Still Feral In Meeker Park and Shopping in Estes

I drive from Meeker Park to Estes Park once a week for groceries. The drive is spectacular on one of America’s most beautiful scenic by-ways. I pass by The Chapel on the Rock (officially, Saint Catherine of Siena Chapel) at St. Malo. Further on, I can see Lily Like, popular even in winter months. When clouds do not obscure, I have a breath-taking view of Longs Peak and Mount Meeker. After about a 20-minute drive, I arrive at the Safeway Parking lot in Estes Park. I park and then pause to take in one of the most dramatically beautiful views in North America, perhaps the world. The snow-capped mountains of the Rocky Mountain National Park appear and leave me in awe. I reflect that I am blessed to live in a most unique place.

I grab my reusable shopping bags, nylon-net produce bags and Eco-Friendly, Washable, Organic & Reusable 100% BPA Free! Perfect Food Storage wraps (delivered by Amazon in a box large enough to drive my Subaru into and with enough plastic bubbles for an entire landfill!) and prepare to shop. I try to open the car door with all the upper body strength of a 65-year-old female, only to find I am completely trapped by the wind. Envisioning my skeleton drooped over the steering wheel, I struggle once again to open the car door, when the wind gusts shift. The door is flung open with such force, my left shoulder is dislocated. Not to be deterred, holding my bags with my right arm, I persevere. I manage to close the car door with my rear end, which now is an unrecognizable mass of brown mud. The wind whips my grocery bags at mock four speed, dislocating my right shoulder. I am now a mountain woman, this is nothing. With my arms dangling uselessly by my side, I grasp my bags with my teeth and make my way to the store front. The wind beats me senseless with my grocery bags as I struggle to dislodge a grocery cart from the stack. Automatic doors open and whoosh me inside the store.

I survey the store and note the crowd. Reminding me of the ancient computer game, “Pong”, the customers are randomly ponging from aisle to aisle, or wandering aimlessly like The Walking Dead. Not to be deterred, I say to myself cheerfully, visitors need groceries too. Onward to the shelves, I see bareness and chaos, as if an invading Viking hoard pillaged the store. No worries, I say. This is an opportunity to try new brands and items. I have an entire shelf in my tiny kitchen dedicated to inedible, unusable alternative items. I ominously hear overhead “three is a crowd”. I complete my shopping and make my way to check-out, only to find the lines snaking to McDonald’s Book store, where customers browse the magazine section while awaiting grocery check-out. Not I, I say. I boldly take my shopping cart with a week’s worth of groceries to the self-check. I remove my coat, roll up my sleeves and say to myself I can do this. I swipe my Safeway card and am cheerily greeted with “welcome valued customer!” Don’t you just love that? I choose “use- your-own bags, three bags” and begin checking. All goes well until the computer says, “Place the last scanned item in the bag,” which of course, I already have done. In insulted outrage, I say, “I have placed my scanned item in the bag, you sorry excuse for a binary system!” Chastised, the computer instructs me to continue scanning items. I am almost done, when I scan blueberries. The computer says, “This item is not recognized. Help is needed for this item.” Apparently, blueberries are alien blue balls discovered at the International UFO Museum and Research Center in Roswell, New Mexico. In horror, I see that the self-check overseer is involved helping a customer with the self-check skills of a mushroom.

Having completed my checking and paid, I exit Safeway. The wind has ceased, the skies are a bluebird blue, the sun brilliant. Forgetting my travails, I once again am in wonder at the beauty of the place I call home.

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