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Subject: Postcard 08

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Ominous clouds gathered over the La Sal mountains, far in the distance. In the immediate vicinity, the trail to Delicate Arch – symbol of the park, emblem of the state of Utah, international icon – beckoned. We were in Arches NP. We drove past Park Avenue, past Windows Arches, past Balanced Rock, to get a crack at Delicate Arch before it rained.





The trail is primarily across slickrock and is identified with stone cairns. The hike is deceptively strenuous, a 485 ft. elevation gain that surprises those mothers with babies, Mennonites in long black skirts and middle-aged Minnesota couples who try it. We made good time, knowing that slickrock is a poor environment if it's raining and lightning. (We acknowledge this word is not certified. But we like it). The clouds were getting closer and darker and the storm front was preceded by 25 mph winds.

On a narrow ledge we crossed paths with said Minnesota couple. They wouldn't cede their safe spot along the wall so we moved to the left lane to avoid seeing, and maybe causing, a Minnesota myocardial infarct. But from that vantage point we noticed a rock window about 50 feet up. And had to go look.



Through the window we saw Delicate Arch as we had never seen it.



And through the window came gale force winds. At one point a gust pushed me so hard I dropped the camera (ha ha, it was strapped to my wrist) and I grabbed the wall with both hands. Yikes.





Our jackets and pants were flapping and snapping. I took video of Sheila because the still photos don't do the wind justice. Want to watch? Fuhget about it – I clearly have no idea how to take video with this camera.

We clambered down and rounded the bend to see...



...Delicate Arch, up close (well, 150 feet away, maybe) and personal.

It wouldn't be much farther for us to get right under the arch. But in order to get our picture there we had to enlist the help of a friendly looking stranger. Friendly, eager, well intentioned, and couldn't frame a damn picture. Oh well. So imagine a top to the arch.



We left Delicate Arch and began the trek back, following the cairns and taking heart in some blue sky we had left behind.



Angry raven.



Dinner in Moab – Southwest Shepherd’s Pie, Shrimp Pasta with Artichoke Pesto, Flourless Chocolate Terrine with Raspberry Sauce redux.

D&S

PS – We crammed more stuff in today before it rained. Which it did. Which it still is. We’ll pass it along on our wash day to save you from pictures of the Laundromat.