

Wednesday morning around 12:30 am we lost power and did not have it again until 10:30 am Thursday. We then lost it again at 2:00 am Friday and have now been 30 hours without power. According to the Central Hudson website, they estimate our power to be restored around 8:00 PM Sunday night. I am thankful we all were able to shower on Thursday. We were hopeful last night (Friday). Around 6:00 George got a text message from his friend Liam saying that their power had just returned. We actually cheered! Surely it would not be long before ours too would be restored—*ha, right!*

I received a text message from Helen yesterday, reading it I imagined an important telegram, “4 ft. of snow and no plows. (stop) Power out (stop) We are OK (stop) not sending more messages”.

They have a wood stove and a lot of wood so I am not too worried. I am wondering about her ducks though. Since the temperature is in the low to mid-thirties, I think the drinking water in the duck house is not freezing (they have an electric water heater for the duck water). I can't remember if their cooking range is gas or electric. If gas, she could easily melt snow for duck's water. Knowing Helen and Victor, they probably went and got the girls and they are being amused watching them waddle over the floor and furniture. I imagine them keeping paper towels readily available to pick up any messes which can then be conveniently thrown into the wood stove.

Once again, I find myself in McDonald's. Would you believe they have only one table with an electrical outlet for a laptop? So far the staff does not seem to care that I come in here once-in-awhile and order only hot tea and then proceed to sit and use their wifi. Today I was very bold; I smuggled in a bagel from Dunkin' Doughnuts to have with my tea—nothing on the McDonald's menu is too appealing.

I am worried about George's concert this afternoon. He says he won't go unless he can stick his head in snow bank, shampoo his hair, and stick it back in to rinse it. I told him I did not think that would work and I promised him we would leave early and look for a barber who would take in a walk in and give him a shampoo and a cut. George has silky, straight hair. I have never seen him with bed head and his hair looks shiny and clean. He claims it feels dirty. Compare this to my hair which is wirey and obstinate. Mine is sticking out at odd angles and clumped lopsided in various areas of my head; yet, I am brave enough to sit here in McDonald's with this head of hair. I figure maybe the staff will take pity on me, and think that I am a homeless person who comes here for an hour for hot tea, wifi, warmth, and to break up the monotony of the day.

I am thankful I have a gas range. It took me 40 minutes to melt enough snow to fill the back of our toilet with water (sometimes you just have to flush, our toilet is from the 1970's. Too bad it is not a newer water conserving model. Forty minutes was a long time to traipse back and forth between the snow bank by the door and the cooking range). Last night for dinner I made George beef fajitas. Chuck had a McDonald's burger I brought home for him, I opted for an oddly warm Hershey bar from our freezer and a large glass of cabernet.

I am still enjoying reading *Last Night In Twisted River*, if you are not a fan of John Irving you might not like it. I think it is his most Irvingesque (?) like novel to date: humans mistaken as bears, wrestling, avoidable accidents that result in tragic alterations of lives, and incest. He also weaves in aspects from previous novels, one character in *Twisted River* imagines his death caused by a car coasting down a long drive that does not see him, and then inadvertently hit and kills him (although no death resulted, similar incident in *The World According to Garp*); the same character is a writer who writes a novel, *East of Bangor*, about an orphanage in Maine that performs abortions (*Cider House Rules*); another character has lost her teenage son and forms a peculiar love towards her lover's teen son (*Widow For A Year*). I keep hoping to recognize something from my favorite Irving novel, *A Prayer For Owen Meany*. Irving also weaves in parts of his own life: prep school at Exeter Academy (or was that from one of his novels?), University of Iowa Writer's Workshop (with Kurt Vonnegut as a professor; I will have to google whether this is fact or fiction. In the novel, KV reads the manuscripts of the fledgling author and tells him that he uses way too many semi-colons. Now I am wondering if I have ever seen a semi colon in KV's direct sentences.

Yesterday afternoon Chuck and I walked down the hill to the village. I saw a tree on a power line and I wanted

to show Chuck. He thought it might be cable, not a power line. On the way up the hill we stopped and chatted with some neighbors we haven't spoken to in years (George calls them the socialist couple—where did my boy come from?) They have a short driveway so they do not have a snow blower and were shoveling wet heavy snow by hand. The woman was trying to get it off her car, someone told her it was bad for her suspension. Chuck told her he did not think it would matter. They are a nice couple and all four of us needed to commiserate about the storm, power outage, and how we were surviving.

Last night after dinner we all sat down around the fireplace. Two dogs and a cat on the hearth, the three humans absorbing the remaining heat. Chuck took out the old Coleman gasoline powered lantern. It frightens me, to me it is a lethal bomb waiting to get knocked over and instantly burn our house down. Chuck on the other hand is immensely proud of it. It is 54 years old and some years past he meticulously restored it to its original beauty. It does cast a very bright light. George and I played Trivial Pursuit by its penetrating beam. I have an unfair advantage being decades older than George and having played the game quite a bit in the 1980's. While we played, Chuck read a book on FDR in WWII and put his two cents (well more like \$10) worth in on every other question. It was an enjoyable evening.

Last night I crawled into bed fully clothed, including long underwear and the hood on my sweatshirt up. On top of the down comforter I put my full length down coat and I put a down jacket over my head to fight off the cold nose symptom that I am susceptible to.

This AM I started the fire in the fireplace using Chuck's method—no paper or kindling, only wood with a blow torch under it to get it going. It works. When going out for wood I saw the first wildlife (well I did hear coyotes the other night, but did not see them) since the storm. Three doe desperately swimming in snow over their bellies. Poor creatures.

Stay tuned.

Sally