

Nov 04, 2016 by *Gordon Robison*

Scenery Changes... Climate Does Not ^[1]

Amman, Jordan

So I spend three weeks on the road, nearly half that time in the snowy mountains of Italy and Austria. I get home late last night, rise early this morning, look out the window... and it's snowing.

This is not utterly unknown here in Jordan, it happens roughly once each winter. Last year's 'storm' (I use this word generously. Today's snow virtually shut down the city but would barely have qualified as a flurry in Vermont, where I grew up) left me stranded in Baghdad for two days because the plane scheduled to bring me home was unable to leave Amman.

By day's end we had an accumulation of, perhaps, 2mm. Still, it was a decidedly mixed blessing. I have only four working days here at home before I hit the road again, and I work out of my apartment. Today was supposed to be the day my daughter returned to school full-time after a long convalescence entailed by a car accident. I was looking forward to a long, quiet day in which many things could be accomplished. But by 7:20a I had a bad feeling about things. Looking out my front window, coffee in hand, it dawned on me that in the previous ten minutes I had seen only one school bus come down the street, rather than the usual six or eight. With immense trepidation I picked up the phone.

"Is there school today?" I asked the man who answered.

"No, no, sir," he said. "There is no school because of the snow."

This was one of those moments of parental epiphany. As a child in New England I lived for snow days. I gather my parents viewed them with dread. Suddenly, watching the microscopic snowflakes land in the empty street three floors below, I understood exactly how my parents felt a quarter-century ago. There goes the day. So much for getting significant amounts of work done. Sure enough, by 10am the DVD player was going non-stop. The fact that our heating was on the blink for most of the day did little to improve my mood (though surprisingly little to dampen my daughter's).

Worse news came around midday when a friend mentioned that Thursday is a holiday – Islamic New Year. No school then either. For forgetting this, I have no one but myself to blame.

As I write this it is early evening and Halle is vigorously arguing that there will be no school tomorrow either. Things are too messed up around the city (not my impression when I was out this afternoon, but I've learned to avoid arguments like these). Her friends say so, and they are always right.

Fine, I said. You get up at 6:30a tomorrow as usual. I'll call the school at 7:15 and we'll see

what they say. I am desperately hoping for a warm front.

grr
