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Subject:

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Postcard 2011-09-05

It's really late so this will be short. We got up at 5:30 to catch sunrise over Grand Canyon.



Sunrise was a flop. The coffee wasn't. Starbucks' Gold Coast.

Back to the room to figure out where-to? Canyon de Chelly. Yeah, Canyon de Chelly! Not too far and a nice little hike. Then a short drive to Bluff and our favorite Desert Rose Inn, Cabin #1. We can eat at the new organic restaurant.

We packed up Murray, who was parked facing the canyon to give him a nice view. He takes care of us. We take care of him.

Oh, the canyon's looking nice now, just a couple more shots.





Then we stopped by the gift shop for a last minute look around. Whoops lookie there...



Seemed like we'd never get away. But we did. Past Cameron Trading Post (well, maybe stopped for a little while), through Tuba City, and into the Deep Rez, watching spectacular clouds, spectacular geology, beat up single-wides and old hogans.

Finally, Canyon de Chelly. We stopped at the visitors center to pay, which is particularly satisfying when you have a *get into the park free card*, also known as a senior pass. Dang. There was no entrance fee here. The ranger let me show her the card anyway. We ate Navajo tacos at the Thunderbird cafeteria, just like the last time we were here because they were excellent. This time they were only OK. Why is it always like that?

Ah, now the hike to the Whitehouse ruin. The skies were full of ominous clouds and there was occasional thunder. At least the breeze and

overcast were keeping us cool, along with quarts of chilled Gatorade. Across the slickrock and down we went.





Would you look at that?



And of course, the ruin.



At the bottom, in addition to the ruin, are tables of stuff to buy. A polite elder was hustling us (in a gentle way) and we bought a couple of things. After she packed them up I said I knew how to speak Navajo. She looked at me expectantly. I said “Ya at eeh” [hello]. She nodded quietly. I said I know one more thing to say in Navajo: “Biligaana!” [white guy]. She laughed and laughed and laughed. “Where did you learn that?”, she inquired. I said “Reading Tony Hillerman books”. Blank Navajo stare. She said “You should read a book on weaving”. Blank biligaana stare. We’re even.

It thundered. The wind blew so hard it pushed and pulled us along the trail. We made it back to the top, got gas in the rain, drove to Bluff, discovered the new restaurant was closed, ate a surprisingly good salad at a cowboy steakhouse and retired to our room.

Told you this would be brief.

D&S