

PVS
P.O. Box 58068
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November 29, 2020

No doubt you already know that visiting at FCI Englewood has once again been suspended until further notice. We received a notice from the front office to that effect in mid-November. Since I was assuming that I would be sending you a postcard soon, I did not write as I am not allowed to do both. However, I should have resumed letter writing sooner.

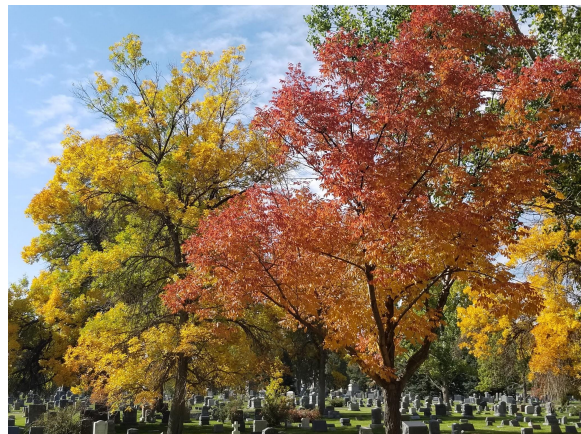
None of this is a surprise, of course, as we are now in a third wave of the pandemic, worse than in the spring. The virus is now more widespread in the community and many are in denial. There are more cases in the complex where I live, but so far (knock on wood) none have appeared in my particular building. Unfortunately, that does not appear to be the case where you are. The map of covid cases shows 110 active cases among inmates today and 27 among staff. Holy Cow! No wonder visiting is shut down. All I can say is that it is my fervent hope that you are safe and well and being cautious.

I wonder how restricted things have become for you in this latest go-round? Locked in unit? No meals in dining hall? That has to be hard. For me, things have not changed that much although I have gone back to ordering groceries for pick up rather than venturing inside the grocery store. I still make a point of getting out for my walk every day. But I have taken to setting an alarm an hour before sunset to make sure I set out in time before it gets dark. Here are some recent scenes from my limited rounds:



Sunset on Oct 20. Could be still tainted with smoke.

Fall color on Oct 9. All the leaves are long gone now. And a milkweed pod sowing seeds.





Remember the prickly white flower with the insect harvesting its pollen in my September letter? Well, here is what teasels look like now.



Finally, here is some kind of nest or hive left exposed by the wind.

Deer have returned to the woods next to the cemetery. Last year I think I sent a postcard showing a buck who was overseeing the herd. So far this year, I have not seen the buck. Perhaps the herd is smaller as there is more construction going on in the area.

Thanksgiving was different this year with no family get-togethers. But nearly everyone in my extended family (spread from east coast to west coast) managed to get on a zoom call for a while in the afternoon. It is hardly perfect, yet it is something. The power went out in the middle of the call where I was and I had to rejoin on my phone, which meant scrolling through screens to see everyone in their little cell, like Hollywood Squares. But at least I was able to do that much to stay connected. Later, my son called and put his nearly-three year old on zoom. He likes to get up close and personal and take over the whole screen.

So as I say these things, I know I am describing capabilities and access that you do not share and it pains me that you do not. I hope the free phone time policy has continued, and that you have access to the phone. And that calls actually get through and find the one you want to talk to at the other end. It wasn't that many years ago that holiday calling, especially to places like Florida, frequently ran into "your call cannot be completed at this time; please try again later."

Of course, there is other strangeness going on this month -- but I won't go there.