An Icy Transition for Centenarians

It's time for a momentary excursion into the realm of make-believe:

The candles on the cake have been blown out. Now that you've reached the century mark, you are on the threshold of yet another passage in your earthly life. In accordance with recent enactment of the Transitional Humanitarianism Act, you are on your way to a new environment.

This relocation is based on the realization that life has its impending limits and death is irrefutably ever so close. A compassionate mandate declares that at the age of one hundred, all citizens will have reached the ice age when they are allowed to emigrate to a transitory location known as "ice-bergatory," located in Iceden, a remote island in a vast northern ice field. Here, inside an icehouse, they are evaluated by a panel of differentiation specialists, known as "ice-berts." These lone rangers determine if the quality of an individual's life warrants a final stint at the North Pole working as an elf for Santa, or if misdeeds dictate relegation to the uninhabited South Pole. Either way, the intent is to revamp attitudes, so that warm–blooded humans will regard looming death as a welcome retreat.

Do not think for a minute, though, that this is an unpleasant experience. Au contraire! During their time in Iceden, centenarians are treated to ice cream, ice milk, iced tea, ice wine, ice-cold cake with icing, and ice water (for the dieting folks) that are chilled, of course, in an icebox. For picnics, though, food is kept cold with ice packs. Headaches are treated with ice bags, and accumulations of earwax are removed with ice picks. Ice skating, ice hockey, and ice shows are the usual modes for recreation. Word has it that life here is pretty ice-citing!

So, here you are, relaxing contentedly on the icebound trans-iceloonic airbus plane en route to Iceden. According to regulations, you were required to leave every earthly thing behind, except for apparel and toiletries. Suddenly, you realize that you forgot to bring your toothpaste and toothbrush! And that realization triggers a whole bunch of others. You forgot to tell your family about your pet iguana that hangs out around the palm tree on your investment property; it relies on your regular offerings of alfalfa and acorn squash. You also forgot to tell them where to find the key to your footlocker in which your vintage collection of comic books is stored. And, *oh gosh*, Blanche Skinner sure would have appreciated it if you had thought to transfer your nudist camp vacation timeshare to her name.

Oh, what to do! What to do! *Just what **are** you going to do?* Oral hygiene is mighty essential, especially since you'll need to make a good impression when you are in close proximity to the "ice-perts" in Iceden. And you really, really wish you could have another opportunity to deliver instructions to your folks.

Impulsively agitated, you consider getting up to knock on the door of the captain's cabin. But it's like during the night when your bladder is full, yet you resist abandoning your comfort zone to get out of bed. Eventually, though, you realize what's gotta be done must be done.

As you rise to the occasion, you notice that the gent in the seat ahead of you has done likewise, while fondling the provocative lady next to him, hoping for an unprecedented "hook-up" in the lavatory when the flight attendants are distractedly serving beverages. Although that's pretty entertaining, you must stay focused.

So with an air of contrived confidence, you wend your way to the front and open the cabin door. The pilot looks up from painting her nails. You ask if she would please turn back the plane so that you can grab your toothbrush and toothpaste. She responds accommodatingly, *"Oh sure, we'll be glad to take a quick spin back home. We get that request all the time."*

In real life, of course, there's no turning back. At least, not once you have journeyed to your final destination. So take advantage of the current moment in time. Imagine that you are on the brink of a permanent departure. What would you want to communicate, with the intention of assuring a smooth managerial transition? And what would you want your folks to know just to enhance their lives? Chances are, when you look around your environment, all sorts of issues will come to mind. Now is the time to make a note of them.

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Excerpt from the recreational pre-planning book,
Pondering Leaves: Composing and Conveying
Your Life Story's Epilogue
(no longer available)

Mary Ellen Markant

Signature Sunsets

ponderingleaves@gmail.com