

2018 Week 42: The Week Ending Saturday,  
October 20th

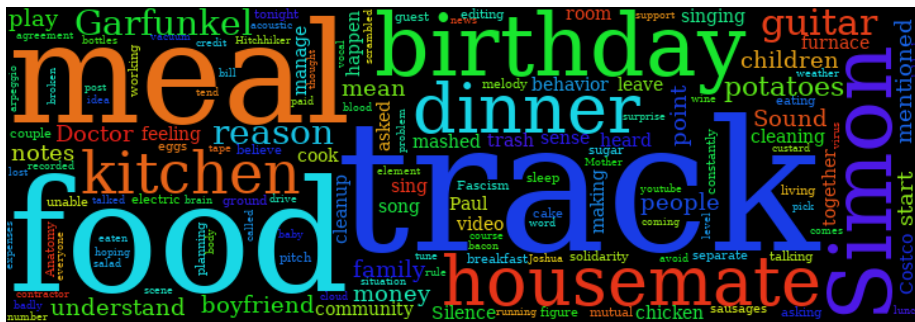


Figure 1: Word Cloud

## Sunday

We had an exceptional dinner last night. Grace made a delicious eggplant lasagna out of the eggplant our friends grew. We baked it in a giant stainless steel baking dish that our friend Joy brought here. We had salad from Costco and baked sweet potatoes and leftover wine. It was a terrific hippie repast. For dessert, Veronica had made two coconut custard pies — basically, an egg custard she made with unsweetened canned coconut cream. She flavored the custard with cinnamon and molasses. We found that we were out of sugar, so molasses was the only sweetener, and unfortunately that didn't quite work — the custard needed just a little more sweetening. But we're very happy she's getting the chance to experiment in the kitchen, and learning how to come up with her own recipes. If we make coconut custard pies again, we'll try making them a little bit differently.

### “The Sounds of Silence” (1964 Simon and Garfunkel Song) and “The Sound of Silence (1965 Retitled Remix)

After cleaning up, I went down into the basement and did a little bit of singing. I've been working on learning the vocal parts to Simon and Garfunkel's song

“The Sound of Silence.” There are only two parts, so it isn’t that challenging to remember the parts, but my voice is quite rusty. I was singing through my Boss RC-30 Loop Station. I would sing Paul Simon’s part, which is the lower part. It’s pretty simple, as he used a lot of repeating notes, only changing pitch a few times. Then I’d try to sing Art Garfunkel’s part, the well-known melody, over the first part. The melody swoops way up and so it requires a pretty wide range to sing... and I don’t have that. I can almost get there if I warm up for a while first, but I’m still really straining at the top end, so I have to try tricks like dropping an octave halfway when I cross a certain threshold pitch. I can also try dropping the key, but because the melody covers such a wide range, I’m not sure there is *any* key I can sing that melody in.

Today I found a video on YouTube that includes four tracks. I was imagining that maybe this video contains four tracks from the original multi-track tape because the original was a four-track tape, but I’m not sure that is true. In the comments to the video, the poster linked to five **.wav** files on Google Drive. These match the four tracks in the video, but there is an extra bass track. Was that one of the tracks on the original multi-track tape? Again, I have more questions than answers. Floating around online are stories that say that the multi-tracks may be lost or unusable, and indeed even the earliest-generation monaural or stereophonic masters may be lost or unusable as well. So what is the pedigree of these four (or five) tracks? I have no idea, but they probably didn’t come from anything close to the original recording session tapes.

Anyway, examining the four tracks in that video:

### **Track One: Drums and Bass**

These may have been recorded together along with one of the electric guitar tracks played in the room at the same time, since there’s audible bleed. It’s a very unremarkable rhythm section, as rhythm sections go.

### **Track Two: Electric Guitar**

There’s a track that contains, I believe, three electric guitar parts; the second and third were probably overdubbed onto the first arpeggio track, which is tricky because you can’t undo mistakes. The first few notes of this track has *acoustic* guitar arpeggio parts, and then it morphs into the electric guitar part.

The arpeggio part is a good *part*, as far as the composition goes, but I find the performance questionable. The guitar playing the arpeggio is out of tune, noticeably. This may have been deliberate, in an attempt to “thicken” the mix with a primitive chorus effect. Then there are two unremarkable parts layered on top of it, and those two parts seem to be even more badly out of tune. The parts blend especially badly at about the 8:10 mark, near the end. The worst thing about these overdubbed guitar parts, in my opinion, is that in the final mix, they make it sound to me like the *vocals* are drifting out of tune. My ear assumes the tuning of the accompaniment is correct and stable, and so tends

to assign blame to the singers, when their pitch wanders away from the guitar parts' pitches. It's only in isolation that I can hear how bad the electric guitar tracks really are.

### **Track Three: Art**

The third track is Art Garfunkel's part. There's a little bleed with acoustic guitar and Paul Simon's voice, so they may have recorded these tracks in the same room together, or else maybe it was in his headphones and he was singing along with Paul Simon's track. Garfunkel is right on pitch and his voice really soars here, with a little vibrato and tremolo. It's beautiful. I've heard that he may have overdubbed another pass, but it's not really clear to me that he did; it doesn't sound "thickened," the way double-tracked vocals do.

### **Track Four: Paul**

The fourth track is Paul Simon singing the low part. It's a decent performance, in that Simon conveys some emotion to match the emotions in Garfunkel's tracks. There are definitely some technical flaws, though. Simon's pitch drifts briefly off-key here and there. It's very noticeable at about 11:52, on the word "sleeping," and on the phrase "teach you" at about 13:31, and again at about 14:10 on the word "forming." I'm not actually writing this to criticize Simon; it's better than I could do without a little auto-tune. He also plays an acoustic guitar on this track — in fact he recorded his vocal while accompanying himself on guitar, which would make it extra-challenging to get a perfect vocal take. I think there's also a second acoustic guitar part overdubbed, with some higher chord voicings thrown in here and there.

I always find it pretty fascinating to come across these source tracks for songs I have only heard in their final form. Until reading about this song over the last couple of days, I had always thought that it was Paul Simon singing the melody part — after all, his name comes first in "Simon and Garfunkel," and Art Garfunkel sang the backing track. It's just the opposite. And in fact Simon used quite a simple and unassuming backing part that lets Garfunkel's part stand out.

There's another interesting video that analyzes the harmony, and demonstrates how hard it is to add a third part which doesn't inadvertently double any of the notes in the existing two parts; it's hard to avoid this, because Simon's part is quite atypical as harmony parts go, with its runs of repeated pitches. It doesn't follow Garfunkel's part much as that part moves up and down the scale, but tends to land on just a few notes and stay on them for a while. In the video, Aimee Nottle speculates on just *why* Simon used such a "droning" part. She comes up with the generous interpretation that Simon did it this way in order to fade into the background a bit and let Garfunkel shine.

For my part (ha ha), I think there's a simpler answer. Those repeating "droning" notes would be relatively easy to hit while playing *and* standing next to someone

who was singing a different series of notes. I know that in the church group I played with a number of years ago, I'd sometimes have to play a guitar part while singing harmony, when everyone around me was singing the melody. That can be tricky, and I found it difficult. Of course, I was no Paul Simon and still am not. But in his early twenties, I think the real Paul Simon probably also found it a little difficult. So it's my theory that he wrote a deliberately simple part that would be relatively easy for him to sing alongside Art Garfunkel, a part that would let him "anchor" his pitch on a few easy-to-find notes, while splitting his concentration so that he could also play a steady accompaniment on guitar.

In my recent reading about the song, I discovered that the song was initially a flop, but the producer Tom Wilson added the drums, bass, and electric guitars *without Simon and Garfunkel's knowledge or consent*. That's pretty stunning. The original was called "The Sounds of Silence" (plural, which makes more sense given the lyric, where the narrator finds the sound of silence in different places). And to me, it simply sounds a lot better without the extra instruments. In that original version, I can hear the harmonies much more clearly, and nothing sounds badly off-key.

Grace was pretty wiped out today and it took her a long time to get moving. The kids made some oatmeal and I made bacon and scrambled eggs and a pot of tea. We ate some of the 100% rye bread from Mother Loaf and it was terrific. It is a very high-fiber bread, and extremely filling, so we didn't really regret only buying one pound of it.

I have some news, which I don't think I've mentioned here yet: we have a date scheduled for Grace's C-section. It's December 14th, a Friday. That means if Grace's obstetrician doesn't decide to intervene earlier, due to problems with Grace's health, or any worrying signs from the baby, that will be the baby's birthday. But we know from experience that surprises often happen late in pregnancy.

After breakfast, which was more like a very late lunch, there was kitchen cleanup, kids to shove outside to play on this beautiful Fall day, fights to break up, etc. I haven't gotten much of anything done today.

### **Sam is Twelve**

It's Sam's birthday and he's twelve years old. We will have a birthday dinner tonight, at his request, and a cake designed to his specifications. That's how we traditionally celebrate birthdays.

I'm not sure we'll manage to get a podcast recorded and produced tonight. In fact I'm pretty sure we're going to blow it again. It's almost 8:30 and Grace just got back from a grocery run, and cooking is just getting underway now. The kitchen is crowded with kids and our housemate and her boyfriend, but I'd better shut this down and go see what I can do to help.

## Monday

### My Meltdown

Well, things went pretty badly last night, to my regret.

Just a few minutes after I wrote the last few words under Sunday's entry, Grace asked me to come into the kitchen to help her get the cake ready. I found that our housemate was deep-frying chicken wings on the stove and making mashed potatoes for herself, her boyfriend, and her family, *while* Grace was trying to finish up preparing a three-course meal: greens cooked with a smoked ham hock, sausages, and... *mashed potatoes*. (Sam had asked for "bangers and mash.") *Everyone* was in the kitchen.

She *usually* cooks before or after we do. But this time she was trying to cook a separate meal, with a dangerous pot of boiling oil on the stove, in the midst of a kitchen already fully occupied; the occupants included several young children who like to grab things on the stove.

Grace did not mind everyone in the kitchen trying to work on things at once, but I lost my cool.

There's quite a bit of back-story.

I had told our housemate a couple of times that we were planning a birthday dinner for Sam, and that she and her boyfriend and her kids were invited to join us.

Very often, our housemate doesn't care to eat what we cook, and so makes a separate meal. That's been an ongoing source of conflict, for several reasons, including the fact that she rarely cleans up after herself. Given that we cook almost all our meals, if someone else messes up the kitchen and promises to clean it up "later," there's only really a little bit of "later" before we need to use the kitchen again. So, "cleanup delayed is cleanup denied." Out of simple necessity, I wind up doing most of the cleanup from those extra meals. That often includes deep-cleaning the oven and stovetop, due to the regular boil-overs and drips and spills that would have been a lot easier to clean up on the fly, before they were burned on.

Very often, she and her boyfriend won't even clear the dishes from these separate meals, or clean up the food their children spill on the floor while eating these separate meals. So we very often have to do that cleanup too, when we want to eat our own meals.

The time I spend on cleaning up these separate meals is time I don't have to read my kids a bedtime story, or talk with Grace, or work on a podcast, or do my own reading, or writing. I spend it cleaning up after people who won't clean up after themselves.

It's tempting to say or think that I should just leave it until they feel the need to clean up — but we're talking about people whose tolerance for mess seems to

have no limit. So I generally have been blinking first. And with our housemate's work schedule, she has often not been around so that we can *ask* her to clean up after herself.

## Sugar

The details are tedious to recount, but it's become absurd, and Grace and I can no longer make any sense of her food preferences; we have tried our best to accommodate them. The accommodation never goes the other way, if it requires them to inconvenience themselves or stretch themselves in even the slightest way.

One of my triggers yesterday was sugar cereals. Our housemate insists on bringing products like Cap'n Crunch's Sprinkled Donut Crunch cereal into our home. The existence of this kind of thing in the house is too much of a temptation for a couple of my younger kids, who tend to steal these sugary foods when adults aren't looking. It's easy to say "well, that's the parent's fault!" But a three-year-old has simply not developed the parts of his brain necessary for exercising self-control. The machinery just isn't there yet. It ought to be there in a seven-year-old, but it doesn't always work.

Anyway, she becomes resentful when our three-year-old, or seven-year-old gets into the pantry or the freezer to get at the sugary foods.

Our response to this is to explain that this is *why* we don't bring food like this into the house. I'll bring a dessert for our Friday evening dinners; it is for consumption *that evening*, so the kids don't have to restrain themselves for very long. We really don't want this kind of food in storage, in the house.

Her response is to tell us that we should beat our kids so they will obey us.

So, we couldn't convince her; the sugar cereals thus became contraband. She's smuggle that stuff in, and hide items upstairs.

Well — surprise — bright kids are bright enough to find hiding places.

## Birthdays

We have made it a point to celebrate her birthday, and her boyfriend's birthday, and their children's birthdays — Grace has made *several* special meals and special cakes for them, for each birthday as it comes up.

But they weren't planning to share Sam's birthday dinner with us, because of this degree of food pickiness that, to us, has become worse and worse over time, until at present it is completely incomprehensible. She told us she couldn't eat sausages — that sausages made her gag. But she had sausages for breakfast. And speaking of breakfast — I made a lot of scrambled eggs and bacon. But she wouldn't eat them. She wouldn't eat the bacon, because she wanted to eat her own sausages. Which she then cooked... in the fat from the bacon. She didn't want to eat the scrambled eggs I made, but I think she then made her own scrambled eggs... by scrambling some more of the same eggs.

The previous night, we had served pre-made mashed potatoes from Costco. They were very tasty. Her boyfriend wouldn't eat them. He wanted to boil and mash his own potatoes, which he did while we were eating. But he doesn't really know how to cook, so I had to help him cook his potatoes, while we were cleaning up, because if I hadn't intervened, they would have burned up on the stove.

So anyway, the night of Sam's birthday, she was making a pot of mashed potatoes, from the same potatoes that Grace was cooking, to make a pot of mashed potatoes. I can't understand why. Maybe she likes them without the skins? Maybe she likes them made slightly differently? But for whatever reason she wasn't willing to work that out with Grace (and we bend over backwards to accommodate requests). She couldn't work out sharing a pot of mashed potatoes. She had to make her own, at the same time that we were making mashed potatoes. It's just gotten incomprehensible. We can't make any sense of it.

She wasn't planning to sit down and join us to help celebrate Sam's birthday. She was planning to feed herself, her boyfriend, and her kids in the kitchen, since we wouldn't let them take food upstairs, while we ate Sam's birthday dinner and sang happy birthday for him, a few feet away in the family room.

We didn't actually *need* her and her boyfriend and kids to eat the fucking sausages. They were welcome to cook something else. But we did expect them to sit down at the table with us and sing "Happy Birthday" for our child, the way we've done for both of them and each of their children.

I think that was another trigger for me — seriously? You can't even sit with us to help celebrate a child's birthday, as we did for your birthday, and your children's birthdays?

### **So Many Reasons**

My rant last night was mostly about food, but there was certainly a lot more pent-up resentment in it — resentment over seven months of annoyances and grievances and carelessness and requests ignored and promises broken. This includes the complete trashing of our upstairs bedroom with food — food stored up there, food eaten up there, our dishes and silverware and glasses vanishing upstairs and not reappearing for weeks — after we asked them from day one not to keep food in the room, for sanitary reasons.

In this blog I've mentioned the smoking, and the trash left in the driveway and yard. There are a lot more things. There's their insistence on throwing trash in our recycling bin, which means the recycling isn't picked up, which means I have to dump it out in the driveway and sort out the rotting garbage, with clouds of flies buzzing around. We've explained how the trash, recycling, and returnables work in Michigan. But they won't separate out returnables, either — they almost always wind up in the trash or recycling. Which means that people desperately in need of money are literally throwing money away. I guess that's

some kind of pride issue, because they think only the poorest of the poor return bottles? By comparison to them, I am wealthy, but I'm not too proud to return bottles and cans, at least the ones from my own household. I'm not even too proud to dig through the trash to pick out the returnables they won't bother with.

There are more things still, that I just can't make sense of.

I constantly remind myself that she had a very different background and upbringing than I did. But then I think about it — the years raised by a single mother, living in a trailer, eligible for social security, with my mom trying to get my father to pay child support, and I think that we ought to have quite a bit in common.

I remind myself that she is still pretty young, and I certainly was not always responsible when I was her age. I remind myself of this especially when I suspect she is just nodding along with what we are asking her to do, with no intention of doing it. It's just ordinary adolescent behavior. That doesn't mean it isn't maddening. I try not to get worked up about things that are "merely" cultural differences. I try not to see them through the racist lenses that my upbringing gave me. It's a challenge. Where is the line between taking offense at cultural differences, and taking offense at careless indifference towards others? How can I continue to show compassion and solidarity when I'm "triggered?"

I'm constantly second-guessing my reactions, and swallowing my feelings of resentment reflexively as they arise. I'm constantly asking myself "What if I'm just being racist? Or demonstrating a lack of class consciousness?"

The whole point of our family Catholic worker house was not to be a cafeteria, or a kitchen, or an apartment. It was to live in community. Living in community is often *uncomfortable*. There's inevitably some friction. But adults work these things out and figure out how to work together in mutual support.

There's no "mutual" going on here.

We don't seem to be able to establish what that even is. Their approaches to interpersonal behavior and work and responsibility, and their relationships to the place they are living, just seems so very, very different from ours that we are really having a hard time finding common ground; the common ground that we expected we would develop over the months of living together.

My months of resentment at the way we've been fundamentally unable to come to *any* stable agreements around how to manage food and meals or, well, *anything* boiled over, and I just *lost it* until I was screaming at them as loudly as I could, bellowing about how their garbage food is going to give their children diabetes and rotten teeth, raging about how much food they waste, and how they are spending their scarce cash on junk food in the midst of all the healthy food they could possibly eat.

I did not actually tell them they had to leave, but they left.



## Aftermath

After that, I finished assembling the cake — a store-bought angel food cake cut in half and filled with a blueberry compote and topped with a grape-flavored frosting, per Sam’s request. (Store-bought cake was the best we could do, unfortunately, given Grace’s energy level, and how late we were doing everything.)

We had a an awkward birthday dinner. The mashed potatoes in particular were delicious, but I could barely taste them. We didn’t light candles. We sang, but it seemed like our hearts weren’t in it.

It was never my intention to ruin my sweet, patient, diligent, twelve-year-old boy’s birthday dinner. I feel pretty terrible about that. I guess it wasn’t ruined, exactly, but the mood was pretty muted. And then we spent the next hour or so talking with the kids about what had happened, because there wasn’t anything else anyone could think about.

I’m not sure what happens next. I’m not even sure what they did next. They all left, and they might have driven to her boyfriend’s mother’s house to sleep, but I’m not sure about that. They may have slept in his car, in the driveway, since I think they were there, in the car, when I left yesterday. But I don’t know for sure. Maybe they came back early this morning and were waiting for me to leave for work before they came in the house.

Grace and I were too wired and upset to go to sleep. So after kitchen cleanup, which was finally finished around midnight, I read Benjamin a Clifford book, and read the older boys the second part of the introduction to *The Anatomy of Fascism*, and we again talked about what the many terms meant. Grace came to bed after a while, but we stayed up talking until — well, I don’t even know what time it was. It was probably after three. It might have been four.

So, not a great night’s sleep. Sam got up about eight and started humming to himself and putting away the dishes. I got into the bathtub about nine. I didn’t leave our driveway until about 10:00. I needed a coffee. I was quite late to work.

## Ground Rules and Solidarity

I’m sure there are lessons to learn from this whole experience, but I don’t think Grace and I are quite ready to unpack them all yet. But there are a few things that it seems like we were in agreement on, when we spoke about all this last night:

- Our ground rules were important to us.
- Most of our *actual* ground rules seemed so inherently obvious to us that we left them unspoken.
- When these were constantly broken, we tended to believe that our guests had broken them only accidentally.
- Because of this framing, we’d bring them up *apologetically*.

- We never set clearly defined consequences for repeatedly breaking the ground rules.

Grace and I are both so different from our guests, in terms of class and culture and education, that we have had a very hard time understanding pretty much anything about their behavior — we anticipated having some difficulties, but the difficulties were much greater than we anticipated. Very often, we just found ourselves literally dumbstruck by their behavior, unable to understand or even really process what we were seeing. And we'd just kind of go blank in such circumstances. "Going blank" generally turned into "ignoring it and hoping it would go away."

As you can no doubt tell, we're doing a lot of second-guessing our behavior. Well, at least I am. I think for various reasons Grace is better at maintaining a clear sense of limits, as well as maintaining her equanimity when her limits are challenged. I think part of that is due to her experiences with her family of origin. Her family was in many ways more stable and less marginalized than mine; she had more community, and more role models.

We've been trying to err on the side of constant compassion and forgiveness because it's not lost on us that they are the more economically vulnerable ones here, and they have suffered a lot of traumas already. In fact my whole intent in agreeing to host our housemate and her children was to give her and her children a chance to decompress and enjoy a little stability in a supportive environment. I don't think that ever actually happened, for reasons that didn't have a lot to do with what we were offering. She didn't ever seem to be able to accept what we were actually offering, which was *mutual support*, not a hotel.

### **Solidarity For Never**

One idea I keep coming back to is the idea of solidarity, and how it has to be there for a sense of community to develop. We may literally have just not had enough shared cultural background for this *ever* to work out. To us, it was obvious that since we weren't charging rent, we were offering community centered around things *other* than financial transactions.

I'm really not sure she ever managed to understand that.

I keep coming back to the idea that eating communally *must* be the center of any kind of communal life, for both practical and spiritual reasons.

Practically, feeding thirteen people out of one refrigerator and one pantry, in a home with one kitchen, simply required planning, even if only to figure out where the food would be stored and how to stay out of each other's way. Also practically, our meals together would be pretty much the only time we'd talk with our guest and her family; it was the time we had to raise concerns and work out agreements about all manner of things. It was the time to work on understanding each other. We expected to share meals with reasonable regularity, at least dinners.

And, mostly, that didn't happen.

Spiritually, meals together are for us a sort of unofficial sacrament. Our housemate is a Christian, but raised in some evangelical Protestant communities with... well, let's just say the everyday theology she was raised with was apparently different than the Episcopalian and Presbyterian theology Grace and I were raised on. And me, I can barely call myself a functioning Christian, but yet I still try to practice my Christian values.

Again, I'm not sure she or her boyfriend ever understood any of what we are trying to do with our family and community on a spiritual level, even as it manifests around something as basic and practical as a daily meal together; it's not like we were inviting them to sing hymns or attend hours-long prayer vigils.

### **And... Stress**

Another frustrating and sad aspect to all this is that I feel like I might not have let things get to this point, had we not been so constantly driven to distraction and worry by our own financial situation. But as that situation has dragged on and on, and eaten up most of my available credit, we have found ourselves dangerously tight on money. As the one who manages the money every day, most of that stress falls on me.

Under these circumstances, wasted food (which is wasted money), surprise expenses, emergency expenses, surprise messes, and all the other surprises became kind of "of a piece" to me, all potential triggers for the kind of meltdown I had last night.

I have general strategies to avoid the situations that might stress me beyond my ability to manage that result, but they failed me last night. I didn't *want* to go in the kitchen to help with everything going on, but I didn't want to refuse to help Grace, either, especially once she had asked me. I'm *here* to help her. But things went very wrong. I have to figure out what that is telling me, and what to do about it.

I have to work with Grace to see if there's anything more we can do for our guest and her family, to help ease the transition. We had *already* asked her to find a way to move out as soon as she was able. It was never in our plans to throw anyone out in this manner. Given our failures in communication and mounting frustrations, I don't actually have much confidence that it really could have gone any other way. Maybe it's a blessing in disguise; maybe she never really *believed* that we were getting frustrated with them, at least not enough to do anything about it, until this moment.

To avoid this kind of thing we would have needed to build up that trust and solidarity and community starting on day one, and continue building it, and while we kept trying, we just were unable to get our guests to reciprocate. I'm leaving out the details of a lot of interactions that demonstrated, to me, chronic low-level dishonesty and manipulative behavior. So to me it seems, ultimately,

like there really was no solidarity, no “mutual” in “mutual support.” Although early on, it seemed promising.

If we’re to figure out how to avoid disastrous failed attempts at community like this in the future, we’ve got to understand more about how successful Catholic Worker houses function. But I think we’ve also got to try to ensure that the people living with us are willing to work at being in solidarity and community with *us*, too.

I’m so tired today that I’m dizzy. I haven’t heard any news from home. I got in so late that I won’t get home until about 8:00 this evening.

Stinkbugs are flying around my office today, crawling on my computer screen and my coat and dropping onto my desk. Last fall and winter I was careful not to harm them. This year I’m just throwing them on the floor and stepping on them, stink be damned.

## Tuesday

Last night when we got home our guests were there. They didn’t come down all evening, though. I really didn’t want to see them, and the feeling was likely mutual.

I guess we did succeed at achieving something “mutual,” but it sure isn’t support.

I’m still second-guessing myself and asking — did I bring all that poison, distrust, and hostility? But then I remember the constant lying, and tell myself “no.”

Grace has spoken to our guests. They are working on a plan to move out soon.

It’s funny how we actually asked them to leave about six weeks ago, but we haven’t heard about any progress at all towards an actual estimated date, until the day after I blew up at them.

If we have to tiptoe around each other like this until they are finally all moved out, it’s gonna be a real slog for me.

We had steak and salad and got to bed about midnight. I read Benjamin a Little Critter book before bed, but it was getting too late to read a story for the older kids afterwards. I had hoped that we might watch the second episode of *Doctor Who*, but that didn’t happen; it took us too long to get everything cleaned up. We had to send the kids back down the road with diapers and extra trash, rinse recyclable bottles that were piled up in the laundry room, fold laundry, get a dish load going, hand-wash pots and pans, etc.

The sirloin cap steaks from Costco weren’t as good as they were before. I’m not sure how to account for that. Maybe they weren’t as fresh, since they had been in the refrigerator since Friday. Maybe it just wasn’t as tasty a cut of meat this time. They weren’t as tender as the last ones. We found ourselves wishing for steak sauce.

I wound up leaving my lunch at home again. Maybe I can bring it tomorrow.

There was no news about the proposed rental agreement for our old house yesterday. I'll ask Grace tonight if she's heard anything.

I had breakfast at Harvest Moon Café and got to work at a better time. I didn't do any reading, but I did work on editing a few more pages of this blog text, from the first quarter.

I'll make a small Costco run this evening. Maybe we'll have time to watch *Doctor Who*.

## Wednesday

So, Tuesday night we got through dinner before it was too late, and we managed to watch *Doctor Who*, although Grace and I were both pretty tired, and so perhaps not at our TV-watching best. I tried to avoid any contact with our housemates. In fact I was feeling myself heading into full-on panic attack territory whenever I saw them — a deeply unpleasant feeling of being unable to catch my breath. Grace and I stayed up talking things out for a while before going to sleep, and that was comforting, and helped.

### ***Doctor Who* Series 11, Episode 2: “The Ghost Monument”**

Last week I wrote:

They've set up a *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* moment with the ending.

This was a reference to the scene where Arthur Dent and Ford Prefect are thrown out of an airlock by the Vogons. It's ridiculously improbable that they could be rescued by a passing spaceship, but they are. The Doctor and her companions are also rescued, but by *two* passing spaceships, piloted by two contestants in some kind of competition, and so are split up. We never really get a good explanation for why the contestants pick them up. In *Hitchhiker's*, it happens because the Infinite Improbability Drive, which passes through every point in the Universe, also tends to do things that are extremely improbable along the way. It's mentioned that the competitors Angstrom and Epzo have picked up “bonuses,” but it's never mentioned how or why kidnapping people will give them any kind of bonus in the game. At least, I don't recall hearing any explanation.

The look and feel of these spaceships are heavily *Millennium Falcon*-ish. They are quite impressive. But the storytelling is a little less than impressive. None of the characters seem to have suffered any harm at all from their brief exposure to hard vacuum. People don't literally “explode” when briefly exposed to vacuum, but it's awfully hard on the body. I'm pretty sure I've talked about this before, in the context of the only vacuum-exposure scene I've ever found at all convincing — Bowman's exposure to vacuum in *2001: A Space Odyssey*. There's a very brief nod to some kind of medical procedures, but it isn't very convincing. Even

elsewhere in the *Doctor Who* continuity, brief exposure to vacuum is shown to have some hard consequences; it blinds the Twelfth Doctor.

There are some decent and funny and entertaining scenes in this show, but none really made me say “wow.” There’s a gag where a cigar saves everyone’s lives, which is pretty funny, but the elements that went into that scene were telegraphed hard in advance, so I wound up knowing exactly how it was going to play out before it happened. It was still pretty funny to have such a Freudian joke in a story about the first female Doctor. At one point the group went running through a corridor in some kind of industrial plant, and I yelled out “Running through corridors! Now it’s *finally Doctor Who!*”

I think part of the episode’s weakness is that a number of the many plot elements were introduced by “telling,” and never reinforced by “showing.” For example, we’re told that the planet’s water is dangerous because it is filled with flesh-eating micro-organisms. So I was *expecting* to see this demonstrated at some point, but it never was. When the group repairs the ship, they talk about how they have to align the solar panels, and then we cut to a scene where we hear that they have done it, but we don’t see them doing it. And over the whole course of the story, no one seems to actually become dehydrated, weakened, or even mildly inconvenienced by the brutal heat of the desert planet.

The episode ends with a touching lesson in coöperation. But later, Grace and I were discussing this scene, and Grace mentioned that it isn’t clear to her *why* Angstrom decided to help Epzo and share the prize money. I think she has a good point. *He* wouldn’t have done it for *her*, and she could really use the *whole* prize in order to rescue her family members; the original setup suggests that giving up some of her prize money might cost the lives of some of her family members. The ending was touching, but doesn’t really fit very well with the story elements that the script has set up.

The new TARDIS “desktop” (the redesigned interior) does look cool as hell. And I have to admit, we all laughed at the notion that the console now contains a cookie dispenser. Does the TARDIS bake them fresh, though? I mean, wouldn’t time travel play havoc with “best by” dates?

I think I should cosplay the Thirteenth Doctor for Halloween. I’m wondering if I can find the appropriate trench coat, t-shirt, and suspenders.

## Viruses

I was a little bit concerned about Grace, because she woke up in the middle of Tuesday night shivering, and seemed a clammy and slightly feverish. I am not concerned about some kind of minor viral infection. I’m concerned about either something like a full-blown influenza that could leave her dehydrated and in trouble, or even an enterovirus, since she’s around kids so often. In the back of my mind is also the strange *aerococcus urinae* bacterial infection she had at the end of her pregnancy with Benjamin. But she seemed to feel better during the

day yesterday, and was not running a fever at all, and her blood pressure was good. So for now I'm going to assume it was probably just a mild viral infection she was fighting.

### **The Tahoe Breaks Down**

Early Wednesday afternoon Grace sent me a text at work, to tell me that her car, the Tahoe, had abruptly broken down in traffic while she was driving Joshua to the library. So we had a complicated situation. I took half a discretionary day and left work early. But my car only has two seats in it, and she needed to get Joshua home in time for a piano lesson. So she had the towtruck driver meet her there, and arranged for his piano teacher to *also* meet her there to take Joshua back to the house, while she rode with the driver out to Monro Muffler Brake & Service on Washtenaw near Carpenter. I met her there. They were not able to immediately figure out what was wrong with the truck, so we left it.

I had not eaten lunch and neither had Grace, so we went to the Pho House on Washtenaw for noodles, and talked over some of the things we're trying to get done.

While we were eating, Monro called. The Tahoe needs a fuel pump. With new spark plugs and wires and fuel injector service, that is going to run about \$1,400. We were kind of hoping to spend that money on, among other things, getting our gas boiler serviced so we can turn on the heat. But we told them to go ahead. They said it might be done by the end of the day, or Thursday morning. So that seems promising.

### **The Second Old Furnace**

We still have not scheduled duct-cleaning at the old house. It's just one of the things that we've put off to the point of nearly forgetting about it, after the contractor we paid never actually completed the work.

The latest furnace contractor who looked over the second furnace in the old house told us that it actually seems to be working reasonably well, and the heat exchanger is *not* cracked. A previous contractor told us that it was unsafe to use and could produce carbon monoxide due to its cracked heat exchanger. It seems like perhaps he was just lying to us. This is the kind of thing we have *constantly* had to contend with, when dealing with contractors in the Saginaw area. We rarely came across any who seemed trustworthy. I'm not going to claim the contractors in Washtenaw County by comparison are all honest and forthright, because we've had some bad experiences working with people here, too, but in Saginaw it was pretty much the rule, and here it seems to be the exception.

But that's good news in a way — we can get the furnaces up and running in the old house without replacing both of them. Replacing the main furnace will be only about \$3,000.

I probably could put \$2,000 of that on a credit card and pay a thousand of it in cash. Well, I mean I probably *could* have done that if the car hadn't broken down this week. I might still be able to do it using my overdraft line of credit. But I think I'm only willing to do that *if* we have a signed lease agreement, so that I'm pretty sure we'll start getting some money in, so that I can pay it off quickly.

We haven't heard back from our realtor who, when last we heard, was looking over the lease agreement with her attorney.

The latest contractor also told us that no, he couldn't easily remove the old furnaces from the crawlspace. It has to be done by either busting open a very heavy-duty masonry wall, or by cutting up the pieces of the old furnaces *in situ* in the crawlspace and pulling them out through the rather small door into the crawlspace. (I suppose tearing open the floor from the family room above might also be an option, but that seems even worse.) In any case, he told us, he isn't equipped to do those things.

So — lots of expenses, and lots of things up in the air.

The kids are asking me about Christmas presents. Well — indirectly. They've been asking what we're going to do for Christmas. I've been telling them "we're going to go to Mass."

After lunch I took Grace to an ultrasound appointment. The baby looks good. They checked Grace's temperature and blood pressure — both seemed good. In fact, her blood pressure seems lower than it has been in some time. She thinks that her daily celery-and-apple smoothie is helping to stabilize her blood pressure, since it seems more controlled now than it was when she was just taking her medication. She's not going to make any changes to her medication regimen at this point, but she's certainly going to stick with the smoothies, on the grounds that they seem to be helping, and almost certainly aren't hurting.

Grace and I talked things out a little more last night, trying to unpack all that has been happening with our housemate and her boyfriend, and why I blew up. I still did not want to see them, but most of the sense of panic was gone. I listened to her have a conversation with our housemate, in which she talked out her ongoing concerns about how having junk food in the house encourages Pippin, who already has problems managing his food choices, to basically refuse to eat any healthy food at all, skipping meals and starving himself, in the hopes that he will be able to get his hands on sugary junk food. She also mentioned how, when he hasn't eaten for too long, he gets low blood sugar, and tends to have a full-on screaming meltdown under stress.

### **Hypoglycemia**

I've long known that I am prone not to *hyperglycemia*, in the form of diabetes, but *hypoglycemia*. My father is prone to this, too. If either of us goes too long without eating, we get shaky — our hands tremble, we feel weak. And we're



also *emotionally* shaky — prone to overreactions. Basically, we feel like things happening around us are threatening. I think Pippin has inherited this. Grace’s explanation of Pippin’s behavior brought home to me that on Sunday, when I blew up at our housemate and her boyfriend, I had not eaten for about eight hours, and my late breakfast had been a relatively small meal. I realized that my lack of self-care had been a contributing factor: I had not managed my tendency towards hypoglycemia that day, instead spending my time working on cleaning up the kitchen.

I’m not sure exactly how that works, but I think the mechanism is something like this: I don’t eat, and my body gets shaky. The physical symptoms are a lot like the symptoms my body would be showing if I was having some kind of fear response. In terms of my primitive brain, my body is responding much as it would if a saber-toothed cat was trying to get into my cave to eat me.

This fear response primes my brain to start looking for a cause — something it can identify as the problem, to try to figure out how to make me safe again. The lower-level, more primitive parts of the brain are not really all that good at distinguishing causation from correlation. So they latched on to the situation that was bothering me, and has been bothering me for a long time, and somehow turned that into “this thing is an immediate and serious threat and you must take action.”

I get that this is all manner of fucked-up, but this is my best guess at just *why* I blew up so badly. It helps explain why sometimes minor chronic stressors like this will abruptly become intolerable to me, when failing to manage my blood sugar has made me more vulnerable.

If Grace indeed was fighting off a virus — and I’ve been feeling like I might be fighting off a virus, as well — that could have played a part in making my body feel like it was under threat. And I’m sure the low-level sleep deprivation didn’t help, nor did the loneliness and boredom I’ve been experiencing at work, nor did my usual seasonal affective disorder. Not that any of this really *justifies* my reaction, but perhaps it can help me understand what triggers this sort of thing and maybe manage these things better.

## Thursday

### *The Anatomy of Fascism* by Robert Paxton, Continued

We had a Costco pot pie for dinner last night and managed to get to bed at a reasonable hour. Joshua continued reading *George’s Marvelous Medicine* out loud. I read a bit more of *The Anatomy of Fascism*, completing the first chapter and just a bit of the second chapter. The first chapter is terrific. In chapter 2 he starts getting into the real history, and my mind starts to wander a little bit. I need a glossary; he uses a lot of unfamiliar terms. Sometimes I have to read chapters like this several times before I feel like I’ve really understood them.

Grace did not seem feverish last night or this morning. We caught up on sleep

and woke up on late. I was slow this morning, deliberately, since I was hoping we'd be able to go pick up the car before I went to work. The shop didn't call, so we called them. The car wasn't ready. I had to install one of the fold-up seats in the Element, so that she can use it to drive Joshua and Pippin to choir this afternoon. Her key to my car would not start it, for reasons I don't quite understand, until we flipped it over and tried again; then it started on the first try. Grace drove me to work. We stopped to get bagels and coffee for me and tea for her, and since we both needed to eat, she just came up to eat with me in the office. I introduced her to three new co-workers who had not yet met her. So I started out the work day very late, which means I'm going to have to stay very late tonight. I don't have any lunch or dinner food here, so she's going to bring me something when she is out running errands tonight.

Hopefully we'll be able to pick the car up Friday morning. Friday morning I will have gotten paid, which will make it slightly easier to cover the repair bill — but not *that* much easier, since most of that paycheck is already committed to next week's expenses. But it might keep me from taking our checking account below zero and hitting the overdraft line. That's probably about the best outcome I can hope for next week.

### **Down to the Wire**

Since moving in February of 2017, we've been paying two mortgages every month, along with all the other expenses that go with continuing to own and maintain the old house. This means we've been, on average, spending just a little more each month than I take home. We've been doing this in the hopes that we will soon be able to get out from under the old house, in a way that won't destroy my credit rating. But it's all coming down to the wire. Both of my credit cards are nearly maxed out, and a number of things we've been putting off are now becoming urgent. I don't know exactly how all this is going to play out. We're still hoping there is some outcome we can get to that winds up with someone *living* in our magnificent old home, and not just shutting off the water and leaving it to sit vacant through the winter. But there's honestly not much more we can do.

I'm really hoping that the reason the car isn't done yet is *not* because they found a lot more wrong with it. I'm afraid Grace is going to get stranded, unable to start my car. That weird starting problem is something else that needs attention, but I've been putting it off because I've never been unable to start it after a few tries.

### **Editing, Editing, Editing**

I'm still editing the text of this blog. I'm still working on posts from the first quarter of 2018. In fact, I've only just finished a second pass at editing the post from *the first week* of 2018. At this rate, editing the 2018 posts is going to take a long, long time. I've scaled my ambition back a bit; I think I will try to make

my first deliverable a book-length manuscript of posts from just the first *quarter* of 2018. But even that is going to be a lot of work.

I was talking with Grace about this a bit, wondering why I'm doing it. There are some practical reasons: for one thing, I'm figuring out a workflow that will allow me to turn any of my Markdown content into a book, or at least a book-like manuscript, and that seems valuable. But as for who the audience is for this hypothetical book, or e-book, made from these blog posts — I still can't answer that.

In *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* radio show, Zaphod Beeblebrox implanted a clue in his own brain to help him figure out the mystery of just who actually runs the galaxy. He reminded his future self that he should go find a man named Zarniwoop. Zaphod explains this to the receptionist in the *Hitchhiker's Guide* headquarters:

“Sir, can I ask why you want to see Mr. Zarniwoop?”

“Yeah, I told myself I needed to.”

“Come again, sir?”

“I came to myself in a dream and said ‘Go see Zarniwoop.’ Never heard of the cat before, but I seemed very insistent.”

“Oh, Mr. Beeblebrox, sir, you're so weird, you should be in pictures!”

“Yeah, baby, and you should be in real life.”

Beeblebrox meets up with Marvin, and then completely fails to convince the elevator to go up. He turns to Marvin:

“Marvin, just get this elevator to go up, will you? We've got to get to Zarniwoop!”

“Why?”

“I don't know, but when I find him, he'd better have one hell of a good reason for me wanting to see him!”

So, dear reader, I hope you have at least one good reason to help explain to me why I have written all this.

## Friday

Because I got into work very late yesterday, and I didn't want to take any more discretionary time off than absolutely necessary, I stayed very late last night. Grace came to get me at about a quarter to ten.

I decided that I didn't really need to eat a late dinner at home, since I wasn't all that hungry. I ate some cashews, hazelnuts, toasted chick peas, and a few prunes, and drank a couple of glasses of water, and that was good enough.

The kids had done a good job of cleaning up after dinner, so I took them downstairs and let them watch an episode of *Ben 10: Alien Force*. Benjamin has been asking to see this show for a long time; that, and *Castle in the Sky*. We keep telling him there is not enough time on a typical week night to watch *Castle*

*in the Sky*, but Grace told him we had time last night to watch *one* episode of *Ben 10: Alien Force*. Of course, the first episode (I think it is called “Ben 10 Returns, Part 1”) is a cliffhanger, so he really, really did not want to stop there.

This morning I was up earlier than usual, so I took a little time to read more of *The Ice Schooner*. It’s moving along nicely and I am continuing to enjoy it, although I have not quite even reached the halfway point.

Grace told me last night that the car was ready. I had hoped that Grace and I would get out early enough to have breakfast out before picking up the car, but that didn’t really work. So we went to get it, and I paid about \$1,500 on my Team One credit card, which has pushed my balance almost to the limit again. I am trying to keep some cash free because I might *also* have to pay for the total replacement of the main furnace. I’m considering paying for that by writing a check which will overdraw my checking account, hitting our \$3,600 overdraft protection by at least \$2,000. But it seems like that might at least be *possible*.

### **Secondhand Smoke**

Last night Grace told me about an interaction with our housemate. I’ve mentioned that we wanted to provide a supportive environment for her kids. But for some reason she and her boyfriend refuse almost categorically to allow her girls to play outside in our yard with our kids. We get confusing and contradictory reasons: she doesn’t want them to get their clothes dirty, although her bedroom is right next to a clothes washer and dryer. She’s afraid they’ll get a virus.

Apparently she explained to Grace that her point had been proven, because when one of the girls *did* go outside for a while, when she came back in, later that evening she was coughing. Grace asked her if she showed any signs of a virus: a runny nose, a fever? No. Grace told her that this is what happens to smokers who exercise — they start to cough. Our housemate thought that was ridiculous, because her daughter isn’t a smoker. Grace reminded her that her daughter is breathing secondhand smoke *all the time*, and that this isn’t just something people make up — the dangerous effects of secondhand smoke on children, and even adults, are quite real.

I’m not sure she can believe or process that. I’m reminded of the time we told her not to use the downstairs bathroom, because I had a bad enterovirus and had been doing horrible things in the bathroom, and we hadn’t yet had a chance to sanitize it, and enteroviruses are very, very contagious. She either didn’t understand us or didn’t believe us, and so of course she got it too and was then doing equally horrible things in the bathroom at her job. Talking that over with her later, it seemed like she didn’t actually understand what bacteria or viruses were.

So these educational differences that I mentioned are real, and they’re hard for us to even understand or believe.

If you add “home economics” or “meal planning” or “sharing a home, a pantry, a

refrigerator, a kitchen, and a dining table” to “secondhand smoke” and “infectious diseases” to a list of “things Grace and I learned from our schooling and our upbringings,” then *maybe* our housemate’s behavior starts to make a little more sense. At least, that’s the interpretation I’m going to choose to try to believe in, today.

I’ll head to Costco and we’ll have dinner, and maybe we’ll watch “Ben 10 Returns, Part 2” tonight. I really need to start making notes for a podcast episode. I’d like to talk about *The Anatomy of Fascism*. We again have too much to talk about, but it is not well-organized. That’s not a recipe for a stellar show. We’ll see how the weekend goes. I need to get in touch with the Michigan Department of State, which manages car registrations. We still have not received the sticker and registration for the Tahoe, although I paid for it at the same time I paid for the Element. So it ought to be registered — if Grace is stopped and a police officer looks up the car, it should show up as registered. But we want the sticker and the piece of paper.

I’ve also got to write a bunch of checks, and that’s going to be painful. Most of them are small, but we still have to pay \$200 for trash pickup at our old house in Saginaw, since no one else owns it; I’m not sure what will happen if we don’t pay it, but the city might put a lien on the house, and if we do manage to find a buyer, we certainly don’t want any surprising complications at the last minute.

I also checked out the gas bills online. We’re paying a fixed amount, on a budget plan, but our actual bills for the last couple of months have been shockingly high. This means when it comes time to settle up, I’m going to owe them something like an extra thousand dollars. It’s all piling up on me and I’m feeling pretty hopeless about ever getting us to a more secure financial position!

## Saturday

### Anniversary 17

I’m writing today’s entry at about 9:20 p.m. We just got back from Chelsea where we ate dinner at Smokehouse 52 BBQ. Today is my seventeenth wedding anniversary! We didn’t start out the day with a clear plan, but we wanted to get out and do *something*, even feeling broke and worried about money and stressed. We had a huge meal, including burnt ends and deep-fried pickles for appetizers. I had Nashville hot fried chicken, which lived up to its name, making my nose run and my face turn red. I’ve had it before at Zingerman’s Roadhouse. This was at least as good, if not better. In fact all the food was quite good. The kids had a number of different kid’s meals: chicken tenders, smoked ribs, and pulled pork sandwiches. Grace had a salad with roasted butternut squash, pears, cranberries, walnuts, romaine, and pulled pork with a balsamic vinaigrette and also munched on Elanor’s chicken and waffles, and we brought another takeout serving of chicken and waffles home for our housemate. I also had a pint of Defloured N.E.I.P.A. from Witch’s Hat Brewing Co. in South Lyon. N.E.I.P.A. apparently stands for New England India Pale Ale, which, until today, I didn’t

know was a thing. It has orange and grapefruit juice in it, and I thought it was pretty good. Maybe the citrus will help keep me healthy as the weather gets cold.

Personally I've never really been able to understand chicken and waffles. It seems to be two meals on the same plate. The fried chicken is good, and the waffles are good, but they don't seem to really complement each other or go together. So... it's not that I don't like the parts of the meal. I just don't understand why they are combined.

### **2014 Chateau Ferrande Graves**

Last night I brought home a load of groceries from Costco as usual, and as we usually do on Friday evenings, we had salmon and salad. I tried a cheap white Bordeaux, a 2014 Chateau Ferrande Graves. I think this is a white wine blend. I really didn't care for this wine much. On the nose, it is quite musty and yeasty, smelling more of grape skins than grapes. The review notes I've seen mention "lemon zest" and it does have some strong citrus notes, but not much else. It is just sour and dry. After letting it breathe for a while, I still didn't notice much in it that I liked. It's a pretty color, though. I'll taste it again in a day or two but I'm not expecting to change my mind. I won't be buying any more bottles of this one to serve at Thanksgiving or Christmas dinner. I think it's just another example of the general problem I always have with the Bordeaux wines that you can get imported into the United States — the good stuff can be incredibly good, but it's also incredibly expensive. Meanwhile there's quite a bit of affordable Bordeaux wine available, but the bottles I've tried have never been worth drinking.

It was too late to watch a movie and there was a big pile of clean laundry on the bed, so we folded laundry while I read excerpts from *The Anatomy of Fascism*, and then we got to bed. Grace was feeling exhausted.

Later in the evening our housemate's youngest child, an eight-month-old, seemed to be having some difficulty with chest congestion and she was concerned about him, so they took him to the Pediatric Emergency Department at St. Joe's. They noted some congestion but did not think it was very serious. Our housemate was complaining that she and her girls have some sort of a virus. We haven't seen much of them.

This morning I toasted buttered bagels from Costco and, while Grace ran to Milan to pick up bread from Mother Loaf, made scrambled eggs. The kids had some kind of huge noisy fight before Grace and I were even fully up, so they got KP and had to deep-clean the kitchen and family room. They did that fairly well, so my cleanup work was considerably easier! Grace came back with pan au levain, another small 100% rye loaf, and a couple of bialys. This week's bialy was made with salami and goat cheese and it was delicious!

## Graupel

It was raining and windy on and off today, and for a while we even had graupel coming down. The temperature kept changing. So we were had-pressed to find a fun outdoor activity for everyone. When it cleared up for a while, we thought we might go for a walk at Rolling Hills Park. But then the weather got bad again. We decided to drive out to our friends' farm, hoping that the weather would improve. We had an invitation to do some gleanng — to bring home leftover produce. Today was their last CSA pickup. So we went, but we were slow and late at everything today. We didn't get out there until about 5:00. We filled up the truck with gas and headed out. My musical selection for the drive was Moby's album *Play*. Grace and I used to listen to this album a lot; it had come out shortly before we met. Today we were both struck by how much we still enjoy it. It has held up quite well. As we headed West on I-94, we got to see a weird and gorgeous mix of sun and very low clouds in swirling layers as the weather pattern slowly moved through.

## Gleaning

They had some leftovers that weren't picked up for the CSA, and some produce left in the garden. I put Elanor on my back in the backpack baby carrier, but she really hated it, and as soon as I headed out to the garden, the weather got bad again. She did not enjoy being in the carrier in the wind and cold rain, so I took her back inside the barn. We took a bag of hot peppers, a bag of arugula, and other goodies including three kinds of turnips with their greens and some pea shoots. Just a week ago I was marveling at the beautiful rows of rainbow Swiss chard, the peppers, and nasturtiums. But earlier this week it got very cold, down into the twenties overnight, and the pepper plants were all wilted, the chard was half-collapsed, and the lovely nasturtiums were compost. What a difference a week makes. The Brussels sprouts are still coming along. If things go well there may yet be a nice crop of Brussels sprouts. But this has been a strange growing season. I think a lot of our leaves are going to blow off without ever turning colors, although we've had a little fall color.

When we left about 6:30, we weren't quite sure what to do. We were considering having burgers at Culver's. We were considering just going home and cooking our lamb steaks and roasting some potatoes. But I asked Grace if she could think of anywhere in Chelsea we'd like to eat, and she suggested we try the barbecue place. And we're glad we did. I have paperwork and bills and writing to work on and more bills and all kinds of things to think about and worry about, but it was great to stop and have a good meal. The kids enjoyed it. The boys are down in the basement watching a few more episodes of *Ben 10: Alien Force*. It's now about 10:30 and I just want to read a little bit more of *The Ice Schooner* and get on to bed with the wonderful woman who has been my wife for seventeen years.

## Media Discussed This Week

*This list does not include books, chapters of books, or other works that I only mentioned briefly in the text above.*

- “The Sounds of Silence” (1964 Simon and Garfunkel Song)
- “The Sound of Silence” (1965 Retitled Remix)
- *Doctor Who* Series 11, Episode 2: “The Ghost Monument”
- *The Anatomy of Fascism* by Robert Paxton

*Pittsfield Township, Michigan*

*The Week Ending Saturday, October 20th, 2018*

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