



**NOAA Teacher at Sea
Christopher Harvey
Onboard NOAA Ship OSCAR ELTON SETTE
June 5 – July 4, 2006**

Date: June 25, 2006

Time: 8:15 PM Hawaii

Location: Anchored off Maro Reef

Entry

“When both feet are planted firmly, you are stuck”

I can only think of one thing to write about today- or yesterday, or the day before, for that matter. That is, *what day is today?* Piglet would tell me that today is the day after yesterday, which does not help since I do not know what day yesterday is. And Pooh would tell me that today is the day before tomorrow, which makes more sense, but not enough. Eeyore would tell me that today is a bad day, while Rabbit would tell me that today is however many days past the first of the year it so happens to be (as he calculates how many days have passed since then!). Owl would tell me that today is just a state of pondering what today really means. And Christopher Robin would tell me that today is today, of course! I was thinking that today must be close to July. Days just seem to pass out here. And it seems we are much closer to being back in port than to being out to sea. And yet a container of milk said June 14 for the expiration date. So I think to myself, are we in some kind of time warp, or am I drinking milk that is two weeks past expiration? Pooh says expiration dates don't matter anyway, as long as you put some honey in the milk. (Is it the sun, or salty air, or both that are getting to me?)

But low and behold, as I poured the crunchy ice-milk into my cup I realized that my rationality, what the sun and sea have not taken from me, had been undermined by a piece of modern technology called a freezer! God bless the freezer! We have been eating “fresh” fruit and vegetables for over twenty days now, and I have had no complaint on the freshness of the food. Scurvy has stayed clear of the Oscar Elton Sette!

Presently we are anchored off of Maro Reef, far enough out not to do damage to the reef, yet close enough that- with my mega ultra 17 X super zoom lens (its not really *that* great!)- I can see waves breaking on the reef. Our friendly albatross has multiplied during the day, and all but disappeared during the evening. Have I mentioned how amazing these creatures are?

In terms of work, yesterday we averaged nearly six lobsters per trap, which was a substantial increase over past days in the NWHI. However today was back to normal. We are in our last rotation of jobs this week, which is bittersweet in that by the end of the week we get another break. Only this time the break is for good. I can tell you that without a shadow of a doubt, I will not miss hauling and setting lobster traps.

However, having just observed the Pacific sunset (behind a big nasty storm, beautiful nonetheless) I am reminded of my joys while being here. And yes I still coo like a schoolgirl over her first crush when I see the stars at night. I've made it a point to spend several hours a night lying underneath them. I have come up with my own constellations, since the other ones seem to be rather old and archaic. There is the Hippopotamus, the Wishbone, the Giraffe, the Arrow, the Sun to name a few (Yes, I know the Sun already exists. But I have found another one, much brighter than our own, but further away...Have I told you of the sun and salty air and what it does to the mind?)

As for the quote of the day. When both feet are planted firmly, one would think they would be on stable ground. This is good for some, and bad for others. I am of the kind that likes to think that two feet planted implies immobility. Although it does not quite rule out two feet firmly planted while running in some direction. Still, I always think of my life- the few times I think of my life in terms of footsteps- as having one foot on the ground, and one foot in the clouds. But that might also be because the more I think about planting myself anywhere, the more I want to get up and go somewhere else. In fact, I think that at this very moment I shall quit my teaching job and find a job as a deckhand in Honolulu! (That is the foot in the clouds speaking!) Of course this is not sensible, but can you imagine the stories I would be able to tell you then!

My friends Pooh, Eeyore, Piglet, Rabbit, Owl, and Christopher Robin want me to mention that, if you get the chance, you should read *The Tao of Pooh*. For those of you who know me, you will find that the cover of the book somewhat resembles a piece of artwork tattooed to my right leg (or rather, the artwork on my right leg somewhat resembles the cover of the book). Either way, the book is wonderful in that it brings about a simpler perspective of life. I have been reading it in the time I have been out here, savoring the pages for the perspective that I gain from them.

Other than that, life goes on like Groundhog Day. Did I mention the effect of the sun and the salty air on the mind? Oh, thanks Pooh, I see that I have. Well it makes one love the sea and all of the Beautiful experiences that one experiences out here. Absolutely amazing!