and fat little Martinelli apple juices. (Martha's come a long way since her 6-pack-a-day habit...Diet Coke). The Official Snack Box, with its Fig Newtons (aka "squashed flies"), economysized Oreos ("Hey, it's a long trip! We'll need this many...Really."), cashews, spicy tortilla chips, pretzels, and Health Valley Granola Bars helped alleviate the boredom. But after a 20 minute stop for lunchand-leg-stretch, I'm still restless, and have graduated to actively picking a fight. Martha, having already spotted the signals, refuses to engage, and opts instead to recline the passenger seat and blast Bruce through her Walkman (for the 18th time this trip!) I have no choice but to take it out on the accelerator. We start making good time. Martha nods off. Bitch.

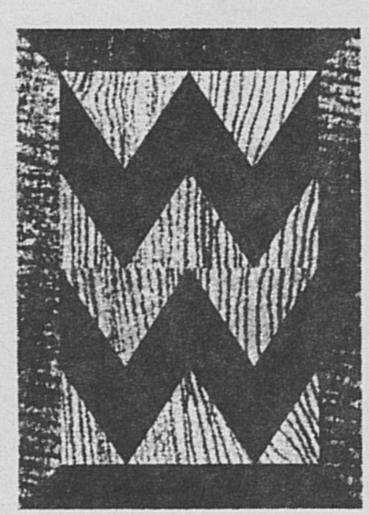
Colorado looks like Vermont. A lot. Postcard views, clean air, snow on the mountain tops... Oh God. We've really left California. What the hell are we doing moving to Vermont? Where are we going to live? What if we can't find jobs? What if there are only three other dykes there? And they hate us? And how could we move to the same town that her parents live in? And we're going to freeze our LA asses off! What the hell were we THINKING?!!

Martha surfaces about and starts admiring the fall leaves and telling me how pretty Vermont is in the winter.

We get lost coming into Colorado Springs. We (and the car) are running on empty. By the time we find the hotel, I'm too tired to argue with the uptight receptionist over the fact that "a king bed is unavailable at this time". Martha escapes to the pool. I languish about the room, have a good long cry and a hot bath.

Later, after I discover that Martha has washed and vacuumed out the car (God love her), we find some books on tape at a local mall and try shopping for a bathing suit for me (since mine was packed in the moving van). Of course I have no luck finding anything remotely attractive. All I want is a plain black one-piece. We end up at Dos Hombres, Colorado's version of a Mexican restaurant. (Not). I hope Burlington has a decent Tex-Mex/Margarita joint. Or we may just starve.

To be continued.



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