

About

We, Rekka and Devine, found Pino on Vancouver Island in the spring of 2016, a Yamaha 33 sailboat built in 1982. At that moment, we knew of Yamaha for their keyboards and motorcycles, but not for their sailboats. After a bit of research, we learned that between 1976 and 1985 Yamaha did build and export sailboats to the Pacific Northwest. These are familiar sights in sailing schools due to their reputation of being sturdy.

Prior to purchasing Pino, we had read a few sailing books. One of them in particular, *The Feeding and Caring of the Offshore Crew* by Lin Pardey, left a lasting impression on us. In it, Lin and Larry Pardey travel to Japan on their 24-foot custom-built sailboat Seraffyn. We had never heard of anyone sailing to Japan, but we soon became obsessed with the idea. Pino was built there, and we thought we could sail it back to its home in Japan! But first, we ought to learn how to sail.

In February 2016, we moved aboard Pino. And like fledglings leaping out of the nest, we clumsily pushed from the dock and spread Pino's Dacron wings. In the beginning, we lacked the finesse that we observed in others, but with time we knew we'd figure it out. On the topic of finesse, or the lack thereof, the first time we hoisted our gennaker, we raised it the wrong way 3 times(it's a triangle). We didn't know which part of the sail was the tack, clew or head. To be fair, when a large sail is stuffed into a bag, it is hard to tell where it begins and where it ends. We learned by watching others, and by reading books, but mostly by doing.

Following the advice of the sailors we met, we ventured further and

further from the dock. We soon began to yearn to see the ocean. Like a compass needle that can't help but point north, we had our hearts set on Japan. Our goal was to sail there by way of the South Pacific, and to circle back to Canada, effectively circumnavigating the Pacific Ocean.

Fast-forward to the spring of 2019, when we finally reached Japan. We made landfall in Chichijima, Ogasawara, before sailing to mainland Japan. We spent a year there. Our stay coincided with the start of the coronavirus pandemic. We said goodbye to our plans of visiting the Inland Sea, and decided to wait out the worst of the pandemic in Minamiise, a small rural town. At the end of May, the state of emergency lifted in many prefectures, we left Minamiise to go to Shimoda, our last port in Japan. Then, on June 9th 2020, we began our long and hard sail back to Canada.

During our North Pacific crossing I (Rekka) kept a detailed journal of the day's events. I wrote most entries while off-watch, whenever I had some free time. We encountered a lot of bad weather. I started drawing funny cartoons in the margins of the diary to try and make us feel better. At the start, I had plans to keep a simple logbook, to talk about our meals, the weather and sea state, but I found comfort in writing, and the texts got longer and longer. By the time we had arrived in Victoria, I had filled 3 notebooks.

Upon our arrival after spending 7 weeks at sea, the Canadian Customs asked us to quarantine for 2 more weeks. I used this time to transcribe the handwritten pages, so we could publish them online. Every morning, I'd transcribe 4-5 days worth of journals, and handed them off to Devine for proofreading. After 14 days of isolation, the entirety of the logbook was published online. Devine wrote the closing words, to try and explain why we did what we did, a question we have long struggled to answer.

Weeks later, we decided to expand on the logbook. We added recipes, and expanded on specific logs, adding stories of previous trips.

The book is titled *Busy Doing Nothing*, as a tribute to our favorite *Ergo Proxy* episode of the same name. The episode is a metaphor for living in harmony with whatever may come. The crew of a boat is stranded for many days after the wind dies, and each one aboard reacts differently to being becalmed. *Busy Doing Nothing* is about living in the present, and on inviting liminality into one's life.

The writing in this book is not meant to be intentionally harrowing, it is an honest account of our journey. When we made the choice to leave port in 2016, we knew we'd have to sail back home through the North Pacific Ocean, it was the only way to bring Pino back home.

Text notes:

Nm. The nm abbreviation refers to nautical miles.

AIS. It is an automatic tracking system that uses transceivers on ships and is used by vessel traffic services.

They. Both being non-binary, we use the singular *they* throughout the text.

Grib files. On this trip, we used GRIB files to read the weather. They are computer-derived weather forecasts packed into a digital file. We download them using our SAT phone's data, and visualize them via a laptop or phone. GRIB files can be quite large, it is therefore necessary to specify an area of coordinates with an appropriate resolution to keep the files small, the transfer fast and the whole transaction not too costly.

Ninj. Ninj is our resident mascot, a plush ninja. He is a back-seat captain.

French. We are both French Canadian, so we kept some of the conversations we had as is with translations. In this same vein, we kept some of the Japanese words for food (again, with translations).

Prior to leaving Japan

On the morning of May 28th, we arrived near the Izu peninsula. We had left Shima Yacht Harbour the day before for an overnight 233 km (126 nm) passage to Shimoda. We had planned to pass south of the Mikomotoshima Lighthouse, an island 11 km (5.9 nm) away from the port's entrance. The forecast showed little to no wind for the area, but we got near gale winds on the nose, funnelling out of Sagami Bay. We tightened the sheets and pushed on. In cold, and wet weather even short trips can feel endless. We saw a large freighter moving between the land and a set of offshore rocks to the north. "We should have passed there, looks nice and quiet." I said. Had we done this, we would have avoided beating into this wind.

We arrived at the breakwater, and inched inside the beautiful sheltered port of Shimoda. We found a spot on a pontoon. Our spot in Shimoda offered an amazing view of the port, with many fishing boats lining its sides. Two iconic mountains stood as a backdrop to this small city. A bust of Commodore Matthew C. Perry sat a few meters away. Perry and his warships sailed into Shimoda port in 1854, demanding that the Japanese end its 200-year-old policy of isolation and begin trade with the United States. In town, we found many monuments commemorating the event, like a full-sized replica of his black warship, the Kurofune. We also found strange Perry-themed oddities, like dolls and cookies bearing his likeness.

Our friends Anja and Thomas on SV Robusta landed next to us on our pontoon a few hours later, we knew they were coming but did not know when. The last time we had seen them was in Whangarei, New Zealand in 2018. We explored the area together, all the while, preparing for our leap across the Pacific.

We would watch the weather everyday. If we hoped to make any progress sailing away from Japan, we needed a few days of consistent wind from a favourable direction. The port of Shimoda was a strategic point of departure, it was as far north, and east, as we could go. Many ports north were still closed because of the coronavirus pandemic, and due to their proximity to Tokyo.

The town had many shops, making it ideal for provisioning. We'd already started stocking up while in Minamiise, but it was hard to carry more than a backpack-full of items at a time. The shop was a 30-minute bike ride away going up and down steep mountains. In Shimoda, stores were conveniently close, we could walk the food to the boat.

While in the city, we realized our Iridium GO satellite phone would need a new SIM card. We had no address in the city, but Anja and Thomas had met a friendly local, a woodworker named Shuhei. Shuhei let us use his address. The card would ship from the US, but we didn't know how long it would take. We knew there were reduced flights because of the pandemic. We noticed a possible weather window opening up in a week's time, but had doubts whether or not we could take it because we had to wait for the SIM card. Venturing into the Pacific without weather, or any form of communication would be dangerous, and so we waited.

Days passed, and the weather window proved to be ideal for departing from Japan. Robusta told us that they were going to take it. Devine & I were feeling down, refreshing the FedEx website every morning tracking where our SIM card was. On the 8th of June, Anja and Thomas travelled to the Immigration office in Shizuoka to check out of Japan, with plans to leave the next day. 2-3 hours after our friends left, Shuhei came by with a package, it was our SIM card! We looked at each other then. "Can we make it?" It was 1100. "If we leave now, we can arrive at the Immigration office by 1400." I said. "Let's do it." We grabbed our passports, our boat papers, and boarded the next train to Shizuoka.

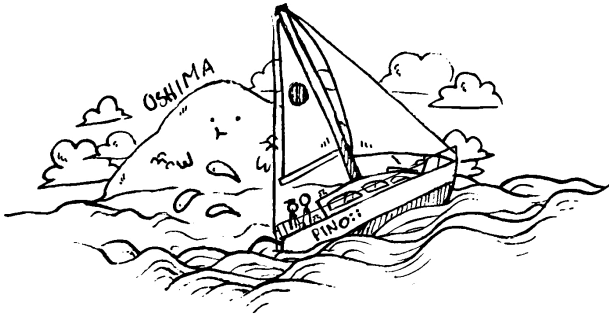
We made it to the immigration office, and checked out. We had plans to visit the customs office in Shimoda to finish the process, but the officials informed us that the Shimoda branch was closed today, it was only open on Wednesdays. If we wanted to check out, we would have to go to Numazu. I looked at the time, even if we left now, we wouldn't make it before closing. The workers at the immigration office could tell we were pressed for time, and decided to give them a call to see if they could help check us out with customs. Luckily, they allowed us to complete the process by email. We rushed back onto the train, eager to return to Shimoda to prepare for our departure the next morning.

On our last connection, the train broke down—a rare occurrence in Japan. We arrived back in Shimoda at 1900, only to find that Anja and Thomas were not back yet. They had gone to Numazu to visit Customs, a detour we managed to avoid, and then, they too were delayed because of the broken train.

Our last day in Shimoda was stressful, but the train ride was a good way to end our visit there. The local train from Shimoda runs along the eastern coastline of the Izu Peninsula, the scenery is stunning. We spent the evening sorting out problems with our satellite phone, but found time for one last beer on the docks. We sat with Shuhei, Anja and Thomas in the dark, beer in hand, nervous, but also relieved that we could leave tomorrow.

Week 1

June 9th



Daily progress: 0 km (0 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 8,210 km (4433 nm)

0600 We woke up early today, as we had little time to prepare before leaving Japan. Why so last minute? Well, we only decided to leave yesterday. Because of this last minute change, there were many tasks we had not yet done, or had not had time to do.

We're usually more organized than this, with only a few tasks to complete, but not this time. Last minute departures is not our style, but we also wanted to take this window. We had to find a post box to send the pocket WiFi we rented and to fill our water tanks. This may not seem like much, but it piled up on top of other things we'd forgotten, like finding and installing the pot holders to the stove top, installing the jack lines, locating the tethers, putting key items back

in the ditch bag plus a number of other last minute things that had escaped our minds at the time.

0700 We meet Thomas and Anja on their boat Robusta, Shuhei is there too. We turn down a cup of coffee, as it never sits right on the first day at sea. We use this opportunity to chat. Meanwhile, butterflies gather in my gut. I am nervous. I always am before a big trip, and this time is no different. This is our biggest passage yet, and will also be the most challenging. My gut has every right to twist itself into knots. We ask Shuhei if he can drop off our pocket WiFi in a post box, he agrees—ah, what a kind person! He came by with his truck to help Robusta with some last minute tasks, like getting produce and gas. We had done most of that ahead of time. A truck would have been useful though, we had to walk our Jerry cans of diesel to fill them. We propped the bins on top of our bikes, and used that to ferry them along. One of the gas stations closest to the water had recently shut, making life complicated for those, like us, who rely on their arms and legs.

0800 We said our goodbyes, and pushed off our spot, working our way out of the tiny sheltered spot in Takegahama that had been home to us this past week. A fisherman was sitting at the entrance, hands gripping a fishing rod with a lure in the water. He peered at us from under his bucket hat, pulling his rod back. He was here every morning, rain or shine, we'd even spotted him there at night with a head lamp. As we passed him, we apologized for disturbing his fishing waters, “shitsureishimasu!” An expression to mean, quite literally, that we were about to do something rude.

Pino and crew then moved over to the Shimoda Boat Services pontoon. We tied up to it and began to ferry bins back and forth to fill, and empty out in our tank. We filled as many recipients as we could carry, we didn't know how long the trip would take. Spending 40 days at sea was the best case scenario, and 60 was the worse. I made a calendar in my notebook marking both of these 'limits'. When I

drew it, my eyes locked onto the number 60 on the page, hoping we would not exceed that number.

After filling Pino's tanks, we left the pontoon and motored outside of the breakwater. The Shimoda Coastguard ship was lifting anchor at the time, it went past us, disappearing quickly in the distance because of its larger, more powerful engine. Outside of the breakwater, we saw the Mikotoshima Lighthouse on our starboard side, the one we had difficulty rounding when we arrived here a week and a half ago. Today, the seas were tame, and the skies clear and blue. Unrecognizable.

We saw the Kurofune taking tourists around the harbour. It was the first time we'd seen it on the water. There weren't many tourists before due to concerns with the coronavirus. Now that the state of emergency was lifted, people started travelling around the country again. Japanese authorities, like others in the world, struggled to keep people safe in this pandemic, discouraging gatherings by moving the 2020 Tokyo Olympic torch from its official podium to a hidden location, and by beheading tens of thousands of tulips at a popular flower-gazing spot.

1200 The current is pushing us along, fast. We passed Oshima island at a ridiculous speed of 9.5 kn! The Kuroshio, or black current, is very strong in this area, and even stronger between the islands as the water is forced through a narrow opening. We have no problem with ships, even with many moving toward Tokyo. Our speed makes it easy to work our way out of the main shipping channel. We are flying. Pino is happy to be moving again, and so are we. I don't feel nervous anymore. Back in Shimoda, some butterflies flutter around an empty dock, waiting to nest in the stomach of another anxiety sufferer.

1430 We see porpoises in the water. "Hello friends, it's been too long." They came for a quick bow-riding session, guiding us eastward.

Conditions are good. The wind is coming out of the southwest at a moderate breeze, with Pino gliding at 8 kn. For lunch, we had inari pouches (rice-stuffed tofu pockets), a meal we'd purchased the night before. Not cooking on the first day is nice, neither of us are seasick, but going below may trigger it. We stay outside instead, enjoying the good wind, weather and sun.

Devine is reading *The Mushroom at the End of the World* by Anna Tsing, while I steer us east. We tried hailing our friends on Robusta on the VHF, but got no answer, either they're too far or their radio isn't on.

1700 The wind rises to a fresh breeze. We slip into our oilskins so we don't wet our clothes. We won't be doing laundry in this trip, so keeping clothes dry is crucial.

June 10th



Daily progress: 305 km (165 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 7,905 km (4,268 nm)

0800 We download the weather, it is the same as yesterday, but it looks like the wind will increase this evening. Pino is doing well, but we are both feeling a bit seasick.

1200 We napped hard, then awoke and decided that we should try and cook something. Neither of us feel like eating onigiri, we regret making so many because we aren't sure we can eat them. They were our go-to snack when in Japan. Onigiri is made from white sticky rice formed into triangular or cylindrical shapes and often wrapped in nori (seaweed). We sometimes serve them plain, but also like to add salt as seasoning, or a filling like pickled plums, or kombu (seaweed). The salty and sour fillings act as a natural preservative. We love onigiri, but today we have no appetite.

The day before we sailed to mainland Japan, a friend that we met in Chichijima gave us homemade onigiri for the trip. The weather was very bad. We couldn't cook. We were glad to have the rice balls. It was an easy and quick meal. In the 17th century, samurai carried them while on the road, but the origin of onigiri goes back

even further, to a time before the Japanese used chopsticks. Molding the rice into balls made it easier to handle with your hands. This is convenient snack for sailors too since one of two hands is often busy holding onto a railing, a tiller or a wheel.

Despite not being hungry, we ate raw snap peas as a snack. The texture was weird in our mouths. Devine made spicy ramen, which were very, very spicy. I couldn't finish my bowl. We had a grapefruit for dessert, and made a mess on deck trying to pry it apart. The deck had red grapefruit innards on it for a while afterwards.

1700 We check the weather again. We don't normally check it twice a day because it eats up data, but the weather was changing fast. We wanted to know what was going on. We're glad we looked, the wind was set to increase by a lot. If we hadn't checked, we might not have set the second reef point in our mainsail. The last thing we want in this ocean is to have too much canvas up. Shaking out a reef is easier than putting one in during high winds. Our mainsail didn't used to have a third reef, we had a new one made in New Zealand in 2018 and asked to include this in its design. We're glad we did.

1800 We eat chips as a snack. We are not hungry for a full dinner. Everything tastes weird? It's like our taste buds are on LSD. The only thing that goes down easy is salty foods.

Seasickness

People often ask us if we get seasick, and yes, we do feel seasick at the start of every trip.

On the first day, we both become ill and grumpy. The early symptoms of seasickness include a headache, a reduced appetite, and a morose view of things. Our inner ears fight our eyes, both are determined to convince the brain of their version of reality. This incongruity, if allowed to persist, will trigger vomiting.

The first 2 days are the hardest. We whine a lot, profess that we hate sailing, and begin questioning why we've ever even decided to leave the dock. Then on the third day, our inner ears adjust, our brains adapt and learn the rhythm of the boat, and sailing becomes fun again! Although, we've met sailors that are not so lucky, cursed with constant seasickness that persists for the entirety of their trips, and yet, they continue to sail.

The best advice we have against seasickness, is to stay outside, and to keep your mind off the motion of the boat. Going indoors to retrieve an item from a locker is the number one trigger for seasickness. To alleviate the symptoms we take turns steering the boat, keep our eyes on the horizon and take in some fresh air. When steering, we can anticipate the movement of the boat, which allows our brain to re-calibrate with our eyes.

June 11th



Daily progress: 255 km (138 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 7,650 km (4,130 nm)

0900 We have peanut butter toast with slices of banana on top for breakfast. Devine sent a happy birthday message to their sister, with one hand holding breakfast, and the other typing. We've reduced the jib because the wind has increased to a very strong breeze. The Kuroshio pushed us higher than we wanted. We are at 36°N , and it is worrisome. We knew it was safer to stay under 35°N , the wind above that line tends to be stronger. Robusta is at 33°N , upon leaving Shimoda they took a more southerly route, and we should have done the same.

We are worried about our fresh produce, we can't eat any of it. This has never happened to us before, we've never been too sick to eat. The sun is warm and is hastening the rotting of some of the more sensitive vegetables, like broccoli. We had to throw away half a head overboard today. I hope we'll find our appetites again, I'd rather the food end up in our stomachs than in the ocean.

Devine made a salad for lunch to try and use up some of our uglier produce. The wind is blowing food off of my fork as I eat—maybe

not the best meal to have on a windy day. The wind is rising to a near gale, generating big waves, but hey, at least it is sunny.

1300 We watched seabirds pirouetting in the distance, they've got no problem in this wind. Their movements are sharp and fast. We don't know what kind of bird they are, they're brown with a white stomach. It's at times like these that I wish we had a book to identify sea birds. We've seen a great variety in the last 5 years. There is always a certain excitement with sailing into different waters, wondering what kind of birds or sea life we'll find when we get there. Becoming familiar with local flora and fauna is wonderful, but it also makes it difficult to leave. We will forever miss the trumpet fish of Tonga, the orange trees of Minamiise, the feral goats of Chichijima, the unicorn fish of Rangiroa, and the giant kauri of New Zealand. Pūkeko will always have a special place in my heart.

1700 We noticed that in following seas, the automatic bilge pump goes off often. I suspect it may be the rudder post that is leaking, but for now it is impossible to look, I'd have to get into the cockpit locker which is full of water bins and other heavy gear. For now, we try and check the bilge often, pumping the water out by hand every 2 hours or so. We have two manual bilge pumps, one in the cockpit and another in the cabin under the sink. The automatic bilge pump doesn't empty the bilge entirely because it sits on a little stand above the lowest point, but the manual pump tube touches the bottom and does a better job of sucking up the majority of the water.

We installed a second manual bilge pump in the cabin in 2018. We thought having a second, more powerful pump aboard could be useful in storm conditions. If necessary, we can pump water out while inside the cabin. On a boat, redundancy is key.

We prepared spaghetti with eggplant and green peppers for dinner. It is still hard to finish food, so we started preparing smaller portions to avoid waste. Both of us are still plagued with weird taste buds.

Sweet is too sweet. Veggies are bland.

Kuroshio

The Kuroshio, or black current, is a high-temperature, high-salinity dark blue warm current that has a transparency of more than 30 m (98 feet). Its flow rate is 4-5 km/h (2-3 kn) on the average and reaches up to 7-9 km/h (4 to 5 kn). The Kuroshio is weaker in the summer and autumn, but stronger in the winter and spring. The current carries a lot of sargassum seaweed into the Eastern Pacific. The Kuroshio and Oyashio currents also carry small fish close to Japan's coastal areas, that in turn attract larger fish, resulting in a varied ecosystem along the coasts.

Sailing along with the Kuroshio gave us a free ride, adding sometimes two or three knots to our speed. But coming out of Shimoda, we underestimated its strength. As soon as we passed Oshima Island, the current began to pull us northward, even with our bow pointing east.

June 12th



Daily progress: 300 km (162 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 7,350 km (3,969 nm)

0800 Rain. All day. It won't stop. We've asked it to, but it *won't* listen.

The conditions out here are horrible. We are running with the waves and wind, we wished we'd put in the third reef earlier. It is too late to do it now, it is too dark and too stormy. Neither of us eat dinner. We're in Sparta-mode.

June 13th



Daily progress: 335 km (181 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 7,015 km (3,788 nm)

0800 It is still raining, and the wetness is accompanied by gale force winds. This weather is demoralizing, but at least we are making good progress east, and getting further away from Japan—I never thought I'd be happy about getting away from Japan, I love that place but I don't have the same love of the ocean encircling it. Linger there is too dangerous. I wish the rain would stop. Everything would be more pleasant if the rain stopped.

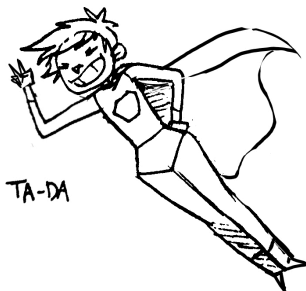
1200 Devine made pasta with a mustard sauce for lunch, I ate half, and left the bowl on the gimbaled stove. It was delicious, but I couldn't finish. I'll keep it as a snack for later. We had our usual peanut butter and banana toast this morning, we have no problem eating this. Will our appetite ever return I wonder? We had to throw away half a daikon today. Sad.

1700 Devine was steering outside, running in heavy weather. They turned a bit too far downwind, and gybed accidentally. As that happened, the shackle holding the block for the boom preventer

broke, and the line caught one of the stanchions, bending it. The sound of the boom slamming to one side was horrific from inside Pino. At the time, we thought the stanchion been ripped off the deck—glad that wasn't the case. We'll be able to straighten it back out, but the weather right now doesn't permit casual walks on deck. No damage to boom or main.

It's going to be another rough and rainy night. This horrible system seems to cover the whole area. What a nightmare world this is...

June 14th



Daily progress: 230 km (124 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 6,785 km (3,6643 nm)

0800 We both did shorter night shifts because of the weather. Everything inside is wet. The floors are slippery, and our foul-weather gear just isn't drying between shifts. We hang them over the sink so they drip into it, which makes doing the dishes a very unpleasant affair. All synthetic, or cotton clothing won't dry and don't keep us warm. We switch to wool. Wool provides insulation and allows moisture transmission from the skin to the external environment. We collected a few sweaters over time, rescued from Thrift Stores.

We eat two small meals per day, but aren't yet low on energy. The terrible weather has a way of keeping us focused. When there is danger we become superhuman, we need less sleep, less food, less everything. Don't know how long we can sustain this though...

1200 The wind has lessened, but the rain has not. I wish it gave us time to dry off. The weather doesn't care about our damp clothing and water-logged bones. Devine made gnocchi, and I managed to finish the entire bowl this time. This is a good sign! The wind is supposed to change tonight, and we hope that the waves die down.

Sailing at night

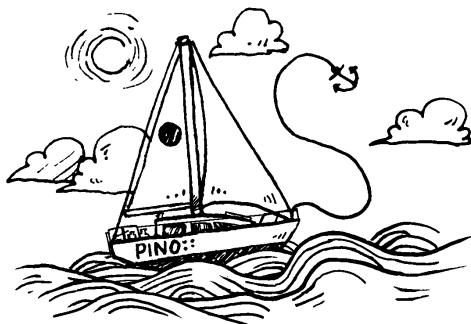
We used to be afraid of sailing at night, but now we look forward to it. It is the perfect time to think, to read, to listen to podcasts or music. It is easier to see ships in the dark than in the day, their locations are marked with lights. On clear, moonless nights, we see a beautiful tapestry of lights overhead, a show that is becoming less observable in cities because of light pollution. Then, depending on where we are in the world, there is bio-luminescence in the water. Pino leaves a sparkling green trail as it cuts through waves. While sailing toward Los Angeles, we saw ghostly figures in the water. They were dolphins. They had a tail of bio-luminescence behind them as they swam, the glow lingered long after they left.

Before we start our night shifts, we usually reef the mainsail. A smaller sail will slow us down, but our main concern is safety. The rule is that if the wind rises enough to have us question whether we should reef or not, we do it.

Another important rule, is to never reef at night. Everything is harder to do in the dark. We have done it before, with success, but the problem is that it means waking up your partner, robbing them of their precious sleep. Can't we reef a sail alone? Yes, we could, but that would break another rule: never wander on deck in the dark alone, even with a tether. Therefore, we plan to always do our last manoeuvres of the day while there is still some light out, at the cost of speed.

Since we started sailing, we have stuck to the same pattern for night shifts. One sleeps between 1900 and 2100, then sails between 2100 and 2400, then goes back to sleep from 2400 until 0300, and then goes back to the tiller between 0300 and 0600. 3 hours on, and 3 hours off. Some sailors prefer longer shifts, doing 4-5 hours at a time. We prefer shorter shifts, because we get tired easy, and 3 hours, when tired, feels unending. If ever we need more sleep, we take short naps in the day.

June 15th



Daily progress: 96 km (52 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 6,689 km (3,612 nm)

0800 The wind changed a few times, then died and left us with nothing. We hand-steered toward a blue patch on the horizon, toward the sun. Blue patches in the sky, laying between clouds, always gives us hope. We wanted the sun to dry up Pino's insides, and our outer shells.

We arrived at the clearing, and found the sun, or rather, it found us. We put our clothes out to dry in the cockpit—well, all of the clothes. The wind and waves were down, and so we spent time inspecting hardware, and dealing with minor breakages aboard. The anchor fell off the bow this morning after too much time spent bashing in the waves. I could hear banging outside at the bow, not because the anchor was hitting the hull, it was the sound of it skipping on the water, with the force of impact reverberating up the chain. Luckily, our new beefy chain-stopper kept Pino from trying to anchor in the deeps.

I went at the bow to pull it back up. The bow was diving deep. I was clipped to the jackline, and held onto the pulpit to keep still.

The bow was like a giant shovel, scooping up saltwater. Most of it ran off the deck, but my jacket and clothes sponged up a lot of it in passing. I managed to get the anchor up, and secured it as best as I could. In truth, nothing can really hold an anchor down in such seas. If the winds calm down enough, we'll take it off the bow entirely. This is a lesson for future trips in rough waters: remove the anchor and stow it below, always. Putting it back onto the bow before anchoring is a pain, yes, but it is better than losing it, plus 91 m (300 ft) of chain and rope rode at sea. The strength of the sea is immense, and we have no desire to test it further.

In early 2018, we upgraded from a wheel to a tiller, and gave our old post and wheel to a second-hand shop in exchange for a larger anchor. Our other anchor never leapt out of its bindings, but this heavier model just doesn't want to stay put.

1500 Pino is drifting toward the southeast in very light winds. We still have a few items out to dry. Our morale is good, and so we make coffee for the first time since we left Japan. We also make a proper lunch of rice and miscellaneous vegetables, a meal both of us were able to finish.

1530 Devine is asleep. The sun is still with us, and as I sit outside I notice something shiny in the water. A sea turtle! It drifts past Pino, its head out of the water. I can also see its shell. Far off in the distance, I see the spray of a whale. Calm days are wonderful, we see and hear so much more. I like to try and imagine a city stripped of idling engines, car horns and jackhammers, the rumbling replaced by the low hum of wind and birds.

On days of calm, bright sun, the world always feels so large. On grey, cloudy days, it shrinks, and stops at Pino's edges.

1600 We put in a third reef in the main in preparation for the coming bad weather, it is easier to set it up in calm conditions. We're

lucky that none of our slides have broken off so far. We had many problems with this between New Zealand and Japan. I've since replaced them with ones that are better quality. I wish our mast track was external, would be easier to fix slides when they break—ah, we can dream. Dreams are cheap, marine hardware though is not.

We are steering toward the northeast. The weather is still beautiful, but there is little wind. We make pasta with fresh tomatoes for dinner.

2000 Clear night, we can see the stars. I am bored tonight, my usual tricks to pass the time just aren't working. I decide to do shadow puppetry using the light from the compass. We replaced the original light with an LED, but its luminosity is too great. Pino is a bright star on the ocean. The LED lights the entire cockpit, and could act as a luminescent lure for fish, or other creatures from the deep. Sea-dwellers have nothing to fear, Pino is no predator. It is sometimes difficult to see the light of other ships with it, I have to obscure it with my hand to see afar, not a big deal, but also not ideal.

The usual tricks I have to pass the time include brainstorming and planning projects. Another, is recalling as best I can my favourite films, then wording them out. I've watched *The Lion King* too many times in my youth and can narrate it well enough, this can keep me busy for some time. I do the same for my favourite music, singing aloud when I feel tired to keep awake, and when I run out of ideas I try and do the same thing but translate the song into French, which usually makes me laugh and does a good job of keeping me alert. Listening to podcasts, music, or the audio ripped from films is something we used to do, but on this trip, we don't take devices outside because it is too cold, or too damp.

Week 2

June 16th



Daily progress: 267 km (144 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 6,422 km (3,468 nm)

0600 Devine woke up and went to stand in the companionway to tell me about this weird, elaborate dream they'd had. I looked at them, standing there, half-awake as they re-counted it. They spoke slowly, talking about the architecture and mood of the place in the dream. Their eyes were small, barely open, and I wondered if they were truly awake.

The wind came back late in my shift, I sailed Pino close-hauled in light rain.

1000 The wind is turning gradually to the southwest, it is easy to self-steer with this point of sail. We lock the tiller with a bungee,

trim the sails and let Pino do as it pleases. The sea is choppy through, and the ride not too comfortable.

I go below to prepare lunch. As I am cutting carrots the boat rolls, and I fall from the starboard side to the port side, my back striking the edge of the navigation table. My vision blanked out when I hit the edge, and the pain was like a knife in my back and ribs. Devine witnessed it in part, from their spot in the cockpit. They asked me if I was okay. “I’m fine.” I say, but this is a knee-jerk response and I don’t really believe that I am fine. I try and get back to cutting carrots, but I feel faint, and have to go lie down before I fall again. Devine asks me the same question again, and this time I say I am not okay and lie down. This did not help. Lying on my back wasn’t comfortable due to the constant movement of the boat (I later learned that lying down was the worse thing to do with rib pain). I winced with every passing wave. My ribs on my left side were bruised, sensitive to the touch. I am worried, and hope it won’t be hard to steer. I can’t let Devine do all the work. For now though, I lie here, focusing on getting better.

1200 I feel better when sitting. I can’t lie down, so I go outside to try and steer—because I am hard-headed. I find that it isn’t too painful. It is hard to get in and out of the boat. The wind is increasing now, and we make rice and veg for lunch. This is what I’d started preparing before my accident. I went back down below to finish, tying a rope behind me to make sure I wouldn’t be knocked over again. I should have done this before. Why didn’t I do this before?! This simple gesture would have saved me a lot of pain and trouble.

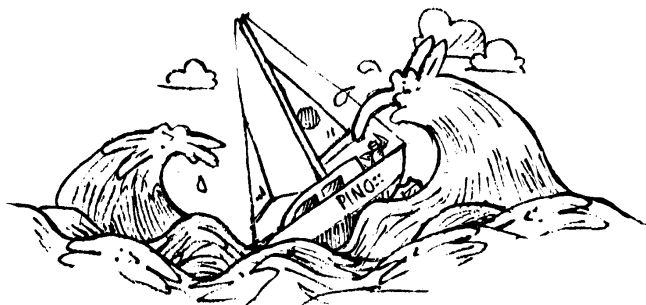
1400 I can stand to drive for 2-hour periods, that is good. We will do shorter shifts tonight.

The wind is at gale force, with big waves building at our stern. We are running, the sea at our starboard-side quarter, under a triple-

reefed main. We dread having to make dinner in such conditions. Fog is rolling in too, for the first time in this trip.

Devine plans to do a longer shift to give me time to rest. I take an Ibuprofen for the pain. The rain begins then too.

June 17th



Daily progress: 20 km (11 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 6,402 km (3,457 nm)

0600 *Disaster.* I was sitting outside, steering the boat in heavy weather. The waves were still monstrous, but showed signs of slowing. This wasn't the first time we'd run with weather, but we made sure to keep a good angle to it. But then, I noticed a large wave pushing up at our rear, the strength of it caused the entire hull to vibrate. I didn't like the look of that wave, but before I had time to look back, another one came. I did not see it, but it overwhelmed me.

A giant wave broke over us, and knocked Pino over. I didn't see it happen. A wall of water washed over me. I saw nothing but water. I fell. The water dragged me off my feet, and carried me right out of the cockpit. I was underwater, my vision blurred by a curtain of seawater. I was facing up, I could see shapes, and colours through the salty, wet veil enveloping me. I remember thinking then: "Well, this is the end. This is how it happens."

I wasn't afraid, or panicked, just disappointed? This is not how I wanted it to end.

Then, the world became clear again, Pino righted itself, as sailboats tend to do. I rose with it, clinging onto the lower lifelines, hanging outside of the boat. I was tethered to Pino—thank goodness. My life jacket had popped open, encircling my head like a lion’s mane. I was dragging halfway into the water, coughing up saltwater, confused. The water was warm, thankfully, we were still in the Kuroshio. I realized what had just happened then, and screamed for Devine for help. This was bad, very bad. I saw them work their way out of the cabin, shook up. Our dodger was ripped from the deck, in shreds, and the flexible solar panel on it was broken in half. The propane bin that was attached to the stern rail was laying on its side, its bindings had snapped off—glad it stayed aboard.

Devine ran to me, and tried to lift me up but couldn’t. “Is something dragging you under?” They yelled, panicked. “No!” I replied, “it’s the weight of the water in my clothes! My boots are full of water! Winch me up!” I was wearing tall rubber boots when it happened, they do a good job of keeping water out when sailing, but in this particular instance, their impermeability was problematic. When people fall overboard, a common tactic is to tie a halyard to a point on their life jacket, and to winch them out. Our halyard winches and lines were covered in broken dodger pieces, it was hard to reach them. I had an idea then. “Take my leg!” I yelled. I managed to lift my right leg up so they could help me get it above the lower lifeline. It worked. Once that leg was up, it gave me enough lift so they could grab my other leg, and then it was easy to climb to safety. I imagined then how difficult it would have been to get me out of the water, had my tether been longer. At that moment, I wished for an even shorter tether. The boat had rounded 180 degrees. Devine secured Pino into a heave-to, lashing the tiller so we could relax, and assess the damage.

We left the outside as it was, and went inside. I was eager to get somewhere safe. I was glad that we kept the companionway door shut, as the wave filling the inside of the boat would have been very bad. The cabin was an incredible mess, with things, not water.

“We’re dead.” Devine said. In truth, we were fine, but they were shook up, and the inside of the boat looked worse than it was. When the wave broke at our stern, Devine was thrown from one side of the boat to the other, the produce jumped out of the baskets, some of the floorboards were flipped over, a bottle of cooking oil leapt out of the fridge and emptied its contents over a cushion and onto the floor, a 5 L jar of umeshu (Japanese plum wine) leapt out of that same space and hit the ceiling on the opposite side, exploding onto the navigation table and instruments. All our charts were wet, and our passports too. I usually stash them in dry bags, but I didn’t do it this time and I’m not sure why I didn’t? There was umeshu *everywhere*. The stink of it covered everything.

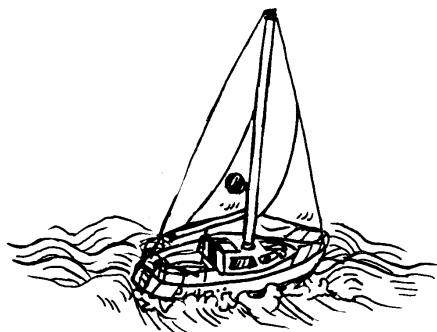
We sat on the sticky, wet floor, wide-eyed and thinking: “Did that... just happen?” I’d read of boats being knocked-over, or ‘pooped’ many times before, but reading about it is different than experiencing it. I downed a can of ginger ale. “You almost *lost* me,” I said to Devine, pained at the thought and thankful in that moment for the tether that kept me from drifting freely into the sea. They came over and we stayed in each other’s arms, for what felt like...forever. They smiled and looked at me afterwards. “You want to get married?” I laughed out loud when they said this. Devine knew how I felt about marriage, because they too shared my views on it. We’ve been together a long, long time, for 14 or so years. We’ve spoken about it before, but neither of us ever cared enough to even consider it. The term “marriage” itself is an archaic religious rite that carries a lot of historical and ideological baggage. At this point though, we were agitated, and we wanted to make promises to each other.

“Yea. Okay. Fuck it. Let’s do it.” I said. If we made it back home to Canada alive we’d get married, well, we’d opt for a civil union, and try and be content with less. We don’t need to cross an ocean to be happy, surely?

1100 Got the boat back in order. We surveyed the extent of the damage: we have no more dodger, the wind meter appears to be dead, we also lost our 100-watt flexible solar panel, the rig looks okay, and so does the engine and the sails. We spent the day heaving-to, trying to calm down. We made a plan not to panic, and to go forward. It's a long way to anywhere from here, and we've got to keep going. No one is coming to get us out, we have to get ourselves out.

1700 After cleaning up the cabin, we slept in each other's arms, with alarms to warn us of coming ships. We don't usually do this, but with both AIS and radar, we felt safe.

June 18th



Daily progress: 39 km (21 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 6,363 km (3,436 nm)

0400 Seas are calmer now, we broke our heave-to and started sailing again. The winds are light, we're pointing southeast because that is all that this wind permits us to do at the moment. We shake out the third reef, make coffee and have peanut butter toast.

We recovered rather quickly from yesterday's event. One of the best things to overcome fear and stress is routine and goal-oriented tasks. Every day we eat, sleep, take note of our position, and check the weather. Every day we do these things, and focus on the present. Yesterday is gone, today is today, and we don't have time to sit with our fears.

The sun came and stayed with us for an hour, not long enough to dry anything, but we're happy it came at all. The sun does wonders for our mood.

1200 We tacked back to the northeast to dodge some weather. It is raining again now, we drive from the cabin using a set of long

ropes, since we no longer have a dodger to hide under. We make deconstructed shepherd's pie for lunch. Then, I napped hard.

Beating to weather with a good easterly heading. We are now 1,847 km (997 nm) from Japan, we're nearing the 165°E mark that indicates our turn northward. When you sail east to Alaska or to the Pacific Northwest, you've got to go east until you hit that mark, otherwise you run the risk of staying in the path of typhoons.

We keep getting strong winds. Every 2 days a big system runs us over. Considering what happened yesterday, we decided that we would heave-to as often as we needed to. This trip is a long one, and we need to keep our energy and morale up.

1700 We put the boat into heave-to again to eat a dinner of soy-bean hummus, carrots and sauteed vegetables. We don't normally heave-to to eat meals, but we stopped for an hour just to relax, and to spend some time together.

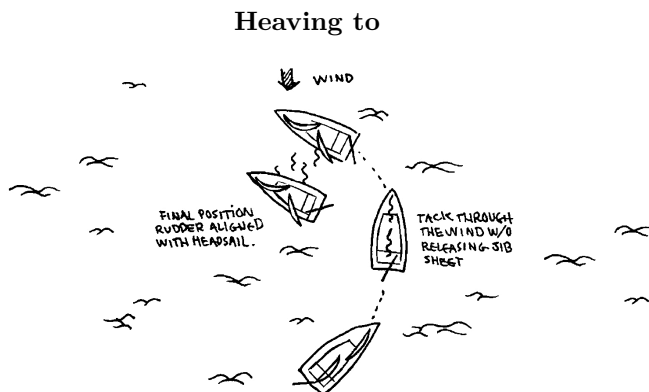
We started night shifts ahead of time today because it is getting dark earlier. We had good winds pushing us southeast. We received a message from Robusta, they are doing well, and are 556 km (300 nm) away from us. They cannot send messages often, they seem to have a problem with their radio.

2000 I couldn't sit on either the high, or the low side during my night shifts. I was scared. Scared of being swept up again. I sat on the cockpit floor, wearing 2 tethers, and moving the tiller with ropes from there. I did not think that yesterday's event had affected me adversely, but it had. Every time I hear a wave rushing up to Pino, my heart leaps into my throat, and my legs turn to jelly. Big waves have the same effect, but worse.

Whenever my brain has a chance to idle, I think back to the wave. I keep trying to re-live the moment, re-playing the memory over and over again, making corrections, as a director might do when editing

a film. I find myself trying to view the scene from a different camera, frustrated with the limited first-person footage I've got. I want to view the scene from afar so I can see the wave, to see the size of it, and to figure out if I could have done things differently. I don't want to think about this, but the memory comes uninvited.

This is going to be a long, long trip. I know we are not done seeing big waves.



Heaving-to is a sailing technique, it is a way of slowing down your vessel. It involves fixing the tiller and sail positions so that the vessel doesn't need steering. To heave-to, we turn to tack through the wind, without releasing the jib sheet. The mainsail self-tacks to the other side, but the jib is held aback. When the jib's belly curves inward, the tiller (or rudder) should be aligned with it, as if trying to tack back again. It's necessary to lash the tiller so the rudder can't move again. Without the power of the jib, the boat can't go forward and will stop. It is easy to do, and all aboard should learn to do it.

Breaking a heave-to involves unlash the tiller, and releasing the windward jib sheet before hauling in the leeward sheet.

We refer to heaving-to as ‘parking’ the boat. We tried this technique years ago in Canada, and again a few times in the South Pacific. Heaving-to in calm waters is very different than in storm-like conditions, but the technique is the same.

The first time we did it at sea, was on the sail from Mexico to the Marquesas. It was early in the morning, I was outside steering. The sky was grey, overcast, and I could see lightning. Then, without warning, the wind rose from a comfortable 15 kn to 40 kn. We had a full-jib and main, I couldn’t hold the tiller. The sudden wind increase woke up Devine, and together we decided to heave-to to let the weather pass.

It’s a technique worth becoming familiar with, it could save your boat and your life. We should have been heaving-to instead of running with the weather yesterday, if we had been, Pino would not have been overwhelmed.

Our boat, with its fin keel, heaves-to well. Slowing the boat costs time, but our safety and mental health matter more. We’ve got plenty of time to get to Canada. We are glad that the rig suffered no damage, we were lucky. Well, luck has little to do with it, it is because of the Fifth Essential.

The first Four Essentials are as follows: A well-found ship, a good crew, adequate preparation/maintenance, and being a good seafarer. The Fifth Essential is an exercise in accident prevention. John Vigor explains this as every ship having an imaginary black box in which points are kept.

“In times of emergency, when there is nothing more to be done in the way of sensible seafaring, the points from your black box can buy your way out of trouble. You have no control over how the points are spent, of course; they withdraw themselves when the time is appropriate. You do have control over how the points get into the box: you earn them. For every seafaring-like act you

perform (replacing a shackle before it breaks, travelling in the good season, checking all halyards/rigging prior to leaving port etc.), you get a point in the black box. No matter how good your seafaring skills, there are times when there is nothing left to do but batten down the hatches and pray. If you have a credit balance of points in the box, you'll be all right. People will say you're lucky, of course. They'll say a benign fate let you get away with it. But we know better. That luck was earned, maybe over quite a long period."

Pino is a good, strong boat, but we also work hard to ensure that our black box always has enough credit balance.

June 19th



Daily progress: 176 km (95 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 6,187 km (3,341 nm)

0400 Wind has lessened to almost nothing. The sails are flapping noisily. We reef the main to the third point in preparation for the night shifts. We checked the weather, and it looks like we'll be heaving-to for some time. The coming low will sweep right over us. After it passes, there's a patch of green on the GRIB files? Green patches mean fair weather. Is that even possible in this land of infinite tempest?

1000 We found some wind and are heading southeast, away from the patch of no-wind. Our goal is to work our way toward an area with better conditions. This point lies at 165°E, or better yet, 170°E.

We awoke Calcifer, our engine, to charge our batteries, but noticed there was no water coming out of the outtake? We went below into its chambers to investigate. Recently, in Shimoda, I changed the water pump impeller. I'd noticed it was damaged, and it looks like I put it back in the wrong way. I've got a spare impeller, but I can't keep making mistakes like this because I heard impellers are hard to come by on the ocean.

1300 We ate sweet and sour lentils for lunch outside, it started to rain but we stayed out there anyway, hiding under an umbrella to eat. We've got little protection from the weather in the cockpit, so we do what we can with what we've got. There is something funny about holding an umbrella while sailing in a vast ocean.

2100 We heave-to as the wind starts screaming into the rigging. We had trouble heaving-to with both main and jib for some reason? We don't have problems doing this usually. We decide to use the main alone, but also, the jib was hard to furl! What the hell is going on? We'll investigate tomorrow, when the sun comes up and that we can see what we're doing.

0000 I can't sleep. I am stressed out about the weather, plus the bit of jib we couldn't furl is making a racket. I slept in the quarter berth, hiding well away from the noise...

June 20th



Daily progress: 74 km (40 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 6,113 km (3,301 nm)

0100 Finally went to sleep, as Pino slid into a calmer area of the passing low. It's hard to relax when the wind is howling outside, it always sounds worse from inside the cabin, with halyards slapping on the mast, waves smashing against the hull and the walls creaking.

0400 I woke up and went on deck to fix whatever was happening with our jib and furler. The seas were still big. Devine added a line to the furler to keep it from spinning, and made a few more turns in the barrel so we could furl the jib in tighter. It worked. By adding more turns to the barrel, we were able to roll it up all the way. Difficulty with furling the jib only happens in heavy weather because we have to winch it in to furl it, by winching it we furl it extra tight, which then requires more turns to roll all the way.

Sometimes I wonder if a hank-on headsail wouldn't be safer. I know that no system is perfect, and that going to the bow to douse it would be unpleasant too, but both systems have pros and cons, it's a matter of finding which we want to live with. I like the idea of a system with fewer moving parts because less can break. Just like we

opted for simplicity with our software, maybe we'll consider getting rid of the furler should it break.

0600 Made coffee from whole beans! It's a special day! Coffee from beans has a better taste, but takes more effort because we have to grind the beans first. Devine prepared the beans and set the moka pot on the stove, but then a wave knocked it over, spilling all of our delicious coffee behind the stove. The gimbaled stove prevents this usually, but when the boat rolls, the back and forth motion can knock it over, if say, we're not there to hold it. Our stove has pot clamps, but these only grip the base, and our stovetop coffee maker is too damn tall.

After the accident, Devine was swearing aloud, frustrated. The boat smelled good, but there was coffee all over the floor, at the back of the stove and under it. We make instant coffee instead, it is better than no coffee, I think. Devine is still bitter about the spillage, but downs their cup of instant coffee anyway. We imagine better pot clamps, something we could make that could hold the tall moka pot in place at sea.

0700 Devine is reading *Les Glénants*. This is the first book about sailing we've read. It was an intimidating first read, ill-suited for complete beginners. When scanning through the pages, we realized we knew none of the French sailing terms. The word "bôme" was close to boom, but words like "l'étai" resembled nothing we knew. It's embarrassing to say, but back then all the sailing terms we knew came from English movies, like Captain Ron and Master and Commander. I'm happy to say that our French sailing vocabulary has improved since we last opened that book. Walking into a marine store asking for parts is less of an awkward experience, saying: "Do you have the thing that goes in the thing?" is a *thing* of the past.

I am sitting in the quarter berth, still afraid of the boat rolling over. The quarter berth is the safest place to be in such an event, because

it is a very restrictive space. Nesting in this narrow cocoon helps me feel better. We received a message from our friends on the sailboat Tumbleweed today. It feels good to get news from the outside world, these days we spend way too much time in our own heads. We first met Morgan and Douglas in Newport, OR in the US, they too were going to Japan. We travelled together loosely through the South Pacific, but we parted ways when they left Japan for Alaska last year, one year ahead of us.

Currently, we are farther north than we want to be. The weather keeps pushing us that way. We get low, after low, after low. It feels like we're in hell, with good weather being but a distant dream. We'll likely keep heaving-to until Sunday, depending on how the weather develops.

1200 For lunch, we had tomato pasta with green peppers, with chocolate and clementines for dessert. Clementines were a gift from friends who came to visit us in Shimoda before we left. Eatable gifts are the best.

Whenever I eat an orange, I think of the time we spent in Minamisa, a city renowned for its oranges. There was an orange shop in Gokasho, they had varieties for every season. Our favourite variety was the Dekopon, an orange hybrid, recognizable by its protruding bump on the top resembling an inverted belly-button. The shop sold orange-flavoured desserts, as well as fresh juice, and ice cream in the summer. We'd bike there once a week from our spot in Shima Yacht Harbor. Oranges will always take me back to that place. We ate the clementines in silence, savouring every bite, letting memories of Gokasho transit in and out of our minds.

For now, we are parked at the centre of a mean system, waiting things out. Looking at the GRIB files, it's funny to see ourselves positioned in the 'eye' of this massive storm. The world around us is chaos, yet it is much quieter in our little spot on the ocean.

1400 The seas have settled, and the wind has died. The forecast changed. We motor east to get out of this patch of no-wind. We also use this time to charge our batteries. Even this far out, at 2,097 km (1,132 nm), we still see some of that pesky sargassum seaweed (hondawara in Japanese), the kind that wraps around your prop and fouls it up. We are careful to avoid it, we would not want to dive under the boat to clear it, not out here, not in this weather. Both of us fear swimming in open water, we both get vertigo. There is too much space between us and the sea floor, and our monkey brains hate it.

1600 We stopped motoring and sailed with a reefed jib and main. We don't trust the weather here, it's best to be cautious with the amount of sail we raise. The wind is coming out of the west even if the GRIB files called for no wind. The seas are moderate. We don't know the exact strength of the wind, our wind meter died after the wave knocked Pino over. We installed telltales at various points around the boat. One of them is hung around a toothbrush, and it is the best one we've made? The telltale spins right around loosely, it is sensitive and is perfect to show wind direction—also, it makes me laugh, sometimes the cheap things work just as well as the fancy things.

It's also funny to think that something like a broken wind meter might keep some boats in port. The things you think you need. A wind meter is useful, but not essential. This device has failed us before, so we have generally learned to live without it.

Pino is steering itself. We are navigating from inside, checking our heading on the side of the compass from the companionway door. There are zero targets on AIS. Strange to think that there are no other humans around.

June 21st



Daily progress: 37 km (20 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 6,076 km (3,281 nm)

0300 Woke up after heaving-to again for the night. The wind rose in the night, and it was too hard to steer. We broke our heave-to and motored east in calm conditions. Today promises favourable winds. Finally! We have finished all of our pre-packaged sliced bread. We bought many loaves before leaving so we'd have something easy to eat in the beginning. Now, we switch to cereal and oatmeal.

Later, the wind turned and lessened to a pleasant strength. Sailing is nice now, with new waves coming in to flatten the monstrous waves of the previous day, like giant hands smoothing out wrinkles in fabric.

We had ramen, both of us were very, very hungry, this is probably because we've been eating smaller meals lately. It was so good, both of us craved a salty and spicy dish.

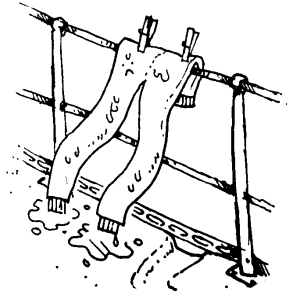
1100 Devine cleaned mould off the walls. The exploding bottle of umeshu has left stains all over everything. We cleaned up most of it on the day of the accident, but we keep finding hidden patches

behind the radar, around the navigation table, on the ceiling etc. We currently have no way of warming or airing the cabin, our heater is broken, and all hatches have to stay shut because of salt-water spray. Now that we no longer have a dodger, keeping the companionway door shut is even more important. Like a lion in the brush, hunting prey, the rabbit waves keep low... until a window opens, and then, they pounce.

My ribs hurt a lot today. I took an ibuprofen to quiet the pain, which comes and goes in waves.

The wind rose from the south, with big seas. We reefed the jib, put the third reef in our main. We are wondering if we should heave-to. The waves are once again monstrous. The GRIB files were wrong for this area, and we're worried it'll get much worse. We decided to push on, even if steering is challenging. We are at 163°E and want to get past 165°E as soon as possible. A messy ocean feels a lot like a mosh pit, with waves and cross-waves striking each other to the sound of howling wind and shrieking petrels.

June 22nd



Daily progress: 191 km (103 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 5,885 km (3,178 nm)

0300 We hove-to as the morning light shone onto the sea, this is a good time to figure out if what we're doing is a shit idea, or a really shit shit shit idea. Cradled by waves, I stared into the depths and felt dizzy. I'd rather not spend too much time thinking about the enormity of the world's oceans. They are large and wild spaces between continents, and humans, blinded by hubris, build and wear their boats like armour to cross them. Madness.

The wind in this area is very strong, but there is a promise of lighter winds from the east. Devine gets their foul-weather gear on, and goes outside to steer us onward to 165°E. Our friends on Robusta are south of us still, but making some progress to the north, they are mending a sail and going slow. We are glad that Pino's wings haven't lost their feathers yet, our armoured bird is healthy, and flying east.

0600 As the day went on the clouds vanished, revealing a blue sky. I seemed to have forgotten that the sky could ever be that colour. The waves are still mean, but the blue reflected into them dulls their

teeth. When we get sun, we usually take everything out to dry, but today is not a good day for this because the cockpit is getting a lot of saltwater spray. I have a pair of leggings outside that is well-pickled and that just won't dry, and I don't want to add to that sorry collection.

Later, the seas and winds lessened even more. We were reminded then of what sailing is normally like, it is usually pleasant, and done in fair weather, with enough time to consider each wave, bird and cloud. Yes, this is what sailing is supposed to be like.

1400 We finally reached 165°E, a milestone in our trip. We hope that the weather will improve as we move further east, because I don't think we can stomach weathering more lows. It is difficult on the mind and on the body. A clear indicator that I have some mental stress is that I have amenorrhoea. Part of me is glad not to have to deal with this whilst sailing, but the other part knows that it also isn't a good thing.

The wind has not changed yet, and being outside is nice. I remove my tuque to enjoy the sun, my hair is tuque-shaped underneath, flat on the top with a sharp cowlick in the front. "Hey, check! J'ressemble à Tintin!" (Hey, check it out! I look like Tintin!) I said, smiling. Devine looks bright and happy today, happy enough to make jokes, happy enough to return a smile. My world is infinitely better when Devine smiles.

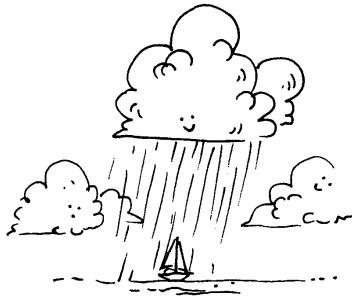
For dinner, Devine makes a pasta salad with a mustard dressing, and we ate the last of our fresh fruit, 2 ruby red grapefruits. When we eat more, it means the weather is good and that we too, are feeling good.

The forecast is promising, but the GRIB files for this area are not always accurate. This morning's weather was supposed to be a fresh breeze, but we had near gale winds instead. There may be better weather ahead, in any case, we are happy to leave this forsaken area

behind. We're running with a full jib and double-reefed main. Our paranoia with the weather is still strong, it seems like we won't be raising the main fully any time soon.

2100 Quiet night at sea. We saw some stars. It has been a while. We're sailing southeast with a patch of light rain on the horizon, just in time for Devine's shift.

Squalls



Squalls bring sudden high winds and rain in passing. They usually blow at around 25 kn (46 km/h) and last around 30 minutes. They are easy to see from a distance, appearing as big puffy cumulonimbus clouds, with dark bottoms and a skirt of rain.

Squalls do not move with the prevailing winds, but at an angle to them, and can affect a boat even when a good distance away. Whenever we see a suspicious formation on the horizon, we keep our eyes on it to track its progress, to see if our paths will cross. If it comes close, we alter course to aim for its periphery since it is better than going straight through it. We also reduce sail, to lessen its effects. If the squall is too strong, we simply bear off and wait for it to pass.

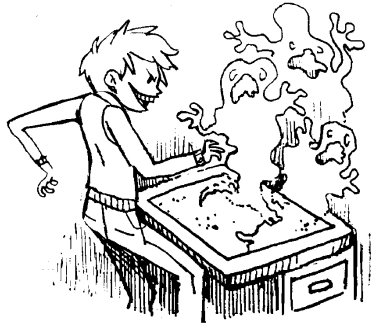
Reefing the mainsail before darkness falls is especially important in areas prone to squalls. It ensures that the person on watch isn't overwhelmed, and that the person off-watch can sleep well. Squalls are visible at night too, especially if the moon is full and bright. We look for dark spots on the horizon, and try and see if we can see the sky underneath. If we can't, it meant the cloud has rain underneath it, and it is likely a squall. A dark mass moving contrary to the prevailing wind is also a good indicator of an approaching squall.

We've also noticed that the air feels different when a squall is coming, it either feels colder, or warmer, the difference in temperature is drastic and hard to ignore.

The doldrums is an area where prevailing winds converge, creating an area of perpetual calms. In such places we use squalls to move forward, effectively becoming storm chasers. We chase squalls for their wind and for their water. Water is not hard to come by when there are squalls around. We always make sure to have a bucket on deck to attach to the end of the boom to collect it.

Week 3

June 23rd



Daily progress: 204 km (110 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 5,681 km (3,067 nm)

0300 Blue skies today—what a gift! Devine overslept because the phone died, and there was no alarm to wake them. I stood watch for 4 hours straight, and it felt unending. We feel that way often, even for short 2-hour shifts. Time goes slow when we're steering sometimes, it feels like hours and hours have gone by when in reality it has only been 30 minutes. There ought to be a ring in Dante's hell like this, where time is warped, where the clock says it is 0233 but it never, ever changes. Or sometimes it does change, to 0234, but then somehow it rolls back to 0233?! Our brains must have hallucinated the change, surely!

When Devine awakens, they serve instant coffee with oatmeal. The

wind is still out of the west, offering good smooth sailing and gentle seas.

0800 We took our sleeping bags out to dry, and found more mould. The pans under the sink had coffee from the recent spillage that we forgot to clean up, and moisture is the perfect environment for mould. The papers inside the navigation table also harbour an advanced civilization of rotted matter. We want to keep our charts anyway though, because we might need them as back up. They are moist and full of spots and stains, handling them without tearing them up is difficult. We hung them over the lee cloths, to try and get them to dry but we both know that won't happen. Our world is cold and moist.

We had soba for lunch, the smell was enough to cover up the one emanating from the rotten charts. To be truly rid of it, we'd have to exorcise the rot demons out of them, but they appear well-settled, and we might have to learn to live with them after all.

1600 We have our first happy hour. We've completed one third of the trip, and celebrated with a glass of red wine. We left Japan with many cartons of Japanese wine of varying sweetness. Robusta made it to half the distance to Dutch Harbour, and they too celebrated this grand event. They are close, but we still don't see them on AIS. They are north of us. Maybe we'll catch up? We turned northeastward at 166°E, we'll be skirting not-so-great weather to escape yet worse weather. Such is life out here. We do our best to stay positive, and to position ourselves well to the weather.

2100 Clear skies, with plenty of stars, but no time to enjoy them because the sea demands our attention. The wind is rising, and will steady at a good strength until dinner time tomorrow.

June 24th



Daily progress: 228 km (123 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 5,453 km (2,944 nm)

0400 The seas are big. Very big. My stomach is in knots from worry. I practice *box breathing* to calm myself. Every wave that comes lapping up the hull scares me now. I never did trust the sea, but now I am terrified of its strength and unpredictability.

We tried to have coffee outside, but a wave came crashing into the cockpit, spoiling both our cups. No coffee for us today. Seems like we'll have to fight these monster waves all day. I worry when I'm out here, but also am concerned for Devine when they're out there. Wind is coming out of the west, strong and relentless. The next days should be calmer, although the forecast has been known to lie. I went to hide back inside, but I wish I was out there with them. Sometimes I wish that we were somewhere quiet, chatting about projects and sipping something warm, not sitting here, mind racing and fearful that the sea will try and take one of us again. A calm existence might suit me better, but I also enjoy a life devoid of comforts, perhaps I need a healthy dose of both. Sailors are such masochists.

We are crazy fools to be out here, but what other option was there, really? How else could we bring Pino home? It's funny. When the weather is bad, we are fools, but when it's good, we're lucky? The weather has a way of toying with my mind and feelings.

1000 I went to steer Pino through monster-sized waves, one of them struck the boat, and spun us right around. It was scary, but at least it did not try to board us. I was holding onto the railing and stayed put. Now, whenever I see a mean-looking wave coming, my hands instinctively grab the nearest handhold. I refused to drive in these cruel waves after that. I secured Pino into a heave-to, went inside, and just started bawling. The accumulated stress of this trip, and the lack of sleep just got to me. This was a ridiculous dream wasn't it? Maybe, but crossing an ocean wouldn't be half so interesting if all was easy and predictable now would it?

Devine is steering now. I feel terrible, but I need a break. They have plans to heave-to again when tired. Meanwhile, I make sure they get what they need. I made spaghetti for lunch with tomatoes and stewed eggplants, and served the meal with a warm bowl of miso soup.

1500 About 20 porpoises came leaping in and out of waves around Pino. Life on the water is always better when there are porpoises around.

We downloaded a bigger range for the GRIB files, and noticed a big system heading our way—what else is new? It's going to be a strong one. The forecast may change, it often does, but we're not sure how to go about avoiding it. Devine thinks we should go south, I think north, either that, or we slow down and let it pass. This part of the ocean is most unkind. The only wind we get to go forward is those from passing lows, which are usually too strong, and then leave calms in passing. This is discouraging. Devine is a glass half-full kind of person, I'm glad he's around to balance me out. Fear is

a terrible thing.

Later, Devine decided to heave-to after Pino got knocked around by two passing waves, they've had enough. We'll heave-to until this weather gets past us. They came inside and went straight to bed, but I noticed our heave-to was behaving strangely, the main was flapping and causing its halyard to slap the mast. That isn't supposed to happen in a heave-to, the main is supposed to be full of air, unmoving. I quizzed them about it, asking about how the main was positioned, the tiller too. I could not understand why this was happening. Devine was too tired to give me answers.

I went out to see, and saw that the tiller was lashed to the wrong side. This was confirmation of just how tired Devine was, they usually don't get this wrong. I went outside and corrected the mistake. No more sounds, and the main was well-positioned. I stayed outside for a bit to make sure everything was okay. When I went back in, I saw Devine buried deep in the sleeping bag, asleep. The one that I love most and share this tiny cocoon on the ocean with needs their rest. *Dors bien mon coeur, I'll keep watch for a while.*

June 25th



Daily progress: 91 km (49 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 5,362 km (2,895 nm)

0230 I got up at first light. The waves had diminished enough, so I got dressed and went outside to steer us out of this mess. I unfurled the jib and steered northeast.

Devine awakened later and checked the weather. After analyzing the data, we tighten the sheets and point north (ha, I was right). The low should pass underneath us. We need to steer as directly north as we can before the wind dies tonight. Devine is still tired, and goes back to bed. I slept well last night, and am in a good mood.

With Pino's sails perfectly balanced, we're pushing north. We let our vessel do its thing and keep watch. I noticed the tiller bolts got loose after our evening of heaving-to, so I went to get tools and tightened them up. The tiller has other problems. The wooden handle is delaminating, with the end splitting in two. I added layers of tape to keep the slabs together. It has looked better. We don't always have exactly what we need to do a repair, but we always find something else to use that works. Making repairs with limited resources is a good exercise in creativity. We have a lot of wood

scraps, metal bits and rope cuttings, stray objects that we don't have a use for now, but that we know will be useful later.

0600 Devine woke up and served me a cup of hot coffee, it helped to revive me. We chatted about the future, me sitting outside and they from the companionway stairs. There's no need for the two of us to be out here in the cold. We talked about being content with less again, a common theme in this trip.

0800 I crave ramen a lot these days, but every time I eat some I get a stomach ache. I made a point of avoiding packet ramen for many years, but at sea I try not to deny my body what it craves. My sea stomach has a simple palate. We didn't buy too many packs at least, and when we run out we'll have plenty of time to work the MSG out of our systems.

We eat some crystallized ginger for dessert. Our produce is looking past its best. We've got a 3/4 head of cabbage, 9 carrots, with a few starting to look tired, a daikon that is getting spotty, and 1/2 an eggplant. Our potatoes and onions are looking good. We've also got some preserved lotus roots, and many other dried vegetables, but we're keeping those for later.

1000 The wind is lessening, but isn't gone yet. Devine is reading Ursula Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*, while steering with a line from the companionway stairs. I just woke up from an hour-long nap, feeling refreshed. We got a message from Robusta, complaining about the waves. The waves yesterday were bad. Our positions on the live tracker are updating again, thanks to Devine's dad.

Morgan and Douglas, from Tumbleweed, messaged us to report an issue with our track, saying it was not updating (since the 17th). We were concerned that people would think we'd disappeared, or had serious issues. It is fixed now! We're glad. We're lucky to have good

land support, people to tell us if our path is broken, to help us with weather or to give us moral support from afar.

1030 My ribs still hurt, I never have enough time to rest to allow them to heal. The motion of the boat makes that extra difficult. When I sleep, I sit still, with cushions wedged under my back. I'm glad I can steer the boat but worry about making it worse. We've got our share of bumps and bruises. Devine has splinters in their fingers, I'm not sure how that happened? Maybe the tiller. They've got a bruised knee, from the wave event, and we both have random aches, calluses on our hands etc. Long passages aren't kind to the body, or the mind.

1400 Time to refuel. Since the seas are calm, it is a good time to do it. The wind isn't down entirely, but the boat isn't rocking too much. What was supposed to be a 5 minute task turned into an hour-long endeavour. The deck plate cover for the diesel intake was stuck! Neither of us could get it open! We tried a variety of tools, and eventually freed it up. This is my fault, I think. I recently changed the o-ring to a *slightly* thicker one (it's all i could find). Also, the tool we use to open it fits loosely in the cap, this due to many years of hard use. We emptied one 20 L Jerry can of diesel into the tank.

1530 We had kiri mochi with diced cabbage and julienned carrots for dinner. I pan-fry the rice cakes with sesame oil and season them with black pepper until puffy, and that both sides are golden and crunchy. Because it is calm out, and that Pino is steering itself, we had dinner inside together. I want to spend as much time as possible with this human. We've experienced much together haven't we?

Because it is cold outside, we steer from inside the cabin, pulling ropes between the washboards.

Food

We spend a lot of time provisioning ahead, because many cities don't carry specialty items like nutritional yeast, miso, dried legumes, dried beans, flax seeds and B12 supplements. Before a big passage, we calculate how much of each ingredient we'll need, based on how much of each we typically eat in a week. First, I make a list of our favourite meals, break them down into ingredients and their quantities, then I multiply that by the amount of time we'll spend at sea. Say we typically eat 100 g (1/2 cup) brown lentils once a week and have plans to stock up for 26 weeks, I multiply the number of weeks by 100, which means I'll stock 3 kg (rounded from 2.6 kg).

Energy-dense legumes like lentils are cheap. We especially like whole brown lentils, because we can sprout them and cook them into meals. Sprouting them halves the cooking time. Cooking the meal in a pressure cooker further reduces cooking time, while saving on precious fuel.

We keep a lot of shelf-stable tofu aboard. It is a good source of calcium (when calcium-set) and protein. For iodine, we carry iodized salt and seaweed (wakame or nori). Other essentials, like omega-6 (LA, linoleic acid) we find in pumpkin seeds and sunflower seeds, while omega-3 (ALA, alpha-linolenic acid) are available in linseed and chia seeds. We like to pre-grind linseeds ahead of time and to sprinkle some onto meals, we also like using the grounds as a thickener for sauces.

Staples like oats, rice and flour are available everywhere, but finding wholegrain versions (brown rice, oat groats and wheat berries) of these ingredients can be difficult. Stocking up large quantities of pre-ground wholegrain flour isn't a good idea because it will go rancid. It's better to stock up on wheat berries (when available) and to grind them yourself with a mill. We crossed paths with a German boat in Fiji who did exactly that. Another way to make dough from wheat berries is to sprout them. Sprouted wheat berries become soft, easy

to grind, which can in turn become dough for your bread when mixed with other ingredients. We carry a small 10\$ meat grinder on Pino, it's got a simple mechanism, is easy to clean and requires no power, but most importantly, it does a good job of pureeing sprouted grains. Meat grinders are cheaper, and easier to find in Thrift Stores than grain mills.

We always find fresh vegetables, wherever we go. And if we're going to an island where produce is scarce, it's best to leave it to the locals, and to arrive with enough provisions. We carry dried peas, mushrooms and daikon, and preserve food—when in a place with plentiful fresh foods—whenever possible.

“You don't need to be an expert to preserve food, or any fancy technology. Just a container, some salt, and trust in the world of bacteria and fungi.” — Aaron Vansintjan

Lacto-fermentation is easy to do, requiring only vegetables, salt and water. We make sauerkraut, kimchi and other pickled vegetables (carrots, radish, garlic etc). Preserving food by lacto-fermentation keeps vitamins intact, and in some vegetables, increases its nutritional value. Fermentation also improves the immune system, and digestibility of the food, making them easier for our systems to assimilate. Lacto-fermentation on a boat helps in saving fuel, and to prolong the shelf life of perishable foods. A sailor who pickles vegetables will be able to prepare elaborate meals with complex flavors and nutrients quickly.

There are many other ways to preserve vegetables, like nuka (Japanese technique) and with miso. Fermented foods are nutritious, unlike canned foods. As Alex Lewin, author of *Real Food Fermentation and Kombucha, Kefir, and Beyond* said: “With canning you kill all of the microbes and seal it hermetically. With fermentation you invite the microbes you want and don't let in the ones you don't. Fermentation is diplomacy and canning is a massacre.”

Cans can help in a bind, we carry many on Pino, but there are other, better ways to keep food. We learned this late in our travels, but after living without a fridge for 4 years, turning to fermentation was inevitable.

Below is a list of rules that we go by, when choosing what to eat:

Eat varied foods. Biodiversity in the diet means less monoculture in the fields.

Pay more. Spend more for foods grown or raised less intensively and with more care.

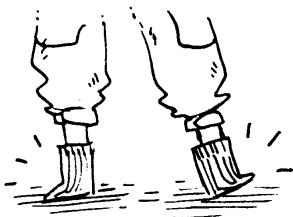
Eat mostly plants. Especially leafy greens.

Avoid processed foods. Buy base ingredients. Cook at home.

Eat local seasonal ingredients. It's cheaper, and better for the planet.

Plant a garden. Or sprout seeds and legumes. It's a good exercise toward mindfulness.

June 26th



Daily progress: 196 km (106 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 5,166 km (2,789 nm)

0200 Red sky at sunrise—how does that saying go again? “Red sky in the morn’, sailors’ forlorn.” It is difficult to view this as a threat, we’ve come to expect big heavy weather in this area.

I don’t feel tired from my shift, seems like I got enough sleep. I am steering north, the current wind doesn’t permit much else. We’re steering clear of a system passing below us. I’d like to make more progress east but that won’t be possible today.

Devine brings me a comforting bowl of warm oatmeal! We try to save on propane as much as possible because our tanks are smaller, it’s why I’ve been eating cold oats for the past 10 days. I wanted to keep gas for higher, colder latitudes. Warm oats do taste better, but being frugal with our cooking fuel is necessary.

It was difficult to get our propane tanks filled in Japan. While in Shima Yacht Harbour, we had to buy new Japanese-style tanks because they refused to fill ours—may have been because of their aged, and somewhat steampunk appearance. The issue with Japanese tanks is that they are tall and skinny, and only get taller as their

volume increases. Our propane locker is made for a short and stout 9 kg (20 lbs) tank, we couldn't fit a Japanese tank of a similar volume because of its increased height. Instead, we had to purchase two smaller 5 kg tanks, which wasn't ideal, but better than not having the ability to cook at all. We are still on our first tank, so far, so good.

0800 Devine awakens, serves coffee and checks the weather, as is our usual morning routine. After today, we should get some good wind to go east. We got a message from Robusta, saying it looked like the Pacific High was going to appear on Monday. Normally, when boats plan to sail to Alaska or the Pacific Northwest, they wait until it appears, because with it, comes the promise of favourable winds. We did not wait for it, and the weather we're getting now might very well be due to that, but we thought waiting was more dangerous since summer is also typhoon season. We'd sailed in areas of contrary, variable winds before, we figured we could handle it. Indeed, we can do it, but it isn't easy.

Devine started reading *Canticle for Lebowitz* by Walter M. Miller Jr., having finished *The Dispossessed*.

0900 Devine slips on a fresh pair of socks. We've been wearing the same pair for a while, we don't have an infinite supply, nor do we want to use up our water to wash them. I alternate between two pairs of wool socks. I was wearing my favourite pair when I was thrown overboard, they are dry now, but full of salt. I need to hang them outside so the wind can shake the salt out of them. We might start using water more frugally once we reach our second milestone at 45°N 159°W.

1430 Wind is coming straight out of the northeast. We can't make any headway, and I am frustrated. I'm afraid it'll be the same deal tomorrow. That passing low sure is a jerk. Pino can only go northwest or southeast, and to us, both options are crap. For now,

we steer northwest. Might be better to heave-to than to tack back and forth between two points. I angrily drink a ginger ale. Devine wakes up, they are hungry, very hungry, but also tired? Conflicting needs.

If the wind had a face I'd punch it.

1530 Devine is making cornpone for dinner. We opened a vacuum-sealed bag of cornmeal we had leftover from our time in New Zealand. I can't believe it's still good after all this time!

June 27th



Daily progress: 120 km (65 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 5,046 km (2,725 nm)

0230 Finally, we are seeing the wind turn a little more towards the north, permitting us to do go east. We need to keep heading that way to catch some of that sweet Pacific High breeze! The only wind that we got comes from a passing low, and won't last, but we'll take what we can get.

It's getting colder, so we're steering from inside. Devine fiddled with ropes and found an arrangement that will let Pino steer itself tonight.

0530 Pino is now bashing to weather. The waves aren't too large, but I worry still. Pino's bow slams into the sea every now and then, and I can hear the anchor rattling. I hope I tied it down well this time, retrieving it now would be dangerous. We are pointing east right now. I never thought we'd have to chase lows to get wind. Walking inside is difficult, we have to move carefully. Going to the bathroom is an interesting experience when bashing, since ours is located at the bow. It's hard to focus on our business when we struggle to keep our butts down and bodies straight. Making a

secure deposit with legs and arms sprawled out like a starfish is a skill that I doubt will ever be useful to me in any other setting.

0600 We saw a cargo ship named Scorpion on AIS. It is 7 km (4 nm) south of us. A rare occurrence. We've got an alarm set for ships that come near, it only rang twice so far while on the open sea. Last time it rang, there was a trawler passing south, near enough that we could make out its faint outline in the distance, and we could hear its engine too. Otherwise, there is no one within 89 km (48 nm) of us. Land is much further than this. We'll be passing the western tip of the Aleutians soon, the more miles we put between the opening to the Bering Sea and us the better. We were pointing towards it for the better part of yesterday, and it was scaring the shit out of me.

1230 We are bashing northeast. The wind hasn't lessened much, but is supposed to as the day goes on. I am nervous, and I don't know what to do with myself today. I read a little, sleep a little. We're doing good speed but bashing is stressful. Buckets of saltwater splash up on deck as the bow keeps diving into waves.

I noticed some wear on the foot of the headsail, but I've no clue when I'll be able to go up there to patch it up. The weather is still too rough. I hope the jib will hold up; it's old, very old. I've no doubt it'll enjoy a quiet life in British Columbia inland waters, once—no, IF we reach Canada. I can't talk in "whens" yet, only "ifs". It's hard to imagine arriving anywhere when there's this much distance between us and land. British Columbia is a haven on a rough ocean.

We had kiri mochi, carrot and the last of the cabbage for lunch. Our veggie supply is looking sadder by the day.

1500 We are still bashing. The sound is very unpleasant from inside the cabin. We got a message from Robusta saying the same.

We are definitely going to stow our anchor away when it gets (if it gets) calm enough out there.

1700 Maybe I got my wish? A calm is in our future. We were supposed to have a good breeze for the next two days, but the area looks like its going to be sucked out of all wind. I had oatmeal today for dinner, while Devine had ramen. Not in a ramen mood today.

June 28th



Daily progress: 224 km (121 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 4,822 km (2,605 nm)

0900 Seas are tame today. We are heading east northeast. The wind is supposed to die gradually. We are running with a full jib, and are trying to catch all the puffs of air. A low is coming from the west and we want to make as much headway as possible to avoid it. We are doing good speed, we reached 175°E and are two days away from reaching 180°W. The sky is grey, but our 90-watt solar panel is doing a good job. We're thankful for that, it means we don't need to turn on the engine as often.

Both of us slept soundly last night, we steered from the companionway stairs again and kept our easterly heading. We don't have weather yet, we're having trouble getting a good signal. We will try again soon. We are 19 days out of Japan.

1300 We were able to download weather. It looks like the low will pass north of us—that is good news! The wind also died. We are bobbing in the waves, which are thankfully not too large. It seems like we'll be in a no-wind zone for a while. Devine is outside emptying old soybean oil out of a plastic bag. During the wave

event a bottle of cooking oil shot out of the fridge and landed in the port side settee cushion, filling it with oil. Lacking time and patience, we stuffed the cushion in a large plastic bag and the oil has been draining out of it since that time. It is hard to clean these cushions, getting oil out of foam is no easy task, and neither of us are willing to spend time on it. It's a messy job. Quiet times at sea are the best times to take care of such tasks, to deal with things we normally ignore, though we've both decided that the cushion will be quarantined until we reach land.

1500 The wind is very light. We take time to do tasks on deck. We removed the anchor, finally, and stowed it below in the v-berth, buried in blankets and other soft things. The anchor locker over top will keep it from moving around. Bashing into waves with a heavy anchor makes a racket inside, and we were afraid of further damaging the headsail furler.

We flipped the jib sheets around after we'd noticed some chafe, we also added tape to places they commonly lay up against. Devine tightened some halyard so they'd stop banging on the mast, and we cleaned solar connections from salt and added lanolin to protect them from corrosion.

There is blue ahead, how nice, but this also means we're heading into a calm—not so nice.

1700 Storm petrels are flying around Pino island, cackling in the dark. There's at least 30 of them. We are becalmed over a buffet it seems. Tonight will be quiet, and tomorrow will be more of the same. We might have to motor east to catch a breeze, currently the forecast has us stuck here a while. We hope it's one of those times when it's wrong, otherwise this trip will surely take us 2 months—now I'm glad we left early! We made quick deconstructed shepherd's pie, with corn, sweet potatoes and tofu. When I make the quick version, I don't bake it in the oven, I prepare the ingredients separately and

combine them in a bowl. Both of us had a big appetite today, I guess we were both tired from wrestling the anchor off the bow. We have 1 daikon left, tightly wrapped in cling wrap. It has some dark spots but feels firm. We'll cut it up tomorrow, and see if it tastes as bad as it looks.

Cruel that the wind is gone but that waves persist. I bet there's a circle of hell that is exactly this—this is a common theme in my writing isn't it? I blame the fact that I started to read Dante's *Purgatorio*.

June 29th

BOWIE



Daily progress: 80 km (43 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 4,742 km (2,560 nm)

0000 Clouds bring false hope of wind in passing. I went back inside, no sense in being outside when we're just bobbing on the water in the cold, and in the dark.

0200 Devine is sleeping hard, and I'm still outside, steering. The wind has settled into the north, it's easier to steer and I try to keep Pino on an easterly course. The sea is near flat, the sky is cloudy, but I can see a clearing in the north that will likely catch up, bringing sun and a cloudless sky this afternoon. We had early oatmeal, we were very hungry this morning. Because it was a cold night I had many layers on, but even with extra insulation I could not stay warm.

0600 Woke to find Devine asleep on watch, Kindle in hand. They let me sleep longer but couldn't stay awake themselves. Not a big deal, Pino is not going very fast, although we were going southeast... I corrected the course and made coffee. We sat outside, talking about

our recent readings. Devine disliked *The Incredible Tide* by Alexander Key due to its religious undertones and pessimistic worldview, Miyazaki's *Future Boy Conan* is better. I started reading *Solaris*, and I really like it.

1000 We woke up Calcifer, it's time to charge the batteries. And since we're becalmed, it'll also provide some forwardness. We each had a short nap, we're both very tired today. Whenever we go down to nap we fall asleep instantly, but waking up is very, very difficult. It may be because in hectic times, we are more alert and don't allow our bodies and minds to fully relax. We've had many moments like this recently.

After waking up, I read *The Long Way* by Bernard Moitessier aloud to Devine. It's comforting to have our thoughts echoed in his, somehow we feel less alone. The sea scares everyone.

1400 We put Calcifer to sleep, goodnight buddy! Then, we cook savoury pancakes same recipe as regular pancakes, except that I omit the vanilla extract and add spices. The pancakes act as a side-dish to soybean hummus, carrots and daikon. The daikon had some nasty bits but the rest was eatable, mild, but good enough by ocean crossing standards. We had a glass of wine after the meal. Two albatrosses circled our boat, landing closer and closer each time.

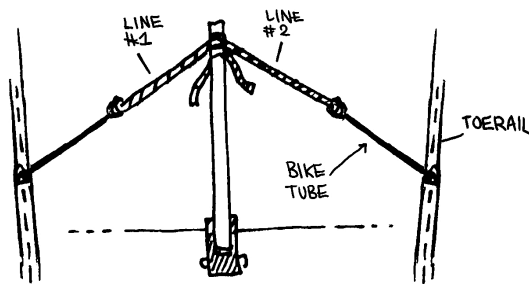
The albatrosses kept their distance at first, but now they're inching closer, and closer, checking us out, allowing us to study their features better. We named the more daring of the two Bowie because of the glamorous dark colouring around the eyes. Every time we look outside we see Bowie there, paddling next to the boat, having no trouble keeping up. Love ya glam bird, you're keeping us well entertained.

1530 We have 2 carrots left, a length of daikon, 2 lotus roots, about 10 sweet potatoes and as many regular potatoes. We have 8 onions

and 1/2 bulb of garlic. We should have bought more garlic. In the end while stocking up, the lack of garlic had escaped our minds. We departed Japan so suddenly that we forgot a few key things. Ah well, we'll manage without, we have garlic powder that we always can use as a backup.

2230 The wind is rising from the east, we're self-steering towards the north. The wind should turn gradually to the south, which will permit us to resume our easterly course. We have a full jib and double-reefed main.

Self-steering



One of the reasons we converted Pino from wheel to tiller was to simplify self-steering. We are big fans of shock-cord sailing, which consists of using a set of shock cords and blocks to self-steer a boat without the need for a windvane.

The easiest point of sail is when beating into the wind. We lash the tiller in place using ropes, then trim the sails and the boat will stay on a relatively straight course. We make small adjustments when necessary. To allow for more variation, we like to tie a line to the tiller (we have two cam cleats fixed to the tiller to quickly jam the line), then to a bike tube on the toe rail. We used an old bike tube

because it's what we had, and we found it more stretchy than shock cord. We adjust the tension by releasing the line from the cam cleat, or tightening it. Wrapping a line about the tiller is also fine, but if the wind is strong it's better to make more turns. We add extra turns even with a cam cleat, as a precaution.

“This system works because the tiller, held slightly to windward, is trying to steer the boat down. Every time the boat sails down, the mainsail catches the wind and tries to pull the boat back up again. When the boat heads up the mainsail will luff and will stop pulling the boat upwards and the tiller will steer the boat down again.” — Andrew Evans

There are different methods of self-steering when running, or reaching. The ‘storm-jib system’ is useful when close-hauled or on a broad reach. It's a dependable, long-term solution for self-steering. If set correctly, it's possible to leave it as is, for hours and days in any condition.

On the passage from Tonga to New Zealand, we ran into our friend, and solo-sailor Josh on his 8.8 m (29 ft) boat *Mastral*. It is rare to come across other sailors at sea, and it is even more rare to meet a sailor that also happens to be your friend. We met Josh while in Mexico. His plans were similar to ours, to sail through the South Pacific and over to New Zealand. His outboard motor died early on, but he continued his trip anyway, learning self-steering techniques as he did. When we met him on the ocean, we could see that he had 3 sails up. *Mastral* had a Bermudian rig, like ours, but also had a poled-out storm-jib just forward of the headsail. We did not understand what we were looking at then, but the image never left our minds. Then, we found a book by Andrew Evans, talking about the ‘poled-out storm-jib system’.

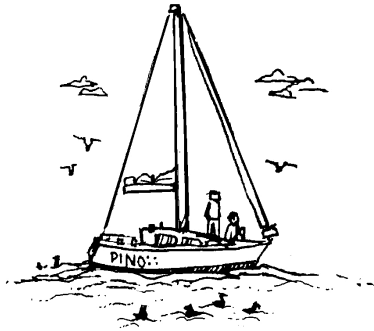
The storm jib system only requires a few lengths of surgical tubing (or bike tubing), a storm jib (or stay sail) and two snatch blocks. I will not explain these techniques in too much detail, Andrew Evans

does it much better in his short (and free) booklet *Thoughts, Tips and Tactics for Single-handed Sailing*. If interested in learning to self-steer without a windvane or autopilot, we highly recommend this book.

Learning to sail without complex systems is essential, not just for single-handers, but also for couples. An over-reliance on gadgetry can be dangerous, especially at sea, where there is no one to help when things go wrong.

Week 4

June 30th



Daily progress: 113 km (61 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 4,629 km (2,499 nm)

0430 The wind is still coming out of the east, making going in that direction impossible. We are going north, making little headway toward our destination. The breeze isn't really pushing us that fast, I marked our position on the chart and was disappointed with our lack of progress. I should be more patient, I know. I can't control the weather. We've got to wait for wind, we've got to be patient.

0640 Bowie is stalking us. They startled me as they landed next to the cockpit in a loud splash. I noticed that whenever we got too far, they'd fly over, land just ahead and drift past us before repeating the motion again. Our Bowie is not shy anymore.

0800 Why am I always hungry?! After coffee comes lunch, I guess both of us eat breakfast too early these days. Devine is making garlic, chilies and nori pasta—my favourite. They sauté the garlic and chilies in olive oil, then add the cooked pasta and swirl it in until well-coated with the mixture, then they transfer it to bowls and top it off with shredded nori. My stomach is whining as the smell wafts out the cabin. I am steering north. The wind has us in irons, but at least there's a relatively constant breeze. Today, we'll be making an inventory of all the food we've got left, just to see the state of things. Our snack locker is bare, as expected. Devine sure loves snacks. We'll soon have to be creative to keep this one fed and happy.

1130 We did the food inventory, Pino's stores are looking good! We have enough variety for nutritive and fun meals. There is food everywhere aboard, it's hard to know the state of things until we take things out of the lockers and start counting. All of the slow days had me worried, wondering if we'd have enough if our sail really did take 2 months. It's been 20 days and we're going through our stores at a reasonable pace.

The wind is weak, and still coming from the east.

1730 Wandered into another calm. This is better than beating or running into high winds, but it's too bad that our options are always either too much wind, or none at all.

This quietness isn't the worse thing. Pacific white-sided dolphins came to see us 3 times today. Because the sea was flat, we could hear them coming from far away. No matter how bad I'm feeling, their visit always perks me right up! Bowie left to look for food, so we're left with cackling Leach's storm petrels for company.

We moved closer to 180°W, we are at 178°E, here's hoping that the wind returns later today so we can finally cross that invisible line!

We noticed today that one of our spreader lights was broken. Pino is going to need a lot of love and attention after this trip.

2230 Sometimes sailing feels like witchcraft. There was hardly any wind before, Pino was bobbing stupidly in the water as I sat inside, waiting. I got tired of the motion and of the sails flapping, so I went outside to steer. Devine reduces the jib in periods of calm to reduce chafe, but keeps a tiny bit of canvas up to ease the pendulum motion from waves. I felt tiny little puffs of wind so I unfurled the jib and pointed us east. Perfect. Wind filled the sails and we started to go forward. I was amazed, and started dancing in the cockpit, happy to be moving forward in a favourable direction! Hope the wind stays with us, if so, we're sure to cross 180°W!

Food storage

Purchasing food in bulk is ideal for long passages, but they'll spawn insects or turn rancid if they aren't stored in air-tight glass jars or food-safe plastic bins, away from light and moisture.

Containers. Aboard Pino, we carry a lot of glass jars of different sizes, and large plastic food-safe bins. We like to use plastic bins designed for drinking water to store grains and other dried goods, like legumes and rice. Food-grade plastics are identifiable by the recycling number on the bottom. 1, 2, 4 and 5 are food-grade, but also to check to see if they are *food-safe*.

We carry a lot of glass, and don't worry too much about it. After 5 years of hard sailing all of our jars are intact, even the large 5 L jar of umeshu that jumped out of the fridge did not break (only the plastic lid did). Glass does not leach chemicals and does not rust (although the lids might). We've swapped our metallic canning lids for durable plastic ones. On passages, we store glass jars on a shelf that is exactly their height. The jars have little wiggling room. Packing glass in tight-fitting spaces is key to preventing accidents. When the jars are full, the weight keeps them well-seated and secure.

We like to use old socks as sleeves for glass jars stored in the settee lockers.

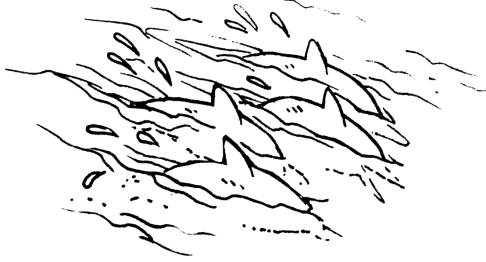
Light. Our storage shelves have a fabric curtain to protect them from light. B12 in nutritional yeast is light-sensitive, protecting it from the elements will ensure that it retains its nutritive value.

Keeping food separate. We keep food purchased in bulk in separate jars. Keeping some types of grains, or dried goods separate helps to avoid problems, like weevils. If one batch is contaminated, the other might be fine. If the infested food is in a solid, and air-tight container, the hatched insects can't escape to infect other containers.

Oxygen. The presence of oxygen decreases the storage life of food and causes oxidative deterioration, and under the right conditions insects can spawn. An easy way to remove oxygen from a container, is to use oxygen absorbers. In Japan, many items in stores come with desiccants. Overtime, we've amassed many and re-use them. Every time you open a jar for a serving of grains, oxygen comes in which hastens spoilage. For this reason, we like to keep the bulk of our food in smaller jars instead of in larger containers.

Weevil-prone items include flours, cereal, rice, quinoa, pasta, oats, barley, corn and wheat berries.

July 1st



Daily progress: 129 km (65 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 4,500 km (2,430 nm)

0600 Devine got up earlier today, they did not feel the need to nap in their last 3-hour shift. They stayed up with me, had a second breakfast—like a proper hobbit—and made REAL coffee from BEANS! We've been having instant since it is easier to manage in rough seas, but now we're running out of the easy stuff. Devine pre-ground beans yesterday for this morning, they may continue to grind more ahead of time to make sure it's never too bothersome to prepare.

The wind is light, but good, we are making headway and will likely reach 180°W this afternoon. Then, we'll be moving toward our big halfway milestone of 4,105 km (2,216 nm). With how things are currently, this trip will take longer than 45 days, but no matter, we're in the good season and left Japan early enough that we can have many more slow days. The seas are flat today, making it easy to move on light airs. We have to go northeast to keep with the wind, there is another no-wind area southeast of us that we have to be careful to avoid. Robusta is behind us, it is not easy for them to go north, the weather up there is awful right now.

0800 Devine makes soba with wasabi, accompanied by a dipping sauce—fancy! The weather is calm enough for us to handle both a bowl of noodles and a dipping bowl. They also added konyakku (konjac), a block we found yesterday while doing inventory. We didn't know if it would still be good to eat, but it was perfect! I will miss konyakku, it is delicious as sashimi.

1030 I made pitas, not for a meal but to snack on. I'm glad the weather allows for this kind of messy cooking. The wind is good, we are pushing northeast. The sea is calm, the sun is bright and the sky is clear. We're gliding at 5-6 kn.

1200 The dolphins are back! They swam with Pino for a good hour. We love watching their dorsal fins cut through the water, the shine of their backs gleaming in the sun. Once in a while, a row of them all jump out together, perfectly synchronized in a neat line. It looks like a glitch in the Matrix—almost too perfect. It's hard to be sad when dolphins are near. Now, if only Bowie would swing by to say hello.

1400 We are so close to 180°W, to one of our big milestones! Crazy how much progress we make with good wind. Marking our position on the chart is more exciting when there is enough distance between points.

We have an early glass of red wine to celebrate our near victory. We sip it as I continue to read *The Long Way* by Moitessier to Devine. The sun is warm and being outside is so damn pleasant!

1500 I make Japanese curry, or *kare*, a staple on Pino. It's a dish that I can always finish, even when not hungry. We both have a kare stomach. I used up the last carrot to make it. Now, our fresh vegetable bin is near empty, occupied by a quarter daikon and two preserved lotus roots.

1730 We made it past 180°W! We are officially in the western Pacific! Exciting! This also means that we get to experience July 1st twice, as we are going back a day—funny how that works. It's nice to see degrees going down. We have a long way to go still to reach our destination which lies at 123°W, but it's a start, and we've got to celebrate little victories. Tomorrow morning, we'll celebrate this passing with pancakes and maple syrup, we'll open our last can of delicious liquid gold.

2100 Devine makes miso soup, and eats a pita, I can smell the food as I am sleeping and its making me hungry. My dreams are interwoven with this scent, generating images of giant pita people with dresses of cascading miso.

2200 Awoke for my watch. Devine is at the navigation table, reading and wrapped up in blankets. It is very cold tonight. I slip on my foul-weather gear even though I've got no plans to go outside. The set keeps me warm. I've got my warmest clothes on underneath too. I make myself a bowl of cereal to quiet my stomach, although in truth, I'd prefer something salty. My body craves salt at sea, it seems it isn't enough to be pickled from the outside, my insides demand the same treatment.

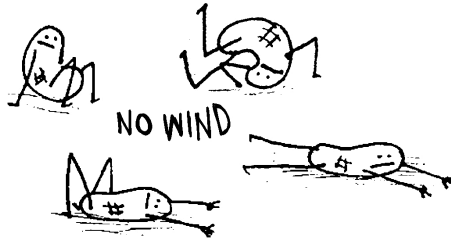
I wash my face every few days to remove the accumulation of salt. My face feels smooth, and so do the tips of my fingers. Our bodies don't get rinsed often because we are conserving water. We wash whenever we change clothes, which on this trip isn't *terribly* often. Sea life puts us on a different beat, I like it, but I do miss hot showers and our little room heater. It's a shame our Espar diesel heater is broken, but again, even if it wasn't I doubt we'd have enough power to sustain its use, because when it's cold the power is also at its lowest. Tomorrow is our scheduled time to wake Calcifer so we can charge our batteries. Our spirit under the stairs is doing well, and did not think the wave event bothersome—good.

2230 Calm, calm. We've drifted into another no-wind desert, a rift between two systems that is 185 km (100 nm) wide. We thought we could keep Pino moving under light wind, following the southern edge of a system, but it is difficult to know for sure where the wind ends. No forecast is that accurate. Because of this, planning is difficult.

Our main is flapping, waiting for wind to fill its belly, to give it purpose. Not tonight. Maybe things will be different in the morning, in the meantime we'll have to endure the flapping.

The night is quiet otherwise, with stars in full view. The moon has set, making it easier to see the elegant tapestry in detail. I see 3 ships on AIS, all far away. Busy, busy seas no? May they stay far away, may we never hear the sound of their rumbling engines cutting through the quiet in our vicinity.

July 1st (again)



Daily progress: 92 km (50 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 4,408 km (2,380 nm)

0130 The wind is gone. All of it. The water is still, mirror-like. I go outside and reef the main in the dark to stop it from flapping. The sun is rising, I can see the outline of shearwaters resting on the waves.

0600 We make pancakes and maple syrup to celebrate our passing of 180°W!

Calm, calm, calm. Flat calm. Silvery, ripple-less seas. We drifted last night until 0400 this morning, then turned on the iron wind to charge the batteries and to give ourselves a false sense of progress. Our dolphin family came to say hello today, we saw their outlines perfectly in calm waters. We felt guilty to be motoring with them around, I imagine the sound must be deafening underwater. Devine charged the Sony a6000 yesterday and with it, was able to take footage of our sea family.

As we drifted in quiet waters this morning, I saw a strange creature pulsing in the water, it looked like a creature that had been turned

inside out, translucent and pinkish. It had multiple bulbous protrusions. The ocean feels alien even without such things living in it. We dubbed these strange-lings *mimoids*, like the manifestations in *Solaris*.

Devine went up the mast to the first spreader to fix a light that had broken off, it was hanging by its wires. Devine feared that one day it would fall and smack us in the head. They secured it with tape, completing a good temporary fix. They were happy to come back down, even after only being up there for 5 minutes. The bosun's chair takes you where you need to go, but it is also an instrument of torture, it excels at wedgies.

0700 I've been doodling a lot at night, drawing silly cartoons. My peanut people doodles keep me busy. Humour is a good way to deal with stress. When working at an animation studio in Japan I was drawing silly cartoons often because of my terrible computer. My work station was garbage and crashed constantly, so between reboots I'd draw cartoons featuring my difficult computer. It loved to forget my pen tablet settings, and to crash right before I'd saved my work. Doodling helped diffuse my anger and made working at that studio bearable.

0800 Devine made a noodle stir-fry for lunch using spices, our preserved lotus root, and half a daikon. They also added bits of dried tofu. We love adding this type of tofu to meals, they soak up all the flavor. After lunch, Devine and I napped hard in succession. The sea is calm, with a gentle swell coming out of the east. No wind—well, if one can call the occasional puff of air wind. We are pointing Pino's bow east, into the swell. I sing some *Deathcab For Cutie* as I steer. Something I do when my brain is too tired to brainstorm projects, or when it doesn't want to dwell on memories past, or on a future when land is near.

1000 Pino clumsily wanders into a patch of resting shearwaters. They are such skittish things. Even if we steer clear they still run, feet and wings flapping as they try and get away. Sometimes they dive underwater. I saw one do this today, but it must have been confused because it resurfaced even closer to us, and in a panic it took to the air, feet splashing and wings lifting water as it took off.

1300 Time to continue to read *The Long Way*. I read aloud, snacking on peanuts with a glass of red wine. We are still on Japan time, deciding that we both liked a 0200 sunrise and a 1700 sunset. 1300 is 1600, the time before we make dinner. These days we start our evening shifts at 1700 to make the most out of daylight hours. We're glad for long summer days, short nights are more pleasant because it doesn't get too cold. Robusta sent us a message, they are aiming for Dutch Harbour now and report the air being much cooler where they are. Anja wonders how we'll cope with the cold without heating. We don't really know, but we'll figure something out. At the worse, we'll wear our sleeping bags?

1430 Devine makes dinner today too, consisting of tomato pasta, with soft tofu and nori. They added some red miso to the sauce, I really like it! It adds a lot of depth to the dish.

There is a tiny breeze, it helps us keep a good easterly heading. We're cruising at a slow 2.5 kn—better than zero no? The wind will likely die today, with the forecast calling for an even calmer calm, if there can ever be such a thing. Perhaps it is a place where even sea life is still, slumbering peacefully before the next low comes rolling in. We should get some weather on Friday, maybe enough to propel us to our halfway mark.

Devine prepared some epoxy, and filled up some holes left on deck by our former dodger after it was ripped off. The dodger was held in place by many little clasps, they all broke.

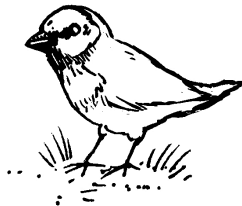
1500 We are still finding patches of mould in weird places, courtesy of the exploded jar of umeshu. That jar of plum wine exploding onto the ceiling is still giving us trouble, weeks later. I don't think I'll be able to drink umeshu again without a ghostly smell of rot wafting under my nose, a reminder of a disastrous event. If we drink some, it will be in the company of others, and we'll share the story. Perhaps making it part of a tale will make drinking it bearable.

The breeze is still with us, the sky is overcast now though, it is much cooler outside without the warmth of the sun.

2330 Light winds, Pino is self-steering to the southeast, sometimes we can nudge it back to east with ropes. It started to drizzle, so I went inside. We're moving at a slow 2.5 kn. It is difficult to find motivation to adjust sails in the rain and in the dark. I'm doing what I can from inside, hoping the breeze won't leave, it just might as the current forecast calls for zero winds in this area—and yet? The sun cannot rise fast enough. I am sleepy today, I hope the brightness of the day will kick the tired out of me.

I feel bad because I dropped a glass jar onto Devine's bony side while reaching for a snack in the dark. They were not pleased with me.

Birds and nature



Since we started sailing, I have become a bird nerd, watching them brings me joy. **Attention restoration theory** says that people can concentrate better, and were less stressed after spending time in nature, or even looking at scenes of nature. We have found this to be true for us, and observing birds has played a big part in it.

Humans possess an innate tendency to seek connections with nature and other forms of life, it is thought to be rooted in our biology (Biophilia hypothesis). Observing nature, whether it be from a window out on a garden, during a walk in the park, or from the deck of a ship, brings us joy, and this positive psychological effect increases as the perceived biodiversity of the landscape increases.

In Mexico, we glimpsed frigate birds. They soar continuously, seemingly immobile in the sky, their tails and wings giving them a distinctive 'W' silhouette. They sleep in flight, they only use one hemisphere of the brain at a time. An incredible adaptation. It is perhaps best that humans can't do this, deep sleep is the only refuge of the brain in those obsessed with productivity.

In the Western Pacific near the equator there were boobys. These birds have a reputation for not being very smart because they like to land on ships, and early seafarers would eat them. Calling them stupid though is hardly fair, it is in their nature to be trusting. Human beings, being cruel and opportunistic, are not worthy of their trust. A red-footed booby landed on Pino once, and spent the night with us. Had we not chased it away though, it would have covered our solar panel with its putrid discharges.

In Fiji, I glimpsed the most beautiful bird I'd ever seen, a Fijian parrotfinch, with blackish feathering on its chin becoming dark blue on the lower throat and turquoise on the upper breast before fading into the bright green of its underparts. I saw it on a walk on the island, perched in a tree, its colours drew my eye and I could not look away. This bird had bewitched me, and did not know it. It went about its business, staying for a short time before flying off to enrapture other unsuspecting humans.

We live in a time when much of it is under threat. Nature will always give, but it is up to us to learn to take less, and to protect it from the greedy.

July 2nd



Daily progress: 76 km (41 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 4,332 km (2,339 nm)

0400 July brings grey days and rain, a drizzle, annoying and ever-present. Weak winds are with us, still, we try and keep with it. Today, I am a slave to the compass, sacrificing comfort for forwardness. I prepared warm oatmeal, but the pan is dirty—Devine had the same idea. Warm meals on cold mornings feels good. I wonder if the solar panel will work today, given the grey conditions and low visibility. I miss the sun already. I'm glued to the stairs, hands on ropes, guiding Pino along as it doesn't care to guide itself today, like this amount of wind isn't worth fussing over, with 2 kn of speed I am inclined to agree, but still, there's a will in me to steer so I will steer.

0530 Slave to the compass no longer, I've left my post, annoyed. The forecast I checked inspired this decision, as the coming calm is complete. We will not be sailing today, maybe not even tomorrow. This part of the ocean is not what I thought it'd be. It's like the doldrums of the north, but only around Pino. I've lashed the tiller, and rolled in the jib, now Pino can go wherever it wants at a snail's pace. There are waves that carry us onward, I wonder if this is what was propelling us on too last night. Today will be a quiet day, spent in a monochrome, wet world. The rain is too light to catch,

I'm hoping for a good downpour so we can replenish our tanks. We are using as little water as possible, but catching a few litres would reassure me, and maybe permit us to wash a few neglected items.

Noticed we were getting a few amps from the solar panel after all, that is good.

0900 I made mapo tofu, with the last bit of daikon. We ate it, while Pino was engulfed in a thick fog bank. It's been a while since we've been in weather like this, our world has become much smaller suddenly. The waves are down, as is the wind. The ocean is quiet.

1000 I transcribe email addresses into a notebook reserved for this purpose. I had many Japanese boat cards to add, many more than I thought. I like keeping addresses all in one place.

Devine spotted a whale, far, far away, and wonders if it'll come closer. We have been on Japan time since the start, but I checked local time today, Adak time, and I feel less bad about our early afternoon wine.

1100 The fog has lifted, Devine decides to try and raise our Frankensail, a sail we made out of old material our friends Kako and Hiro gave us. They raise it using our spare jib halyard, the tack set on the baby stay fastening. "Hey! We're a cutter now!" Devine exclaims, all smiles. Ahead lies what we've come to call a **bobbing bird bank**, a gathering of birds at rest. As per usual, they're in our way and they scatter as we come near. When the birds are bobbing on the seas, you know wind isn't coming. They save their energy, waiting for a time when a breeze can carry them on again. Energy is precious out here. These birds appear light and frail, but they are very hardy. It's amazing they can thrive out here.

1200 Napped for an hour, but had 3 bad dreams, 2 of which consisted of me falling in the water. In the first dream, I fell from the

cockpit seat into the gap on the floor, which wasn't a floor at all but a window into the ocean. I could not climb back up.

In the 2nd dream, the front of the boat was a sheet of ice? I crawled on my belly to the edge to catch a glimpse of some seals that were there, poking their snouts through some holes. As I got closer, a shift in our 'ice boat' rolled me off into the icy water.

In the 3rd dream, we were sailing on Pino, very much like now, and Devine decides to take a break from sailing so we appear on land, elsewhere. They assure me that we can go back to Pino in 2 days when the wind returns. I quiz them about it, how they plan to take us back. "We'll book a flight," they tell me. "The pilot isn't going to land on the ocean! They won't parachute us down either!" I say. Devine starts thinking it over, then realizes what we've done. We cannot return to Pino. My sister appears then, seemingly out of thin air: "I didn't think you could do that with a boat! Taking breaks on the ocean like that!" I am teary-eyed, "you *can't!*" I scream, upset at the thought of Pino being alone, without us on it to guide it back home. In this dream, of course, I've no clue how we got off mid-ocean in the first place.

Strange dreams. This wasn't the restful, peaceful sleep I was hoping for.

1730 We are relying on very fragile systems. We depend on Devine's ancient iPhone 5 for navigation and for weather, and today it developed this weird bug, which scared me. My phone died early on in this trip, I'm not sure why. As I was charging it off a rechargeable battery one night, it began vibrating and would not stop. Then, I couldn't charge it anymore and the battery went flat. I tried cleaning the charging port, buried it in rice too, wondering if it was moisture-related, but nothing helped. I think the lightning port needs replacing. Adding the phone to the pile of things that we've lost, or broken on this trip.

We've got an older phone with Navionics and Iridium mail as backup, but I worry, I hate depending on these flimsy, buggy devices. I am angry that we didn't plan this better. We talk a lot about over-reliance on tech, yet we keep making mistakes. Though in truth, we had 3 working phones when we left, and we did not think it possible that all 3 would fail at the same time. Our safety is tied to the working of these devices and it is scary. It is dumb and I am angry.

2200 Ok. Little freak out just then, but the phone is fine. Still, I hate relying on such things.

We are becalmed, again. Pino had a good run today though! Now, there is fog and it is wet out. I await the sun, the wind... I can hear Leach's storm petrels cackling outside. Seems like they only ever come around the boat at night, to laugh, as if they know how eerie it is for us to hear. Robusta is north of us, but also suffers from lack of progress. Sailboats are creatures of movement, ours has not had many opportunities for it lately.

As we bob around, I hear voices in the rigging, a sort of squeaky "hellooo!" Other times, while sitting outside at night, we'd hear "hey's!" and "check-its!" When extremely tired, the brain not only finds words in sounds, we also have conversations with ghosts, asking questions, receiving answers. Sometimes my own answers were so absurd that it would startle me into wakefulness. I'd start combining words to make new ones, or invent new ones entirely while being sure of their meaning. Questions like: "Where is the turtle there?" I'd answer with "the meeting last time", then say "in the mihtime" or something.

Lack of sleep does weird things to one's brain. Don't get me started on the things I saw moving in the compass! A head, nodding, agreeing to all of my nonsense, always. It would swallow me right up, my head swimming with numbers in a clear liquid, enveloped in yellow light. Thankfully, we hallucinate less these days, being becalmed allows for more sleep.

2330 Found wind for an hour, but lost it again. The wind is rude during calms, it leaves abruptly and without warning. Light drizzle, fishing boats to the south. I continued to read *Solaris*, then painted my nails yellow due to boredom. I cared more about the act of painting my nails than the look of it. I had the same approach to knitting, just making endless scarves because I liked the motion, then when I ran out of yarn, I'd take it all apart and start over. Though, now that I have colour on me I regret it, the mustard yellow makes my nails look rotten. I also suspect that my midnight application gave Devine a headache—bad idea overall. I can never wait for them to dry. Impatient, I slipped on a pair of gloves to unfurl the jib outside after hearing some wind, and now, my nails are yellow with little bits of black fuzz mixed in. Now I've got hairy, yellow nails. Fantastic. A victim of my own impatience and eagerness to catch wind.

July 3rd



Daily progress: 152 km (82 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 4,180 km (2,257 nm)

0500 What is this strange sensation on my skin? Like it is being caressed. It's also moving the water? Wind! *Lots* of it! We are heading northeast at a pleasantly refreshing 5 kn! Pino is zooming! It looks like this patch of wind will stay with us for today. I am really looking forward to hitting our unofficial halfway mark. We've been looking at it for too long now, teasing us with its unattainableness. I am sick of not crossing it, and equally as sick of writing about not crossing it.

We set up food goals for each milestone. Halfway means opening a bag of gobou (burdock root) and renkon (lotus root), a mix we bought at a specialty grocery store in Shimoda. It was pricey, but it is shelf-stable and looks delicious! I am looking forward to it.

0730 Devine woke up with a headache. I make coffee, they decide not to have a cup, fearing it could worsen the pain. Moments later, they taste mine and brew a cup, drink half, decide they can't finish and so this means I get another mug of hot coffee to finish! Joy!

Pino is doing good. The sky is grey, but bright. Our solar backpack is outside, charging up our two little battery banks. Devine went back to sleep, I'm okay to watch since it isn't much effort, Pino is steering itself.

1200 A dark, blocky shape appears at our stern. It's a ship, a cargo ship. It doesn't broadcast on AIS. I take out my binoculars and try to figure out its course, it is still far and difficult to make it out. For now, it looks as though it is barrelling toward us. We keep our course and watch. Phew, we can see its stern at an angle, it's going to pass us well to starboard. As it went by us, I could make out much of its deck, although it carried no cargo. This is the closest encounter we've had with a big ship so far.

We make penne with a red lentil sauce for lunch. The food helps to diffuse Devine's headache, a little, but they hope to nap again right after the ship has passed us. The wind has lessened, but is still with us. Pino won't self-steer now, I pull ropes while standing on the companionway stairs. Afternoons are lonely when Devine doesn't feel good.

1730 The wind is much weaker now, I still need to guide Pino along. It is cold, so I continue to steer from inside. It is not fun, I am glued to this spot. Pino keeps trying to go north, and I want to go east. Not Pino, nor the wind care what I want. It is going to be a long night. Plus Devine has an indigestion and I am not sure what is causing it. I made them some fizzy water (we had a DIY carbonation system on Pino) to help settle their stomach. They also ate a bit of crystallized ginger, claiming it helped. If we had fresh ginger, I'd brew them a cup of ginger tea.

We skipped dinner today. Devine wasn't hungry and I had no desire to cook something complicated for myself. I made a small bowl of cereal, and a pita with peanut butter. Breakfast for dinner, hell yes! I remember my mom telling me a story about my childhood, that

I always asked for toast with a thick layer of peanut butter on top, only because I liked to plant my Smurf figurines in them. Makes sense—I mean, how *else* will they stand?

It is quiet and cold in Pino's world today. The days blend with one another, and Vancouver Island is a distant, fictitious land of plenty. We won't accept it as a reality, not now, all land is fantasy. Our world is ocean, skies, sun, stars, porpoises, dolphins and seabirds. This is our 24th day at sea. I realize I should not be counting, counting only makes me anxious, and eager to arrive.

We've started to wash our dishes using water from our pressure sprayer. We bought this pressure sprayer to use as a shower when in warm climates. We would fill it up with water, and leave it outside to warm up before giving our bodies a nice, pleasant rinse! We filled it up at the pontoon in Shimoda before leaving. We put the container in the left sink (we have a double sink). It works well. Our main tank is reserved for drinking and cooking. Conserving water early is the safest thing to do, since our current speed doesn't inspire much confidence.

We've fallen into a trap, the tricky web of the guardian of the Aleutian Island monster. It grabs winged creatures like us in passing, and is determined to keep us.

2215 I keep having boat-related dreams. Some of these dreams perfectly mirror the current moment, down to the last details. In my sleep, I seem to remember where the wind is coming from, if it's gone, and when it's coming back. The nonsensical bits are enough to set it apart from real life, but in some of the dreams, there isn't an overabundance of nonsense. My mind recreates our voyages exactly as they happened, or are happening.

The wind is with us, but it has switched direction and is now blowing from the south. Pino is gliding onward without assistance. The night is not as dark as it usually is, the moon and stars are hidden but

their light comes through the grey veil. I think the moon is full.

Devine makes late night ramen on their last shift. I am glad they are eating and that their stomach has settled. I have a scarf on, it helps keep the breeze from entering my collar.

July 4th



Daily progress: 111 km (60 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 4,069 km (2,197 nm)

0500 The wind was good for most of the night, light, but good. But now, it has abandoned us once again. I wake up the engine. “Wake up Cal! Time to go to work!” Calcifer rumbles to life, spitting saltwater and a healthy little dose of smoke. We’ll get our wind back, eventually. Meanwhile, a system is forming ahead, one that I’m not certain we can avoid. We’ll keep an eye on it, see how it develops in the coming days.

We reached 175°W today! There’s fog. Coffee cannot come fast enough.

0600 I am managing the charging of our electronics, trying to find out which one needs it the most. We only have a handful of outlets, so I’ve got to swap them out when they’re done. The solar backpack is outside again, charging up the big battery bank. It charges slowly, but it’ll get there! This backpack is a good backup to have should our other larger panel fail.

0800 Devine makes cornpone for lunch, served with soybeans, onions and spices. A simple, hearty dish. No matter how large the portion, it seems I can always finish it. My stomach is not easily satiated at sea, it's very different from when we started this trip and couldn't finish our food. I remember the ghosts of discarded produce on the water, a head of broccoli, a daikon and some green beans.

The wind is good, the seas are flat and we are flying! We put Calcifer back to sleep, job well done friend, our batteries are charged up again. Pino is drifting happily, its residents are also happy. Ninj, our mascot, is ordering us around from his spot on the starboard settee.

1100 While napping, I dreamt of Lin Pardey. In the dream, she is very old, dressed in a woollen outfit, bleached by the sun. I could tell it was bleached because the underside had colour, it was bright blue, or at least it used to be. The woollen hood covered her eyes, but not her mouth and nose. Wherever we were in the dream, no one knew who she was, what she'd accomplished in her life. She kept most of her skin hidden, she had an illness of sorts, it wasn't easy to recognize her. Devine & I found out she was there and went to see her to keep her company. She spoke to us softly, I don't remember what she was saying, but she was sad.

Devine has been cleaning the sailing needles, and was sewing a patch to our laundry bag when I awoke to tell them about my dream. They also set up a Raspberry Pi workstation during their off-time.

We have to alter course to avoid a fishing fleet that lies ahead. We see many targets on AIS but they all share similar names, ending with numbers. The last time this happened, the other ships turned out to be beacons, marking the position of nets. We hoped this wasn't the same deal, avoiding them entirely is hard. I despise the fishing industry. I wish they weren't here doing this. All of the trash we see on the ocean is from fishing. Countless foam fenders, floats,

nets, etc. They're emptying the ocean and filling it with garbage. I hate them.

1530 It's worse than we thought. We've stumbled onto a fishing fleet of over 40 vessels, all huddled together around us. They're covering 74 km (40 nm) of ocean, going around them was just not possible. There is a bit of room to go between them, but it is scary. AIS has been beeping non-stop for the past 4 hours. We thought we'd reached the end but we saw many more appearing on AIS. What a nightmare. I thought we'd be clear of these monsters tonight, but no. How is this possible? Why are they all here? I feel like a mouse in a pit of snakes.

The sight of all these targets is too crazy, I almost don't believe it. They're all Chinese-flagged vessels, I really hope fog won't set in, otherwise this could get dangerous. We went through thinking that we'd reach the end of the fleet soon, but the thing is that AIS doesn't load all targets, especially those beyond 22 km (12 nm). There are many, many more ahead.

There are no birds here. It reeks, I understand. If I could leave this place skyward I'd do it.

2300 We've passed it, but did it ever shake my trust of this ocean. I enjoyed its vast emptiness, and we managed to run into mid-ocean traffic of the worst kind. There is another cluster south of us, glad that it's there and not here. We spent the day weaving our way through them. The upside is that we passed them quickly, the wind was with us. Pino ran at 11 km/h (6 kn), eager too to leave this accursed part of the ocean. When darkness fell, each ship turned on their lights, each one illuminating everything around them. It was easier to see where they were, but it also exposed just how many were around us, their light burning into the clouds above. Absolutely surreal, and horrible. Each time we approached their light we could hear engines whirring, and could smell their exhaust fumes. We

think they're fishing for squid, why else would they use such lights? I was afraid they'd all start moving at once. It was like tiptoeing through a cave of sleeping bears. "*Shhh!* We must not wake them, or they'll swallow us up!"

The wind is light now, and we cannot download the weather. We'll try again tomorrow morning. I am tired, these ships sucked out all my energy. I can't relax either, afraid to see another cluster ahead. Tomorrow will be better, it has got to be better. I want to be with the birds and porpoises again.

July 5th



Daily progress: 57 km (31 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 4,012 km (2,166 nm)

0100 We got a message from Iridium saying our account was about to be suspended. We think we may have used up all our data. We can't check the weather, but SMS still works and we're trying to get in contact with them to append more minutes. Devine's dad is helping us with it. What a shit show. We should have purchased more, but also, I don't know how it is possible that we went through it all. We did have some issues with the device, with it stalling during some internet calls... maybe this ate up extra minutes. Either way, this situation sucks.

There is some good news though, we've reached our halfway mark and ate the gobou and konyakku mix over soba! As per usual, reaching a milestone also means drifting into a calm. This calm came with rain, that we promptly collected with an upside down umbrella, the water pooling in the middle and emptying into a bucket we set underneath it. We collected enough to fill up our pressure sprayer for washing dishes.

I did not sleep much last night, but I feel okay, food and coffee does

wonders. Devine is napping now, while I'm dressed in my oilskins, awaiting wind. When I was outside, I noticed something bobbing on the water's surface, shiny and rounded. I thought it was a gum boot. I looked away for a second, and it disappeared? Either I'm crazy, or the thing decided to sink as I looked away. I spotted it again aft of us, with only half of it surfacing this time. I grabbed the binoculars to try and make out what it was. A seal. A northern fur seal, maybe. I saw its whiskers, its snout and ears. It was checking us out, and it made my day.

0730 I am sitting outside this morning, trying to steer us into each puff of air, but it is too light and the air is too cold; plus a fog bank is approaching. I furl the jib, and wait in the companionway for signs announcing the wind's return: ripples in the water, a low whooshing sound. The sea bears no folds and is quiet, not a single whoosh is heard.

I am tired. I may need a second cup of coffee to help me through the day. If I had giant oars I'd go and row Pino along.

1200 The sea is like melted silver. We drift in and out of fog banks. We can hear everything on a quiet ocean, the sound of a whale breaching, its breath resounding over long distances. I saw a pillar of water far far away. I followed its track for some time before watching it dive, its tail fanning over the surface of the water. For a moment, it looked like a massive plant growing out of liquid metal. Our northern fur seal friend is still with us, we can see its fins peeking out, but hardly ever its head. Maybe it is sleeping? We also saw what looked like a brown, spotted albatross, paddling quietly in the water. Right now, we are adrift next to a group of sleeping shearwaters, resting before the wind comes back. We are bobbing alongside, pretending that we're birds, that we're one of them. We close our eyes and rest until the wind returns.

Eventually, I grow tired of resting. I want to sail, to move forward.

I continue to watch the sea for ripples, but it is as still as ever. It's hard to distinguish the water from the sky, it is dizzying. It is almost as if there is air underneath us. If I were to take a step out, I'd fall, not sink. Devine is sitting at the bow, playing the harmonica, providing a fitting soundtrack. We try and make the best out of difficult situations, conserving food, water, resting our bodies and minds, and being careful not to succumb to the gloom bug. We must never despair.

Water

It's easy to forget that water is not inexhaustible when it flows so readily out of the tap. Living on a boat certainly helps to develop a deeper connection to this precious resource. Depending on where you are, you'll have to treat it, catch it, carry it or pay for it.

Our main freshwater tank has 170 L (45 gal US), we also have a smaller 50 L secondary tank. On passages, we carry 3 extra 20 L (5 gal US) Jerry cans of water, enough to sustain two people for a few more weeks than the length of our trip. To conserve water, our sink faucet is operated with a foot pump, where each push draws out 60 ml (1/4 cup) of water. We crossed paths with a boat who had an incident with their main freshwater supply. 805 km (500 mi) away from shore, they found saltwater in their one and only freshwater tank. The crew had to drink the water from coconuts for 5 days. Having separate bins makes for a more resilient system, if salt gets into one tank, it won't corrupt the entirety of your supplies.

We chose not to have a desalinator aboard Pino, and have managed well without it. It's an expensive device that is both high maintenance and power-hungry.

Week 5

July 6th



Daily progress: 80 km (34 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 3,932 km (2,123 nm)

0500 The wind has been erratic, coming and going, always from the north, or the northeast. At times, it was so weak we could go neither east or north. Other times, the same strength permitted us to sail into it? Both of us are confused. The seas are also messy. Pino is sailing, but we're getting slapped by wavelets from the south, west and east? The westerly swell is notably bigger. The fog is here again, and it is thick. I can see the sun still, a diffused ring of light perched up above. We're happy to be moving forward but being outside is uncomfortable, the fog leaves droplets of moisture all over Pino, and us if we happen to venture into the cockpit. 10 minutes out there and my eyelashes have wet beads in them, and my foul-weather gear becomes thoroughly damp and heavy.

This morning at 0100, when I went to sleep, I noticed that I could see my own breath. Yep, it is cold in here! I was lying in bed, in a pile of sleeping bags, buried within to try and shield myself from it.

Devine made a lantern out of a can of Yebisu beer yesterday, they hung it up and placed a candle in it. It helped us save power at night, while giving the room a nice ambience. If we near our hands to it it gives off a bit of warmth too, it feels good after a cold shift.

The distance to Vancouver Island is a lot of ground to cover, but we've already done so much. If the wind stays we'll meet our goal soon enough, but it is difficult in these waters, where the wind is far from constant. We still don't have weather, the Iridium office is closed on weekends, and the next working day is a holiday. We'd like to know what's going on out there, but we can't read the waves, not like Moitessier. Maybe it's time to unbox the sextant, although it won't be easy to take noon sights in fog.

0700 Devines makes penne, using our last bag of fun-shaped pasta with Indian spices and tofu. "Experiment!" They say handing me the bowl. I like Devine's experiments, they've got a gift for cooking with limited ingredients. They somehow always manage to prepare something delicious, something that feels fresh despite having no fresh ingredients. At this point in our trip, when all that's left are potatoes, dried radish and canned vegetables, it's an important skill. I'm not as inspired.

0900 We sail in and out of fog banks. Sailing in fog is hard on the eyes, it brings everything out of focus. I've got a massive headache from constantly turning my head to check the compass through the companionway door. I steer outside when the fog clears, and retreat indoors when it settles around us. Fog makes my clothes instantly damp. Devine drives, I read a collection of shorts, *Golden Apples Of The Sun* by Ray Bradbury aloud.

We're sailing east into the wind, but it's hard, the waves make us yaw,

and so self-steering is not possible today. Can't complain though, we are going forward.

1730 The wind died gradually, we stayed with it for as long as we could, hand-steering into the waves, tacking north to find more wind. Devine started up the engine for an hour, motoring north to try and find wind. Nada! The gloom bug is back, we're doing our best to fight it off. I took an angry nap, but it did little to freshen my mood. Every time we get wind I think: "This is the wind that will take us home!" It is silly to think such things, for a reliable breeze in an area outside of the trade wind belt. Our GRIB files are more than 60 hours old, not a good reference anymore for what's happening out there. We thought we could use it to approximate the conditions, but in an area of supposed fresh winds, we've got nothing. Pino is still, as if it has forgotten what sailing is, it just might, with all of the calms we've been having. I'm beginning to forget what progress feels like.

In better news, my ribs are better. I can sleep in almost any position, but I must be careful. Lifting heavy objects is still hard, and on some rare occasions I get dull pain. But it's better than it was, and I am glad.

We wait for wind some more, if it would be so kind as to return to instill a bit of hope in us, some faith in the possibility of making it to land someday. Maybe Pino is just tired? Steering us from calm to calm to rest its rigging and wings. We pushed you hard haven't we?

July 7th



Daily progress: 165 km (89 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 3,767 km (2,034 nm)

0100 Calm, calm, calm, always and forever. Not much to say. This constant quiet has robbed me of all words, but thankfully, I'm still able to laugh at this situation through cartoons. This logbook is filled with them, and they get sillier as the gloom bug grows within us.

Captain Ninj is there, confident as always. "Be patient. Wind leaves, but it also always comes back!" He says. You're right Captain, I'll dig up some patience, I've got some left in here somewhere.

0400 I awake to the sound of the engine. We had not agreed on using it today. Devine is driving, saying they saw a tern flying and are following it, saying that it must know where the wind is. The birds know, they *must* know, but no, it doesn't, and neither do we because we still can't get GRIB files. "Motoring won't help," I say, Devine finally agrees and turns it off. I take their place then, steering into nothing. Devine appears high-strung, annoyed, and they start digging through the cockpit locker to get to our old dinghy oars. They find the oars, and elongates one of the two using a boat hook

and some hose clamps. They take it to the side of the boat and start rowing...! What I said about rowing Pino earlier has happened, but as you can expect, it did little to propel us onward, especially with one side doing the work and because the oars are too small and not really very good ones. The paddle is too short. I urge Devine to stop, to go to bed. I can tell they are frustrated. When Devine loses their cool, then you know that things are bad, but also, they have a headache again and I blame this for the momentary breakdown. "Go to bed." I say again. They nod, stop, leave the oar on the deck and slip inside. They are tired. They need their sleep.

0800 I am starving. I am always hungry these days. When Devine wakes up they make tomato pasta with mushrooms and dried tofu. Pasta remedy to heal our bodies! I feel better, and they do too. The wind is light, but it's here! We're steering northeast, although we've got to alter our course to the east to let a cargo ship move past us.

1450 There are many ships on this route, with more and more encounters as we go north. The wind is great, it is a good fresh wind and Pino is steering itself northeast. Our world has been bordered by fog for most of the day. We don't stay outside, it is too wet. We're sailing close-hauled, it is pleasant because the waves have not had time to build yet.

I made chocolate cake today, a request from Devine. I prepared it in our cast-iron pan with a heavy lid, let it bake for 20 or so minutes on low and let it cool with the lid on. It baked wonderfully.

Life aboard is quiet today, Devine is reading *The Art of UNIX Programming*. We should have left with more books. *Golden Apples of the Sun* is great to read, we went through 3 shorts this morning. Ray Bradbury has a fun writing style. In one short called *The Murderer*, a man is jailed after killing a variety of noise-producing devices, being fed up with it and wishing for a quieter world. That struck a chord. In a noisy world, cluttered with tech and distractions, people

don't have the mind space to reflect on what matters.

In her book *How to do Nothing*, Jenny Odell suggests ways to protect ourselves from the companies seeking to capitalize on our attention. We have to protect ourselves, each other, and whatever is left of what makes us human:

“I'm suggesting that we protect our spaces and our time for non-instrumental, non-commercial activity and thought, for maintenance, for care, for conviviality. And I'm suggesting that we fiercely protect our human animality against all technologies that actively ignore and disdain the body, the bodies of others, and the body of the landscape that we inhabit.”

1600 Devine makes cornpone and serves it with some kimchi. It's a very good and filling simple meal. Cornmeal is a humble ingredient, one that I've come to love over the years. It is cheap to buy, versatile and it lasts a long, long time.

The chart that I use to mark our position every day has a lot more mould now, but it's all we've got so we keep using it. There are little black dots all over it, and any mark we make using a marker pen bleeds out. We've got to use a ballpoint pen to keep our positions on the map readable.

We have a box of electronics and wires that we use every day, housing the satellite phone and Devine's old iPhone (and corresponding wires). Every time we use them, we put them back into their box afterwards to protect them. We've also added a pack of desiccant to minimize moisture. We keep the logbook and some other important notebooks in a plastic bag with more desiccant packets, we'd hate to lose the content of these books, which contain notes on future projects, drawings etc.

2200 At this point, the GRIB files are so old that there is no way to know whether there is still a patch of bad weather ahead or not. The wind is definitely increasing, but remains manageable. We keep our course east, with little to no adjustments. I am inside, wrapped in a blanket, and gaze outside every 20 minutes or so, the time it takes for a ship to catch up. I also check AIS often. I look at Navionics too, although there is little point in checking our progress every hour, it is better to check at the end of the day. We measure our advancements from 0900-2100. 0900 was the time we departed from Shimoda. It is strange to think that we were in Japan, that we made it, had a lovely time there, and left. I almost don't believe it, and I know I'll likely think the same of this passage. Some things we do are just too crazy, even for me to believe. Imagine, a small plastic boat sailing around the Pacific.

I'd rather be here aboard Pino than on a plane though, that much is sure.

Computers

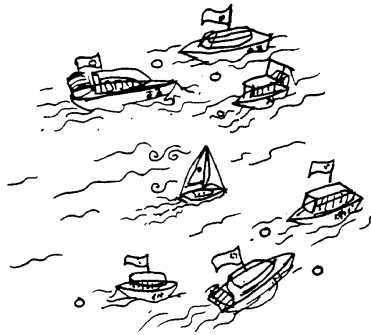
Computers are subject to water intrusion and saltwater corrosion, but with some care they can survive in a normal marine environment. We solve most of the typical problems by cleaning external connectors often, and by storing them after each use, in sealed boxes with desiccant packets.

Leaving a port with spare parts, especially extra batteries and cables, is a good tactic, but leaving with backup PCs is even better. There are many good inexpensive computers on the market, like notebook processors (Pinebook, EeeBook) and single-board computers (Raspberry Pis, Pine64). We carry 3 extra Raspberry Pi computers as backups to our main laptops, as they are inexpensive and small. These computers run on lower voltage, which lower overall power consumption. By consuming less power, the system will be less expensive to run, but more importantly, it will run much longer on existing battery technology.

When parts fail on our boat we repair them, and we do the same for our PCs. Replacing broken components is important, as manufacturing a new PC makes a far bigger ecological footprint than manufacturing a new replacement part.

To be fair, while at sea, our computers don't see much action.

July 8th



Daily progress: 167 km (90 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 3,600 km (1,944 nm)

0000 I realized something tonight, that I had not checked the fuse for the sailing instruments. After the big wave hit, I just assumed the wind meter had died, but it *hadn't!* The fuse blew! I switched the fuse with another one, and now it *works!* Wow! *That* is awesome! I turned the switch on and heard the familiar beeping as it sprang back to life! But at this point, we've already been sailing without it for 3 weeks, I'm still glad it's working.

0500 The wind is strong and steady, we are still on the same northeast course. The Turn Off lies ahead. We call the Turn Off the place where we can turn and aim straight for the entrance to the Juan de Fuca Strait—looking forward to that! I think we even have a small milestone before that, celebrating the fact that we can see our position along with Vancouver Island on the same chart. Little milestones keep us happy, they keep us busy.

There are some fishing boats ahead that I can see on AIS, I hope it isn't another large fleet... we'll have to wait until we get closer to find out. There is fog all around us still, it just won't leave. We're

getting a lot of saltwater spray in the cockpit, so we're staying inside. I'm eager for a shower, but not the cold, salty kind. Sometimes, the fog blanket thins out just enough that we can feel the warmth of the sun, other times we can glimpse patches of blue sky.

0830 I made kare soba! Which is basically just Japanese curry over soba noodles. The wind has increased and cutting vegetables was tough. I cut the potatoes so there's a long flat edge, this way, they don't go rolling off the cutting board. We have 5 sweet potatoes left, and 6 regular ones, although they're fairly large and each one could be counted as 2.

We received a message from Devine's dad, saying that he contacted the customer service at Iridium and that we had indeed, ran out of data minutes. Our satellite phone plan was topped up, and we're finally able to send our position again, check emails and the weather! Pino is not completely free of complex systems onboard, we bought the SAT phone when we first decided to go offshore 5 years ago. If we knew what we didn't know back then, we might have left with an HF radio instead.

We had many messages from Robusta, saying they had run out of coffee, and that they looked forward to touching land, even if it is only 10°C outside. We told them we'd be passing Dutch Harbor, and that we'd head straight to Canada. After the wave hit us, we weren't sure if going straight home was the best idea, but now we think we can make it.

The weather is set to increase, which means we'll be going forward for the next few days, but we've got to be careful. It has been a while since we've encountered heavy weather, and I don't want a repeat of what happened off the coast of Japan. We reefed down the jib, there is a fleet of ships is ahead. Yep, another fleet of Chinese-flagged vessels. As we are nearing them, the number of vessels increases. First, there was 2, then 4, now 9. The closer we go, the higher this number will go. Our reefed jib permits us to sail

around the northernmost edge of the fleet.

We're going at 5 kn. I'm glad to have the weather, but the forecast worries me.

0900 Noticed our jib sheet-leads are staining our sheets black. The aluminum is being ground down. This hardware is original, it's been aboard Pino since 1982, and way past its prime. We think they will be fine, but we'll be keeping an eye on them anyway. They squeak a great deal more than they used to, we sometimes have to pour dish soap over them to shut them up. Elderly Pino is all right.

1330 We passed between 2 fleets of fishing vessels, Japanese ships to the north, and Chinese ships to the south. We crossed the invisible line dividing the two. We are safe now, well out of their path. Wondering how many more gatherings like this we'll encounter.

The fog is thick, thick. I can't see a thing. Looking outside offers nothing, we can't even see the water around us. I wonder if we'll ever see a full blue sky accompanied by a warm sun again. The weather tonight should not be too crazy, but we're ready for anything. Devine went outside to put a piece of Sunbrella on our jib sheet to protect it against chafe. That is always a problem in heavy weather, and our jib sheets have seen a lot of weather and ocean.

1400 When I look at a rough sea, I can't relax. My legs tremble. I realize now it's going to be a very difficult 4 days, difficult for my nerves. I didn't used to be like this, I used to be more confident, but that wave knocked it out of me. I fear I will never be rid of the dread now.

At least wind means forwardness, and I am thankful for that, but I do wish we didn't have to bounce between extremes all the time. No wind is maddening, too much wind is frightening. They're both bad for different reasons. Bouts of calms I used to think of as 'mini vacations on the ocean'. I no longer think that.

I'm on watch and it is hard to keep from snuggling up to Devine in the covers, ignoring the chaos outside, buried in soft fabric. "The weather can't touch me here! OH no! I am safe in the fort with Devine." Pino doesn't feel unsafe to me, that I want to make clear. The noise inside the cabin is what scares me the most, so does the roaring of the waves outside, my brain picturing a monster trying to get in. Even if a fort is strong, you can still tremble within its walls.

1500 The weather got to me. So I climbed into bed with Devine. They woke up not too long after that, because I tried laying down over their legs and accidentally pinched them. My not-so-gentle act robbed them of sleep.

We prepared the last two packets of ramen for dinner, something simple and warm to appease my mind. It helped. We continued to read *Golden Apples of the Sun*. We only have one short left. We read *The Foghorn*, it illustrated the mood outside perfectly. I calmed down after that, so did the wind and with it the waves. I wondered then, does the weather affect my mood, or does my mood affect the weather. We sailors are a superstitious, self-absorbed lot aren't we?

We kept the reefed jib because the wind may increase again tonight. For now it has slowed our speed, but no matter.

2230 The wind has freshened a little, I can tell by the sounds the boat is making. Every boat has its sounds, if you listen well you learn the language, and you know instantly when something is wrong. Pino rounds up and rights itself again and again after each big wave. On watch, we do checks outside often, but with more wind comes a risk of getting a saltwater shower. We open the companionway hatch quickly, look over each side. Lights? No? Yes? No! Good. Get back inside, hope for the best, close the hatch. No spray—phew! Earlier tonight, Devine wasn't so lucky, they opened the hatch, stuck their head out and SPLASH! Not a wave, thankfully, but just enough spray for a late evening pickling session.

I bought boxes of snack bars in Japan before leaving, as filler for our ditch bag but also as a simple night-time snack. A few weeks ago, we started rationing them so they'd last the whole trip. Devine cut them into 6 pieces and placed the slices in a jar for easy access. In the beginning, we were wolfing down entire bars, initially out of hunger, and then as a way to keep awake, but eventually out of boredom. We try and be more reasonable now, we get 3 slices per night, each.

We passed the 3,704 km (2000 nm) left milestone, exciting!

The burden of electronics

Nowadays, sailboats come with an increasing number of complicated electronics. In truth, these modern conveniences don't save us anything, and they take more than they give. Proprietary hardware and miniaturized systems prevents people from attempting repairs themselves, it turns users into consumers, effectively binding them to services on land. Throughout our travels, we've met many sailors stuck in port for weeks and weeks, waiting for replacement parts from companies overseas.

Systems that use few standard moving parts are more reliable, easier to inspect and repair. Choosing standard hardware ensures that users will find a particular part to satisfy a particular need wherever they might be located. When replacements parts are available, it is easy for users to make their own repairs.

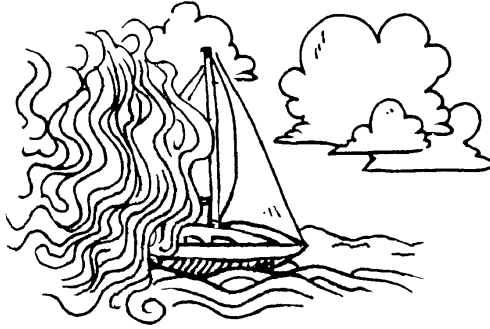
Making so-called inconvenient choices, like baking your own bread, or splicing a rope yourself, exposes us to a risk of frustration and failure, but there is much to gain from doing these things.

“These are the non-instrumental activities that help to define us. They reward us with character because they involve an encounter with meaningful resistance.” — Tim Wu, 2018

There is an allure to high-tech systems, they are easy to use, but the taste for convenience begets more convenience. The more toys you own, the more chance they will break or get in the way. Off-loading tasks isn't wicked, but when you can't get drinking water because the electric water pressure isn't working, it is easy to see the problem with such systems.

Our boat has no refrigeration, hot water, water pressure, windlass or autopilot, which minimizes opportunities for breakages, costs less, while preventing a significant drain on Pino's batteries.

July 9th



Daily progress: 343 km (90 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 3,257 km (1,759 nm)

0700 Been turning radar on more often. There is no break to this fog. We don't leave it on because it is a power-sucker. This, paired with AIS is essential out here. I can imagine that it wasn't crucial during Moitessier and Lin & Larry Pardey's time, there was less shipping then, now I see targets every day as cargo is circling the globe from one port to the next.

0800 Pino is gliding at a reasonable 5 kn, heading northeast. The winds will shift to the southwest tomorrow, and will increase. If it gets too wild we will heave-to. I have no desire to take risks anymore, not for speed anyway. As I am writing this, the fog cleared ahead. Look at that horizon line! Never thought I'd miss the sight of it this much. I will not last, but for now I'll take it. It is here, it is pleasant and I am happy. The world just got a lot sharper, a relief for my eyes.

We're still on the same propane tank, I am surprised we haven't run out yet. Our backup tank is still full, strapped to the aft rail. I decided not to bake on this trip to save on gas, and it makes a big

difference. I hope that when we run out, that the weather will be mild because it is a pain to hook up. I make stovetop pitas now and then, but because I cook each one in a cast iron pan with a lid it cooks faster, saving us precious fuel. In general, our meals are done after 10 minutes of cooking, with the flame burning hottest in the first 3-5 minutes. Most meals I cook with a lid, after that, at a low setting. Glad my efforts to conserve fuel have paid off, and that it doesn't affect the quality of our meals.

0900 Creatures of habit, we prepared cornpone with kimchi, and canned corn—that's right, double corn. We crave this dish a lot these days. For dessert, we had the rest of the chocolate cake with some strawberry jam as a topping. I made some while in Shima Yacht Harbor in Mie. Fruits are expensive in Japan, but Kako brought us to a fresh market in Matsusaka and we found cheap tubs of strawberries there.

Tonight, we will prepare soybean hummus and stovetop bread. We don't have fresh vegetables to eat with it, but it's okay. I'll also be using garlic powder instead of fresh cloves, we only have 1/2 a bulb left. I'll hate myself forever for not buying more fresh garlic. 1/2 bulb is really no garlic at all, when many of our recipes use up to 6 cloves—I am not kidding.

1500 Quiet afternoon on Pino Island. The waves are down, making it more pleasant to move around inside. I just awoke Calcifer for a short 2-hour charging session. Our batteries are doing well, we found that charging them for 2 hours with another 2-hour session 12 hours later helped them perform better. Despite being constantly engulfed in fog, our solar is able to charge our batteries.

I ate fermented radish that Kako gave us before leaving, she gave us two jars, plus two others of rakkyo, small onions preserved in soy sauce and vinegar. We also prepared garlic miso. It's an amazing recipe and is easy to prepare, it consists of peeled garlic cloves with

the tips cut off, buried in miso and left to ferment for 1 month. It is delicious, and not overly spicy, or salty.

The wind will rise tonight as the low passes over us. It won't be as strong as what we had near Japan, but we'll be careful anyway. We're doing good speed, rapidly approaching our next milestone The Turn Off. It is 685 km (370 nm) away, not too far. Devine added other milestones in-between, to make things exciting. We'll likely cross the 3,241 km (1750 nm) left mark in the coming day. Captain Ninj is pleased with our progress, "the gnocchi," he says, "it is near! Soon the potato pillows will enter your mouth caves!" Yes Captain Ninj, and we will be happy when they do.

2200 This is officially the longest sailing trip we've ever done, 2 days ago we passed our record of 28 days to the Marquesas, from Mexico. Already then, we had this passage in mind. It is much longer, but also inevitable if we want to go to Japan and back home. The passage to the Marquesas had better weather, consistent winds and assured rain because of squalls. The passage to Canada has been an entirely different experience, we thought that rain would be a frequent visitor but it has largely avoided us, especially when we need it the most. We collected water once, not since. We've no real way of measuring what is left in our main tank, but with the extra 50 L we added, it will extend its use for sure. If we are careful, we can go 1 1/2 months on this tank. Our extra Jerry cans total 70 L. I'd like to keep these for cooking and as drinking water.

With 3,334 km (1800 nm) left, being careful is essential. We don't know what could happen that could slow us down, meaning more days out here where we consume water. Here is hoping we get some rain, one big downpour to dissolve the crust of salt enveloping Pino, to fill a few upside down umbrella's worth of extra water.

The night is smooth, so far. We are staying ahead of the weather, pretending it won't catch up. I realized today that I stopped dreaming? Seems like the dreams stopped when the wind returned. I've

got a more active mind during bouts of calms. With the winds we've had yesterday and today, those calms feel like a distant memory. I am not sure that we've seen the last of the calm calms, I could never say anything like that with confidence, not out here.

Thrift and care

“This curious world we inhabit is more wonderful than convenient; more beautiful than it is useful; it is more to be admired and enjoyed than used.” — Henry David Thoreau

We don't like to dwell on what the cargo ships we encounter may carry. Every object is a potential burden, in terms of the physical and mental space they occupy. Even when they pass out of our hands, whether they are sold, passed down, donated or discarded, the objects still exist, while many more are manufactured. In his book *The Long Way*, Moitessier talks about the need to stop satisfying false needs and false joys, to instead focus on preserving nature. Preserving nature is our most worthy responsibility, and isn't compatible with an economy of “full consumption”.

Devine & I have contributed our share of waste in the past, we have burdened others with objects when we reduced our own lives to fit onto a boat. Now, we do our best to avoid new items, and spend time seeking existing alternatives, or repairing broken items whenever possible. It is a challenge, our for-profit economy doesn't encourage thrift and care, it promotes off-the-shelf solutions, while making repair and thrift difficult, and unattractive.

Time is necessary to practice thrift and care, but it is a scarce resource. Work takes an ever-larger chunk out of the average person's day. Time did not used to be compartmentalized into work and non-work, “work” was once more intertwined with family, community and play. Now, “work” pays for outside entertainment, and life outside of work has lost vitality and meaning, it has ceased being

a means to an end and become an end in itself. An economy that glorifies “work” and “infinite consumption” preaches that leisure is a commodity to be consumed rather than free time to be enjoyed. Today’s pleasures are debited to the future, paid not in money, but in waste and misery. A purchase that was easy to make today, will be an inconvenience to someone, somewhere, later. Our membership in this world is never free.

We have to cherish nature, to foster its renewal, and to prioritize thrift and care rather than waste and excess. Maintenance and stewardship require something of us, we have responsibilities that lie beyond ourselves and our own profit. The farming phrase, “eyes to acres,” by Wes Jackson, says that in order to run a farm well, one has to be familiar with the environment, to be in touch with the little changes that occur every day. Only when we see land as a community, to which we belong, can we begin to use it with respect and love.

“The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land. Land ethic changes the role of *Homo sapiens* from conqueror of the land community to plain member and citizen of it. It implies respect for his fellow-members, and also respect for the community as such.” — Aldo Leopold

July 10th



Daily progress: 185 km (100 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 3,072 km (1,659 nm)

0630 A ship is passing north of us, we're angling east to not cross its path. We had a good restful night, no drama, and we like it that way. Today we treat ourselves to soba, complete with dipping sauce and our bag of special toppings from Aoki: flavoured takenoko (young bamboo). Ahead, lies our bigger milestone: The Turn Off. I can't believe our progress! The weather has not hit us yet, but it is coming! No signs of a calm ahead either. If we can continue at this pace, we might arrive in 49 days—now that would be something!

Fog is ever-present, but with a bit of sun shining through. It isn't too cold, even at night. We sit at the navigation table with a sleeping bag, and with it we are comfortable. Robusta is near Dutch Harbor, maybe they've arrived already. We got no message saying so today, we'll miss exchanging emails with our *schnaubees*.

1330 Quiet morning aboard Pino. We started doing readings of *Cyberiad* by Stanislaw Lem. Devine has read it many times already, but thought it would be nice for us to re-visit it together. It provided many hours of fun. It is such a good read, a great mix of

humour and sci-fi. He is a versatile writer, I'm amazed to see the difference in writing styles between that and something like *Solaris*. *Cyberiad* is more casual, more humorous, but still manages to retain its complexity. Amazing read.

The fog parted today as we were chatting, glass of red wine in hand. I peeked outside and just... laughed! I felt such joy at being able to see far ahead. It's hard to describe what I felt. Such unbridled joy! It is such a relief to see the world and ocean with such precision, clarity and colour. You don't quite realize how much you like something until you're deprived of it for extended periods.

Devine is making garlic, nori and chili flake pasta for dinner. We're using up our last onion, and the bulb of garlic is thinning out. These ingredients usually go last, but the potatoes are still plentiful. Staples in Canada, like carrots, onions and potatoes, are things that are cheap and easy to buy in large quantities, but not in Japan! Yellow onions were sold in packs of 3, and were expensive. The carrots too were sold in threes. Expensive. Why 3?! It's possible that the price of a larger bag would deter Japanese buyers. In general, produce there is costly. At least, Japanese groceries stock many great items like dried tofu (kouya doufu), kirimochi (rice cakes), fu (wheat gluten blocks), preserved lotus root, dried seaweed, dried mushrooms etc.

1400 The wind is rising out of the southwest. We have to hand-steer to keep with the waves. It's been a while since we've steered outside at night. It was very cold, made colder by the lingering moisture in the air. It clung to our clothes, wool hats and gloves. After our shifts, we'd huddle under a pile of sleeping bags to try and warm ourselves as quickly as possible, to fall asleep as quickly as possible. I'd curl up into a ball, to try and accumulate warmth fast. Sleep doesn't come when I am cold.

0000 Saw a ship on AIS called KDDI Cable Infinity. It's one of those vessels that lay internet cables in the ocean! On AIS, it warned

ships of its limited manoeuvrability, and to stay 1.852 km (1 nm) away. Funny to encounter a ship like this here, they certainly aren't working in the best of conditions. The seas and winds are high right now, and the fog is thick and laced with rain. They're here for work, because they've been asked to be here, but we have only ourselves to blame.

Catching rain

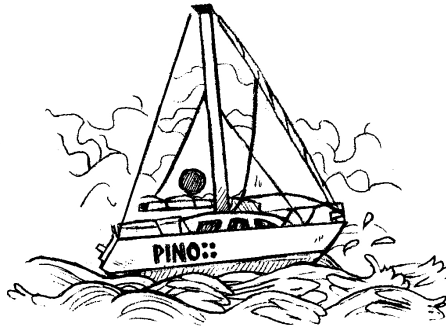
“I think that a boat big enough to carry lots of food and spares could circle the globe several times, relying only on rain.” — Bernard Moitessier

We agree with Moitessier. Watermakers are now ubiquitous on blue-water yachts, but they are not necessary. Rain catchment is a good way to top-up your tanks. We set up buckets under the mainsail, and pour them into Jerry cans when they are full. It is easier to catch water at anchor, when we can set up a tarp that empties into a container. The tarp is lashed down into a V shape and pours into a Jerry can. At sea, the wind catches into the tarp and is ineffective. Some sailors block out areas up on deck, and have the water flow directly into their main tank. We don't recommend doing that unless you are certain that the deck is free of trapped dirt, or that you've got a good two-step filtration system. While the rain itself might be safe to drink, it carries dirt or whatever may be on your tarp, or deck. And depending on where you are, the rain may have environmental pollutants mixed in.

We recommend using rainwater for purposes other than drinking and cooking. If you are to drink it, it's important to boil it first, and to run it through a good filtration system. The rain at sea is likely safe, devoid of pollutants, but the same can't be said of some anchorages. In the Majuro in the Marshall Islands, the lagoon was full of floating fish-processing factories, spitting smoke all day and night. We collected rainwater there, but never did drink it.

Even if you don't plan on drinking it, it's a good idea to treat the water you catch. The easiest way to do this is to add chlorine bleach to your supply. This is something we've done, and continue to do. The suggested ratio of chlorine to water is 2 drops bleach for 1.15 L. The above ratios are for bleach containing 5.25% Sodium Hypochlorite. This amount depends on the concentration, the ratios will be different for 5.25% than for 8% chlorine bleach (1 drop: 1.15 L). Only use regular, unscented chlorine bleach products that are suitable for disinfection and sanitization, as indicated on the label. A good way to remember these ratios, is this saying: "You must be 21 to drink." 2 drops bleach per L (1 qt) water, easy to remember. Note that 1 qt is slightly less than 1 L. Note that adding bleach doesn't remove chemical pollutants.

July 11th



Daily progress: 85 km (46 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 2,987 km (1,613 nm)

0100 We keep to Japan time still because the days are long, and because we enjoy a midnight sunrise. The fog is always thick in those early morning hours, visibility is limited. No ships nearby, at least. No monstrous fishing fleets either. We have a fresh breeze, it looks like the wind won't be as strong as was forecasted. I am starving though, I am always terribly hungry in the morning. I am a chasm of hunger, a food-less void, a mass of flesh in need of immediate sustenance. The groaning of my stomach creates ripples in the ocean. I am an empty quarry, demanding to be filled.

0300 Devine makes coffee, we drink it together and check the weather. Robusta sent us a message, they haven't arrived at Dutch Harbour yet, but they're at an anchorage that seems pleasant. Land. Rather not think of it. It's getting closer, this weather has been carrying us across fast, so different than the period of calms we suffered recently. The downside of this point of sail is the hand-steering, but really, it isn't all bad, not when there's promise of a warm and dry sleeping bag inside.

0800 The sky has blue in it, and the fog has cleared. Waves are better too. I don't have to wear my scarf and gloves! This sun will help dry our wet clothes before tonight's inevitable wetting. We make Japanese curry for lunch, with white rice, potatoes, dry tofu, Japanese curry pickles and green peas. Delicious.

We are nearing the Turn Off. When we get there, it is time to eat our prize: a pack of gnocchi!

1400 Time for another freak-out moment! I was steering outside, waves were okay, manageable, then over time there would come trains of waves, sweeping in threes, each one larger than the next. This is common on the ocean, but I was also getting cross waves. While I steered through the first set of threes, another set would come and hit Pino at an angle. I freaked out because of the size and ferocity of the cross waves, with some peaking way high above the lifeline. *Not again*, I thought. *My legs are noodles. J'ai les jambes en nouilles.* My legs could barely hold me up. I wanted to heave-to then, but I had to wait for the threes to pass to make my turn. Once they did pass, I *parked* Pino and hurried inside, finding Devine reading quietly on the starboard side settee. "You okay?" They ask me, as they tend to do, because they're great like that. When I park the boat, it is usually because things aren't okay. I went to lie next to them and shook for hours as they tried to calm me. Devine decided to try and steer, and did so for a while but stopped, the cross waves were too much even for them. We decided to heave-to for the night to let this awful weather pass.

Devine made pasta, I ate it while half asleep. Today's stress robbed me of rest. We shared a can Yebisu beer too, to make sure I'd get knocked right out.

1700 Every time we near a milestone, we hit a wall, whether it comes in the form of a calm or strong weather. There is always something, and this time is no different. We are at a wall, with big

weather all around. These walls are, for the moment, impassable, keeping us and our destination apart. The Turn Off lies ahead, but a patch of very strong winds bars the way, reaching far north and south. We'll check the weather tomorrow morning, to decide if we should go, or wait. It's possible the weather will lessen, but it can also get worse.

This streak of rough weather is a cruel, cruel thing, a horrible weather monster, guarding the east, keeping small ships from passing. Vancouver Island is concealed behind it. "What can we do to appease you? Oh great streak?" It doesn't answer—well, it answers the only way it can I suppose, with lashes of rain and gusts of wind. Maybe it intends to let us through, and we are misunderstanding each other? As different sorts of beings often do, being dissimilar in every way.

I am eager, and scared to see how this develops. Gale force winds isn't a big deal for most vessels, and it isn't for us either usually, but it can get dangerous if the wind blows hard for hours and hours, then the sea has plenty of time and inertia to grow into something terrible. In Japanese, the word for waves is *nami*, we've often heard the term *nami usagi*, or *rabbit waves*. This is a perfect way to describe the ocean, full of **rabbit waves**.

Coping with stress

Sailing is pleasant most times, but after long periods at sea in foul weather, or in calms, feeling cold, hungry and tired, it is normal to experience some anxiety.

Much of the stress in sailing comes as a result of poor performance, when becalmed, or when plagued by lights winds for days and days. We experienced this early in the trip. We were both obsessed with finding wind, and with it came greater mental exhaustion and emotional instability. In such moments, having another person with you to talk things out with helps, but the best medicine is sleep. Stress

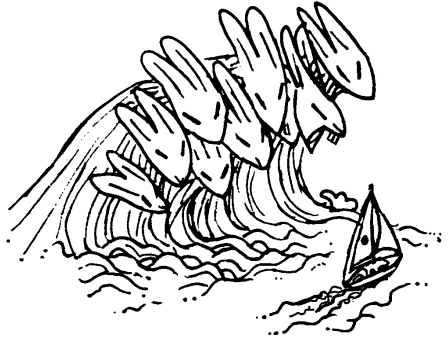
due to lack of wind is worsened by lack of rest.

“Uncertain waits are longer than known, finite waits.”
(David Maister, “The psychology of waiting lines” 1985)

If stressed, we like to practice **box breathing**. Box breathing involves doing each of the following steps for 4 seconds: breathing in, holding your breath, breathing out, holding your breath, and repeating it for 5 minutes to get the full effect.

Drawing silly cartoons kept me calm on this trip, and continues to make me laugh. Laughter is a good way to increase endorphins to your brain, while reducing stress hormones. Keeping a journal is another good stress reducer. Writing things down can help keep your mind uncluttered. Reading books together also offered a good distraction.

July 12th



Daily progress: 93 km (52 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 2,894 km (1,563 nm)

0100 We checked the weather. Bad, bad news, the streak is still there, and its brought friends. We're not sure where to position ourselves to avoid it, as it is massive. Getting nearer to the Pacific High would be ideal, but it is impossible with the time we have, the wind doesn't allow for much either. One option is to keep heaving-to, but this will push us deeper into the system. Our boat might be fine, we might also get battered—no way to know. Another option, is to head a few degrees north, where it will be a tad calmer, but the winds there will switch to the east and there's a chance we'll get sucked back in. There's a calm forming north of that area that we can sneak into, but we fear the waves generated by the system that will enter that area, heaving-to in a calm is impossible, and we'd have to take the sails down and do the mad pendulum dance.

Nothing is guaranteed, neither the calm, nor strength of that system. Conditions change daily, mostly in small ways, but also in big menacing ones. Today, we got the big menacing kind of update. I am tired of being afraid, of waiting, I'm tired of these walls that keep forming around us. The next 4 days will not grant us much

progress, we'll be hiding from the monster streak, waiting for its anger to subside so that we can transit past it. There's a chance too that once the streak leaves, that it takes all wind with it. It is what it is, and it sucks. I am sick of the Pacific Ocean.

0400 I dared to be hopeful, just 2 days ago, chatting with Devine about the future, about life in Canada, family, projects and friends—ah, and food too! How we miss french fries and strong Canadian beer. I don't mean to sound like we've been defeated, far from, but I am angry that I dared to hope for these things so soon because it makes being far away so much harder. I am getting impatient. I want to bring this amazing human I'm with safely to shore, that's all I care about, not the boat or the things in it, although the boat is required to make it happen.

The gloom bug is strong today isn't it? You let it in! Why'd you do that? It's easy to succumb to it while in bad weather, with our goal being so far away, but I'm here, with the most fantastic human there is! That's good isn't it? Even in bad times it's good. My brain defaults to this kind of negative thinking when I am tired, and I definitely am. A sure way to slay the gloom bug is to sleep.

0600 I slept so, so deep. My sleep has been light these past 24 hours, sensitive to any and every sound and twitch of the boat. I don't have trouble napping usually, but it's been rough. I'm glad I was able to get some rest, I feel better now, more relaxed.

1200 Devine took the wheel at 0930, after checking the weather and seeing a safer spot for us up north, though it means hand-steering in shit conditions for a while to get there. The waves from yesterday's winds are still here, mountainous and persistent. They steered for some time, while I made deconstructed shepherd's pie for dinner. They hove-to as we ate it, warm inside. Then an hour later, off they went again to steer for another 3 hours. We only need to go 55 km (30 nm) to avoid a bad spell of weather south. Then,

we'll have lighter winds to continue to head north to hopefully avoid Wednesday's flare-up. We hope to get some days of reasonable winds after that to make it past the Turn Off. It's close, so close, but we cannot go east, not yet.

It is definitely discouraging to not work towards our goal because of strong winds, but we've got no choice, it is the safest thing to do. Sometimes, the long way is the best way, detours and all. After that, we have 2,778 km (1500 nm) to the opening to the Strait of Juan de Fuca. With what we've done already, it doesn't seem like much, but if we keep getting flare-ups like this it will amount to many more miles. It is best not to count detours.

I'm in a better mood than yesterday because we've got a plan. Having a plan feels better than idling, waiting for the storm to come. We hope that this bad streak will be a distant memory, as we glide on a corridor of smooth, fresh winds all the way home.

1300 Collected a bit of water with the umbrella system, which I poured into the pressure sprayer for dishes. The rain isn't terribly strong, or consistent out here. We still haven't touched our extra 70 L of water. I put my ear to our main freshwater tank today, to try and gauge how much was in it. It isn't full, that much is obvious, but there is still enough sloshing around in there.

As for the diesel, we're at 1/2 a tank currently, with 3 extra Jerry cans, totalling 60 L. We've used Calcifer sparingly in this trip, only to charge batteries, hardly ever for forwardness and we will continue to do this. We tried to time our charging sessions with calms, to help us move along, and also because it's better to motor in calms than in rough weather. The engine doesn't like being tossed around, neither do we. We want to have enough diesel to motor through the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and into Victoria Harbour. Distances will seem so small once—if—we get in sheltered waters, with everything being a day sail away. The dream.

1600 Devine comes in for some hot chocolate. A mix of cocoa powder, kinako and sugar. Warm, and comforting. Devine downs the cup in a second, and then falls asleep. I watch them doze off as I struggle to finish mine, as it is very, very sweet.

Week 6

July 13th



Daily progress: 155 km (84 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 2,739 km (1,479 nm)

0000 We hove-to for the night, bypassing some weather lying east of us. With the system that's coming, it's a good idea to rest up anyway. We're going to need energy to face the waves, winds and cold.

0330 Went outside to steer to dodge a boat headed our way, a large cargo ship. On AIS, it looked like it would be crossing our path so I went out to steer out of its way. There's a chance it would divert, but I prefer not to assume that it would. In all cases, the *little boat* ought to move out of the way.

0400 I heave-to again so we can look at the weather together over coffee. We need to make a plan to stay safe. Looking at the data, we noticed it changed a lot, as it always does. Going north yesterday was a good idea. We are now on the top-end of the mean red streak of weather ahead. We're going to be heading northeast, taking short 2-hour shifts in the day with plans to heave to for dinner. We've got a long way to go still, we decided that it was okay to take the time to eat together, to warm up. We make mistakes when we're tired.

0530 Rain on my shift, I have an extra coat on but I'm already freezing. Devine has fewer layers but seems fine, although it is entirely possible that they just complain less. A jet of water aft of Pino startled me. Looking back, I saw a **sei whale!** It was so close, swimming 5 m (16 ft) off our stern. I saw the shine of its grey back, and its upright dorsal fin as it dove back under. I shriek, as I tend to do when faced with large creatures, both out of awe and fear. I thought it had gone, but then it re-surfaced again on the starboard side, just as close as before. What do I do? Shriek again of course!

"This whale is crazy!" I shouted. Then it dove back under, and came back even closer, commanding awe. I couldn't believe it. "Ah! You crazy beautiful thing! What *are* you doing?" I saw its face that time, as if it was checking me out. Unlike the Sphinx, it did not pose a riddle. I saw its eye and mouth before it rolled back into the water, disappearing forever that time. The whale glided effortlessly through the ocean, dwarfing Pino and crew. I steered away to make sure I wouldn't cross its path again.

Our most memorable whale encounter, was on our arrival to Nuku Hiva in April 2017. On day 27 of our voyage, I could see the outline of the island in the distance. I stood at the bow, trying to take footage of the event, but was disappointed with the shot. Far-away wonders have a way of looking unimpressive on camera. I was about to put the camera away, when I heard a 'whooshing' sound. I looked over the side, and saw an orca whale swimming next to Pino, its

length matching our own. It stayed with us for a long while, its white belly making it easy to spot in the water. We had our own little welcome committee. This unusual encounter was a great start to our Marquesian adventure.

0700 The joy of hiding in the sleeping bags. My shift ended and I am inside, trying to warm up, head and body covered up. I appreciate my time in this bunk when it is freezing out there. I can feel my hands and feet warming. Venturing outside the covers means instantaneous cold. I am hiding in my warm fort. It is over 80% humidity in the cabin, and the hygrometer does not lie.

1100 My patience is short. The conditions out there aren't terrible, but self-steering is not happening. If we let Pino have its way, it would steer us southeast, not good. I tried various ways of getting it to keep to the east, or the northwest, but no. After a while I just lost it. It might be because we've been out here a while, or that the grey fog we're in is getting to me, but it is **hard**. All days are **hard**. I'm trying to stay optimistic, because after all, we eat well, the wind is mostly okay and we've got each other. I wish I didn't default to moroseness. Devine's presence helps though, at least there's that. When I lose all will to steer, they volunteer and go, rain or shine. If I was in a better mood, and that they felt downtrodden I'd likely do the same, but these days it falls onto them.

I want to have a good course always, I should know better. I know with sailing you can't always point where you want. The path to our destination will never be a straight line, it'll curve, zig zag and sometimes overlap itself. You can't be in a hurry. I know all of this, but I still think it, like my brain is ignoring wisdom on purpose to torture me.

The gloom bug isn't here to stay, it's not all I have on my mind, there is also gnocchi banging around in here. We've nearly reached the Turn Off. Nearly, but screw it, we're eating gnocchi today. We'll

be hitting that milestone in the night.

1400 We are zooming! Devine unfurled the jib, and we are going northeast, riding rabbit waves like a surfboard. Last I looked we were riding at 6-7 kn. The wind is set to lessen tonight, if this morning's weather forecast holds. We're trying to skirt past the top of this low, but it might catch up. For now, our speed is good, but I hope it doesn't increase suddenly in the night, a full jib is difficult to furl. Furling should not be difficult, but the furler is a bit stiff these days. The anchor damaged the barrel, making a dent to accompany the one we already had. It is harder to furl because there is less room in the barrel for a fully-coiled line. We want to get the dent out, but the weather these days doesn't permit much. We're still waiting for a good time to fill the diesel tank, an operation that requires calm weather. Calcifer is thirsty, with half a tank to draw from.

1700 The wind increased, instead of lessening, and came with rain. A lot of rain. Not a very pleasant evening. High winds is hellish when combined with rain. We are both very tired tonight. Our sleeping shifts were disrupted by the flapping of sails as we let Pino steer southeast a while. I went out to correct the course, but did not last long. I can only stand being out for short periods of time in these conditions. Two hours is forever in outside time.

July 14th



Daily progress: 157 km (85 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 2,582 km (1,394 nm)

0000

I rose with the sun, and went outside to steer us northeast. The wind has lessened, yesterday's calmer weather was delayed to today. Waves are big but round. Manageable.

0230 Devine wakes up. We have oatmeal and coffee while checking the weather. Team Pino makes the decision to keep going northeast, what we saw advised this decision. I go back out and steer some more, unfurling the jib to 100%. Pino glides at good 7 kn. Perfect. It would be better without rain, can't have it all.

0630 Devine makes garlic pasta with shredded nori for lunch. I park Pino and step inside, peeling off my many layers, wet on the outside and gradually dry inside. I wasn't cold wearing this, though I dread having to go to the toilet. I usually delay it, waiting until the very last moment before going inside, I then wrestle out of my prison of layered fabric and race to the head.

1200 I make kiri mochi with soft tofu and kimchi for dinner. I opened the pack of special kiri mochi sliced thin with cooked kuro-mame (black soybeans) in it. We did not heave-to to eat, we wanted to keep making progress. We ate in turns.

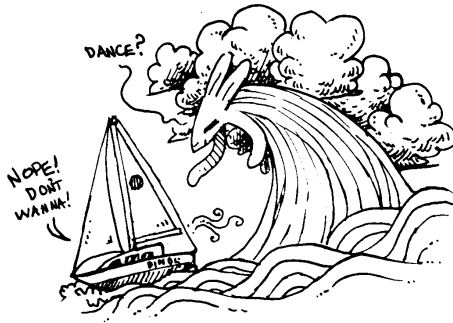
Rain is consistent. I set up a bucket under the main to catch some extra water for washing dishes. We've not yet touched our extra 70 L.

1400 Read *Cyberiad* aloud to Devine, cup of wine in hand, celebrating nothing and anything. Read two shorts, laughing out loud a few times. This book is beautifully absurd and clever, now I understand why it's one of Devine's favourite books.

I go outside to transfer the collected water from bucket to Jerry can. It filled half of a 10 L can. Halfway into the trip, I wished for rain, now I wish it'd stop, that's how it goes! Everything inside is moist, or thoroughly wet. We've got 2 dry and clean dishtowels left. We must use these sparingly. The bowls cannot be allowed to air-dry, they won't on their own because of the wet environment and will develop rot.

1200 The wind increased, a lot. We were a bit over-cavvassed. Devine begrudgingly went outside in full foul-weather gear to reduce the jib. The wind continued to increase, as did the rain and waves. We'd been skirting the top edge of a streak of bad weather, and now I think it's caught up to us. Devine heaves-to. I hate having to stop so often, it hinders our progress, but continuing also affects our safety and mental health. Waiting is the best thing to do right now. The wind will lighten early tomorrow, we'll resume this infernal dance then, hopefully the rain will let up too. In the meantime, the bucket is back outside under the main, gorging itself on rainwater—enjoy buddy, you're the only one who does.

July 15th



Daily progress: 178 km (96 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 2,404 km (1,298 nm)

0400 We've resumed forwardness. The waves are up but we've got to continue because another system is trailing behind and will surely catch up if we stay put. These systems all want to dance the csárdás with Pino, but Pino and crew are sick to death of it.

The rain has let up, we don't know how long that'll last but we'll enjoy it for now. I know Devine is glad, they are not as rain-ready as I am. They've got no rain boots, the last pair became too leaky too early in the trip, and their foulies lost their waterproof-ness as well. Our foul weather gear does keep wetness out, a little, but doesn't dry fast enough. Even if dry inside, it feels moist because of the damp outer shell.

We have coffee, warm oatmeal and I step outside to steer us along.

0700 Devine switches foul-weather suits, wearing their bright red one. "Dry clothes attract rain," I tell them, "be careful." They steer, I am indoors, getting ready to rinse off my hair for the second time in this long, long trip. I waited, I did not know if we'd be getting

rain, and it seemed frivolous. Now that we have some extra water, hell, I splurged. Washing your hair isn't splurging, I know, but such is life on long, seemingly unending ocean passages.

1430 We heave-to for dinner. We both need a break. We have a glass of red wine plus nutritional yeast kishimen, a good meal day. For lunch, I made noodles with a peanut butter sauce, along with some sauteed tofu, dried daikon and potatoes as toppings.

The waves are still with us, and the wind has turned a bit. We're forced to hand-steer downwind—not my favorite. We'll be outside tonight, pushing hard to make it to a safe zone because as per usual, more weather approaches. We'll make it out of the first bad patch, but the second is wide. We're nearing the 2,315 km (1250 nm) mark to the Juan de Fuca Strait, we cannot get there fast enough. Sometimes we wish we had a giant dial aboard, counting the distance covered and what we have left to do, a colourful, ridiculous thing with little doors to open for each big milestone, like opening a door on an advent calendar, but with lotus roots and beer as prizes.

2100 Dall's porpoises came by briefly today. Our beautiful, white-bellied friends. We could see them, leaping out of the water from afar. I wish they'd stayed longer.

I'm doing my best to stay upbeat, but I am getting worn down by all this grey weather and oncoming storms, I might be feeling this way because I am tired, I've had trouble getting deep sleep. I didn't sleep well last night because of the AIS beeping, warning us of a ship. Then after that, the wind died and the jib was flapping rudely. We always wait a little before furling it, sometimes the wind comes right back. It did return, but it was weak and we had to furl it again after all.

I motored for 2 hours on my first shift to charge our batteries, we need to do it often these days, cloudy skies don't permit our panels to draw enough from the sun. Once in a while, we get a fog sun, a

bright diffused halo in the sky. That is the most sun this part of the ocean will ever grant us. Fog sun works with our panel, I did not expect that.

Foul-weather gear

Modern oilskin garments were developed by Edward Le Roy, in 1898. Le Roy used worn-out sailcloth painted with a mixture of linseed oil and wax to produce a waterproof garment suitable to be worn on deck in foul-weather conditions.

Oilskins and other traditionally ‘waxed’ clothing, used to be the main-stay of sailors, they would last a lifetime if their owners put enough love and work into them. Nowadays, foul-weather gear is made from synthetics treated with Durable Water Repellent (DWR), but requires the same amount care and attention. Other types include flexible PVC-coated synthetics. All have their pros and cons, but few can rival the breathable qualities of Le Roy’s process.

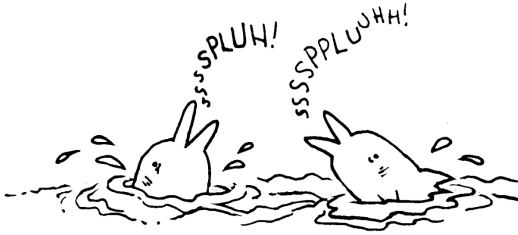
When we started sailing, we both purchased a full set of foul-weather gear. An expensive set, a bib and jacket. These kept us dry and warm at first, but over time, they lost their durable water repellent coating, and we found ourselves sitting in puddles often. The water would wet our butts, and seep inside to wet the rest. A wet butt is terrible on long trips, as it irritates the skin and can leave painful bruises.

Synthetic DWR-coated foulies require re-treatment to maintain water-repellency. Affected garments can be treated with a ‘spray-on’ or ‘wash-in’ treatment. It is apparently possible to wetproof clothing yourself, although we have not yet tried it ourselves (our butts remain wet to this day). In all, we have little faith in synthetics.

Zippers on clothes are also exposed to the elements, making damage and corrosion difficult to avoid. We found that even plastic zippers will freeze up from too much salt buildup. Applying a lubricant can minimize blockages.

After long, salty trips, we usually rinse our gear with plenty of fresh-water to remove salt crystals. We use old toothbrushes to scrub deposits from zippers. Failing to do this, will make your expensive gear deteriorate very, very fast. If it is not possible to rinse the clothes right away, close all of the pockets of outdoor gear with zippers, that way, if they get stuck they'll be closed, not open. My set of foulies has a chest pocket that is stuck open, inviting the rain to pool inside, and it is horrible.

July 16th



Daily progress: 198 km (107 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 2,206 km (1191 nm)

0100 I steer outside, glad that there is no fog or rain. Devine too shared in this delight last night. We both saw stars twinkling brightly in the sky. Stars. It's been a while. For a moment, it was like being in the South Pacific again, with a good wind, calm seas and a perfect show of lights overhead. We would see this spectacle every night, but it never lost its novelty. When I saw them in the sky tonight, along with the moon, I smiled. I felt better.

0400 We have coffee and oatmeal—classic morning on Pino. We are sandwiched between two cargo ships, bound for the US, and further south, we see more on AIS. Civilization is near. Cargo ships carry their goods to port, and Pino carries the rabbits home. One ship passes close, I can make out its shape on the horizon, then as it passes us I see its full of containers, weighing it down.

0700 Devine awakens. They are starving. They make stir-fried potatoes with tofu and shiso pickles. Pino is doing amazing speed on calm seas. We are thankful for this. Steering outside is nice when

the waves are down, we glide without resistance, pushing through the waves noiselessly.

It isn't raining, so I take this rare opportunity to fill up the diesel tank. Operation fill-up was a success, with no freak wave splashing up onto the deck and no problems with the deck plate. I can fill the tank myself, thanks to a little siphon we own. I tie the diesel bin on the cabin-top rail so it stands a bit higher, then I jiggle the siphon and have it empty into the tank through a funnel with a fine mesh strainer. No mess, no problem.

We are considering stopping at Ucluelet if we get low on fuel, but I don't think it'll be necessary. Landing there would shorten our trip, that is something to consider if we are tired. I've already marked the positions of the customs and fuel dock on Navionics. The little marina there looks nice, going there is tempting, but I wonder what the situation is now for coronavirus, we've been in the dark for 37 days. It is possible that they would not allow us to dock, but there's no way to know. 37 days is a long time to be at sea. I stopped crossing dates on our calendar because it discouraged me, although the cartoons I've drawn in the margins always make me smile. Cartoons for the mind.

1200 Devine is asleep. I am steering outside under a proper sun?! With a blue clearing? It feels great to see color in the sky again. It won't last, but for now, it is nice. I am lonely though, even if there are two of us aboard. We're rarely together. One person is often sleeping while the other is awake, or steering outside while the other is keeping warm in the cabin. When the weather is good, or when we can self-steer we do activities together, like reading, or talking, but we haven't done a lot of that these past few days, and it makes me sad. We're together alone. At least we take the time to eat together for dinner, heaving-to for a short hour. We plan to do this today.

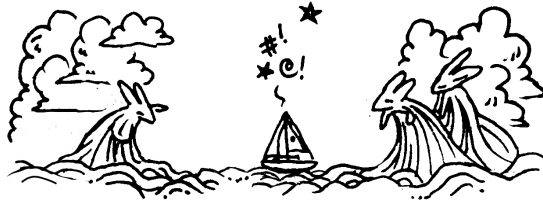
A ship called Cosco America passes south of us, I resist the urge to radio in to ask for peanuts, nutritional yeast and olives. "You want

us to fill your boat with olives?” To which we’d say: “Buried in kalamatas yes that’s right.”

1500 We eat the last of the cornmeal with kimchi and soybeans. I will miss eating this. Devine prepares it well. We heave-to to eat it in bed, sharing our “1,865 km (700 nm) to Vancouver Island” can of Yebisu beer.

2100 Calm night. Not too cold out there, there is neither rain nor fog. Dolphins startled me in the night as I sat outside on watch. Day dolphins are a gift, night dolphins are scary, I can’t see them and all I hear is a sudden “Spluh!” sound as they surface, a sound which I’ve found I am *never* ready for.

July 17th



Daily progress: 172 km (93 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 2,034 km (1,098 nm)

0000 Light comes early on Japan time. We were both starving so we made oatmeal, I went to bed right after. I used to hate sleeping after eating, but on this trip I just don't care, I meet my needs and that's it.

0400 Coffee and weather downloading time. The dance of storms continues, so we'll reduce sail before they come. The wind turned right after coffee, and brought plenty of rain.

0700 The wind lessened and the rain stopped, we unfurl the jib again, increasing our speed. Devine makes soba with wasabi for lunch, which we eat in turns. I then read shorts from *Cyberiad* aloud. The wind is good and permits Devine to steer well enough from inside. We're thankful for a brief moment of calm when we can do things together.

1400 We make Japanese curry for dinner—yes, again, we're not tired of it yet. I used up our last two sweet potatoes, some dried

radish, dried tofu and soy bits to make it. I'm glad we brought 2,700 g of TVP, and 10 packs of kouya-doufu (dried tofu, 5 per pack), these two ingredients add bulk to our meals and fill us up. We have a glass of wine, and enjoy it for a short hour before I go back to steering.

We've been pushing hard these past few days, doing as much distance as we can to position ourselves well to the weather. It has paid off, but it's exhausting. These systems never stop coming. At least we're dry, there is little rain but it isn't too cold.

2100 The wind was supposed to increase, it hasn't, this could mean many things, that it's been delayed, that we've moved past it or that it won't increase at all. We both had good shifts, we're thankful for long summer days. We charged the batteries for 2 hours, they were running low. Looking forward to giving them a good strong full charge.

July 18th



Daily progress: 209 km (113 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 1,825 km (985 nm)

0400 There it is! The wind is fresh and the waves move quickly. They like to knock us around, see how much we can stand. “So do you still like the Pacific Ocean?! Huh? How ’bout now?” The rabbit waves say. Such rude rabbits, can’t they see we’re tired?

“Sick to death of the Pacific Ocean” is turning inside my head. The ocean offered us many amazing moments, images that I will remember forever, but equally terrifying ones too.

0600 Devine wakes up, and stares at me from their bunk. “Hungry!” They were hungry before they napped, and have now been awoken by their stomach.

At this point in the trip, I’ve reached maximum annoyance with sailing itself, made worse by my own hunger, accumulated tiredness and the fact that I don’t have anymore clean pants to wear. I’ve got to choose the pair that stinks the least, or the one that is the least clammy. Tough choice. My fleece stinks too, I can’t stand it. It smells old, damp and well-worn. I keep wearing it though, just

like I keep wearing the same pair of blue wool socks. I shake the salt crystals out of my wool socks, then back on my feet they go. Devine's been wearing the same pants since the start. Our clothes are definitely looking past their best, 39 days of cold and wet sailing will do that. It's actually been 40 days, but since we've experienced July 1st twice I like to subtract that day, it makes me feel better to pretend that we haven't reached 40 days just yet.

1200 We open our "under 1,852 km (1000 nm) to Vancouver Island" prize, the bag of sliced renkon (lotus root) preserved in a sweet soy sauce. We're doing quite poorly on the 'fresh vegetable front'. We do have a few old white potatoes left, but that's it.

We ate the lotus root with some soft tofu, short grain white rice with bits of shredded nori, accompanied by a glass of red wine and some dekopon yokan (orange-flavoured red bean cake) for dessert. After dinner, I went to steer, then I switched places with Devine for an hour so I could have a break before the start of my first long shift.

2200 Very tame winds and seas tonight. I keep over-steering, causing the jib to flap and the jib sheet blocks to knock around noisily on deck. Despite the noise they make, Devine doesn't wake up. I over-steer because I am tired. It's hard to focus. My movements are uncertain. I'm too tired to think, all I've got for distraction is the muted sounds of a calm ocean, a sound that lulls me to sleep.

July 19th



Daily progress: 204 km (110 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 1,621 km (875 nm)

0000 All my shifts were hard, each one spent fighting sleep. With nothing to focus my eyes on, it is quite hard to remain alert. The sun rises in the last 2 hours of my last shift, it'll be easier then to ward off the sandman. I'm looking forward to more than 2h30 hours of consecutive sleep, but after 40 days of travel, I'm impressed we can keep our energy up and our sanity. On the 28-day transit to Nuku Hiva, both of us were hallucinating at night, constantly near the end. We don't suffer from this now because the days are long.

0300 We download the weather, coffee in hand. We're southeast of a bad streak of weather, riding alongside calmer winds. We are making good speed and don't have to worry about being over-canvassed. We'll be going along this streak for the next two days, then it looks like a patch of calmer weather approaches. Devine changed the GRIB file coordinates yet again so we could see the wind on the west coast of Canada. It's nice to finally see what's brewing in this region. The wind here circles the Pacific High, clockwise. We are about 1,600 km (864 nm) from the entrance to the Juan de Fuca

Strait, and it is crazy to think that we are so close! I'm still waiting for something bad to happen, something that will keep us from reaching our goal. It is almost too crazy to be true. Land! Can you imagine, and not just any land, home, where we started from in August 2016. I'm excited, and scared.

0800 The sun. The sky. Today is the day we've been waiting for, a calm day of full bright sun with clear skies. We bring clothes outside to dry, foul-weather gear, cushions and shoes. While taking things out, we discover more mould. A gym bag we found was covered in green moss. We found two wooden plates, also fuzzy. Today is operation clean-up. I cleaned the mould off the cabin walls with white vinegar, wiped moisture from under the cushions and left dishtowels out to dry on the lifelines.

Pino was a turn-key boat when we bought it, and 5 years of hard sailing have turned it into a project boat.

1200 We're starting night shifts earlier today, to try and delay the sunrise hour to a more reasonable time. Because of this, I prepared lunch earlier, I made deconstructed shepherd's pie, using up 2 white potatoes out of our remaining five. We still have plenty of cans, not the most nutritious of foods, but it's better than nothing.

1400 Clouds are rolling in, it looks like the low is catching up. Things are good and Pino is driving itself. Devine is reading *The Care and Feeding of the Offshore Crew* by Lin Pardey for the hundredth time, and I'm checking the manual for our Yanmar engine. I noticed it was leaking oil and I'm not sure why. I wiped the oil off, and we'll test it to see if it happens again. With a clean area under the engine, it'll be easier to see where the leak is coming from, although stuffing bits of absorbent towels around in different spots on the engine body near oil lines is an even better way. A drop of oil can travel far before it drips down, and trying to find the problem by watching where it falls is not always helpful.

2230 Ah, morning at nearly eleven o'clock, we are creeping back toward normality. The night was uneventful, with Pino steering itself on increasing winds and seas. We've managed to bypass a lot of bad weather these past few days, not sure we can avoid this system entirely, but at least we are safe, for now. With our current point of sail we get tossed around a lot, with waves hitting our side.

I hope that we won't arrive at the entrance to the Strait just as a gale forms along the coast. It's a possibility, so we'll plan for it, but wouldn't it be nice for once to arrive somewhere in lighter winds? Wouldn't it be nice to break our pattern of boisterous landfalls?

Week 7

July 20th



Daily progress: 255 km (138 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 1,366 km (737 nm)

0300 Today, as our friend Anja from the sailboat Robusta would say, we are being tossed around like a soba. The weather caught up, and we are getting some good waves and wind. Our speed is good, carrying us rapidly toward our goal. The wind is supposed to come out of the northeast tonight. The system will also leave behind a few ‘bald spots’ of wind in the area, some of which we may not be able to avoid. Going north is difficult, we don’t want to end up in one of the larger ‘bald spots’ later. We’ve only got a few degrees left to do in that direction. Currently, we’re at the latitude of Cape Disappointment, north of the Columbia river in Washington. Ah, Cape Disappointment, lying north of Cape Expectation. Another bumpy grey day awaits us today.

0600 We make kuromame kiri mochi (rice cake with black soybeans) with kimchi and soft tofu for lunch. I should have bought more of this mochi stuff. Because it's sliced thinly, it cooks fast, and has a nice texture and taste. The company making it is called "usagi mochi" (rabbit rice cakes), their logo features an illustration of two rabbits pounding mochi, it is too perfect.

We continue with our readings of *Cyberiad*, an activity we always look forward to, where we wander into the imagination of another, offering some respite from our own. We spend plenty of time in our own heads. We've done a lot of thinking in this trip, now we need to start doing. Our thinking quotas have been spent.

1030 I make soumen with a lentil sauce and serve it with a sweet potato I found. It had fallen out of the basket where I store them. I'm happy I found it now rather than later, rotten and oozing in the bilge. There are few smells worse than that of a rotten potato. Later, we share our "1,389 km (750 nm) to Vancouver Island Yebisu" (beer) as I continue to read *Cyberiad*.

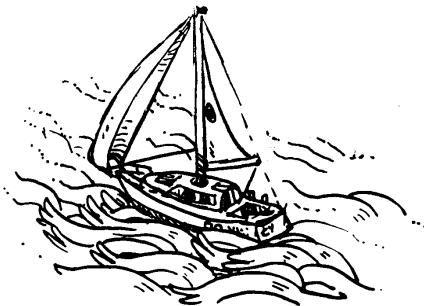
Pino isn't driving itself today, Devine is on-watch, keeping us on course. They are sitting in the companionway stairs, and I'd prefer they stay up there as they are farting up a storm—as am I, actually. Not sure what it is we ate that is causing it, but it does not stop. The stink bullets move like guided missiles, going right for the nostrils.

1100 Devine cleans and sharpens our knives to pass the time, while we quote the movie *Hackers* aloud. We miss movies, and popcorn, and people and cities. I'm glad we're progressing, but we're still a week or so away, and time is passing real slow. We are restless, and running out of reading material. Our meals are still interesting, even if most of the jars in our pantry are empty. They clink together after every passing wave. Our jars didn't used to clink, we kept them full and the weight kept them still. Now, our shelves are a symphony of knocking glass, which we try and quiet by shoving old socks between

them. The symphony isn't melodious, but disorganized and unpleasant. There is always something rolling around on a boat, something that is clinking, banging or ringing. We silence one thing, and when that sound is gone we take notice of another. We just don't have enough old socks.

2100 The weather flared up momentarily, but it's going to die off by midnight. Steering is okay, we've got a reefed main and jib, but the wave trains are constant and massive, nothing compared to what we saw near Japan but still large, and fast. The wind is coming out of the southwest. It's noisy inside of the cabin, with everything creaking and cracking in the night. Despite the noise, we manage to sleep well, meanwhile Pino is doing record speeds.

July 21st



Daily progress: 155 km (84 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 1,211 km (654 nm)

0200 The wind is not down yet, and some light fog is settling in. Pino is devouring degrees eastward, and has been for the past 5 days. It feels good to be moving, but progress also means that we have to work harder. We are more attentive to shifts in the wind, to the size of the waves. It is overall more exhausting.

0500 A calm lies ahead, but we might be able to sail past it since our progress is good.

Yesterday we did record speeds, the wind is looking good for the next few days. The coast of Vancouver Island lies ahead, with just under 1,204 km (650 nm) left to reach the Juan de Fuca entrance buoy. I might just get my wish of a calm entrance, we'll see (and hope) that the weather holds. We'll hit 140°W soon, meaning that it'll be time to open yet another door on our milestone dial. The prize? Pancakes. We'll have pancakes with the can of maple syrup we've been saving. Our morale is generally good, we get frustrated with small things, like when the jib flails when Pino over-steers north,

when the jib sheet blocks bang on deck and when unwashed dishes rattle in the sink.

The concept of our arrival is becoming a real possibility. This is what we hold onto, what animates our tired bodies and minds. We're at day 42, everything is already beginning to feel like a distant dream, were we really just living in Japan? Did we really sail all that distance? It was a crazy plan before we left, it is crazy to be in the thick of it, and it is insane to think that it will end. My brain still has trouble believing that this passage *can* end. This has been our reality for what feels like... forever. Stuck in our little foggy world. Land is coming into focus now in my head, it is becoming less phantasmic. The fabled land beyond the fog-of-war.

We got messages from friends and family, all kept up with our progress, and somehow, knowing this makes us feel less alone. "You're almost there!" They said. Almost, yes, almost there.

1300 Motoring since the wind is weak, and a patch of calm keeps growing ahead of us. It's been very rainy, there is no fog sun and Pino's batteries need charging.

Our days all melt into one another, like one long day made up of an infinity of hours. Living in a grey world has a way of making everything feel the same. Nighttime helps separate our days, but it is also a blur, it seems we're only ever just waiting for the fog to clear. I made rice noodles with a peanut butter sauce for lunch, using up our last can of peas. For dinner, we had Japanese curry with tsukemono (Japanese-style pickles), kouya-doufu, dried radish and half a white potato.

We are running downwind, not my favourite point of sail. I've said this many times already, but I dislike it because it requires a lot of attention, when downwind gybing is always a possibility. The waves are calmer, somewhat, courtesy of the calm at our heels, but they're still there, and we feel them, racing toward us, lifting us up before

setting us back down. I fear being becalmed, a calm will delay our arrival yet again. I am impatient. I am eager. I am ready to be back on land, and I want this to be soon. Of course, the wind will determine when, but I wish we were just a day away. We've got 6 days left, and those will undoubtedly be the longest in my life.

1400 The calm is here, it has caught up to us. We stopped motoring early on, we downloaded the weather and saw that the calm extends far ahead, if we motored we'd be wasting fuel. For now, it's better to wait. The wind will return, it always does. We take a nap together.

July 22nd



Daily progress: 83 km (45 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 1,128 km (609 nm)

0200 We had good wind for about an hour, then off it went again. I guess it didn't feel like staying. We make pancakes with maple syrup to celebrate passing 140°W. Cooking when becalmed is easy, and it means we can spend time together. At this point though, I'd rather we spend time together in a harbour, but what can I *do*? It is funny to see that most of the area has wind, most of it except for a small patch around Pino. It looks like the ocean wants to keep us around a little while longer. "I can be calm and tame. *See?* Do you still like me?"

Do we still like the ocean? Yes, of course we still like it, we've spent too much time in it as of late, but we'll always love it. During this trip, we'd often ask ourselves: why do we do this? Why put ourselves through this crazy sailing across a vast ocean business? We don't really know why, but when we left Canada with Pino to go south, we knew we'd be taking it back home afterwards, that was a promise we'd made. No matter what, Pino would come back with us. We're a team, and we're closing this circle together.

1300 What to say about today, calm days are torture when we're so close to our goal. The waves are tossing us around. The calm, according to this morning's weather, will stay until this evening, 6 long hours away. I tried steering with the 2-3 kn of wind there was, but it's too much work for too little a reward. Devine is reading *Akira* by Katsuhiro Otomo, while I sit outside, watching the horizon for ripples in the water. My patience meter depleted, I went inside to clean the dishes from dinner. I made rice with soybeans, topped with a sweet and sour sauce, sauteed with some dried seaweed and 1/2 the potato from yesterday. We're eating a lot of beans these days, it was a staple on this trip, eaten in the form of soybeans, kouya-doufu, silken tofu, kuromame, yokan and kinako powder.

Looks like this day will consist mostly of sleeping, reading and waiting for wind. People on land complain about boredom during their coronavirus quarantine, well, they'd go stir-crazy on a voyage like this. This is quarantine on steroids. There is no internet, not enough power to watch films all day, not enough books to read, limited water and food, and a look outside our window offers nothing but a view of a dull grey world. This is the ocean equivalent of your window facing a brick wall.

I've noticed I've always got one word stuck in my head, a new one every day that I repeat like a mantra. The word stays with me, especially when I'm too tired to think. Today's word is "flummoxed", yesterday's was "cassowary". Not all words are as great as these, a week ago I kept repeating the phrase "tits up", tirelessly. Maybe this is my brain's way of dealing with boredom. Repetition. Keeping the space filled with words leaves little room for anxiety to take root.

Today, I re-packed our ditch bag, the current canvas bag grew a bit of mould, because we are dumb and left it under the space where we'd hang our wet clothes. I pulled out what I thought to be a large dry bag, thinking it would serve as a good replacement. I rolled it out once to look at it, but never tried to pack anything into it. I'd noticed then how long it was and thought it would make the perfect

ditch bag. I assumed it had as much girth as it had length—far from. I put two big items in, and noticed then how narrow it was, and so instead of bulging outward it grew skyward. With all the items packed in, it was no wider than a soccer ball, but reached up to my waist, like a long, awkward, slender worm. I named it “the lumpy sausage”. Now every time I look at it I can’t stop laughing.

2300 The wind returned! I switched the sails (they were on the wrong side) and we sped off! The wind started fast, at a moderate breeze—perfect. Well, it would have been perfect if I hadn’t looked at AIS to see that there was a large cargo ship heading straight for us, running on the same longitude. Diverting southward seemed silly since it was angling more that way, so I tightened the sheets and went as close into the wind as I could. It was enough to steer us 1.852 km (1 nm) north of it. I saw its lights as it passed us, relieved and thankful for AIS, it saves us a lot of time and anxiety. It’s easy to see their course and to divert appropriately ahead of time.

The rest of the night was uneventful, we are zooming forward, beating into the wind and waves. Last night was especially cold though, even with two sleeping bags I was frozen. Now, I sit at the chart table, fleece and puffy jacket on, tuque, scarf and foul-weather pants and I feel better, especially too since I’ve just finished a bowl of warm oats.

July 23rd



Daily progress: 202 km (109 nm)
Distance to Victoria: 926 km (500 nm)

0400 Beautiful sailing today, so far. The wind is coming out of the north, Pino is self-steering to the northeast in direction of Vancouver Island. The sky is a cold shade of blue. I doubled up my leggings with another pair, and slipped on another sweater for a total of 3, plus scarf and tuque. It is always cooler inside the boat because of the humidity.

Devine is taking notes on their computer, while I've just awoken from a post-coffee nap. We're going to prepare lunch soon. We're in the habit of always discussing what we'll be cooking while having coffee, we look at the state of our ingredients and plan based on that. We still have plenty of kimchi, lots of corn, 1 potato and plenty of beans. We still have a jar of dried radish, which I'm really thankful for. It adds variety and texture to our meals. It was a nice surprise to find a full bag of kirimochi, I thought we had finished them all. Our supplies have definitely dwindled, but we'll be alright.

We've been lighting candles at night, to keep the inside of the cabin lit while not disturbing whoever is asleep. We've gone through most

of our collection, but still have 1 long one, which we'll use tonight, and 3 little ones that only last 3 hours each. We need more candles aboard. The lighting is soothing, pleasant, and uses no power. Devine found a clever way to set up the tall ones, in a way that they stay upright. They sit on a plate on the gimbaled stove, secured by two pot holders.

2000 Devine prepared all the meals today, lunch consisted of one-pot pasta, cooked in very little water with all of the ingredients mixed in (chilies, TVP, olive oil, garlic). The water and flavor is absorbed by the pasta, there is no waste and it's very, very good, especially if topped by shredded nori. Dinner was a stir-fried rice dish with kimchi, soft tofu and corn. We finished the last of the chocolate cake too.

Today was very quiet, with Devine doing a lot of writing and reading, and me drawing, keeping watch outside and sleeping. I was sleepy today, so sleepy I nearly fell asleep while steering from the companionway stairs. I took 2 naps, on top of the 5 hours I get per night. I think the reason I may be tired is because we've been shifting hours around, delaying the time our night watches start since the night is coming earlier and earlier as we go east. Days of calm also mess up our sleeping schedule, we don't adhere to strict rules in calms, we sleep whenever. My body demands a steady sleeping schedule to function, something that is hard to come by on an ocean passage. We're looking forward to sleeping a full night together in the same bunk, it's been too long, I crave both rest and companionship.

Tonight promises a moderate breeze, smooth, easy sailing. We made it under 926 km (500 nm), now *that* is exciting. We've got maybe 4 1/2 days left if the wind holds. We finally switched from Japan-time to Vancouver-time, hours on the clock face feel more in sync with the time of day.

July 24th



Daily progress: 193 km (104 nm)
Distance to Victoria: 733 km (396 nm)

0400 The trip's accumulated tiredness has pounced on me, kicked me in the head and left me writhing on the ground in a pool of pathetic-ness. Its attack triggered many, many emotions.

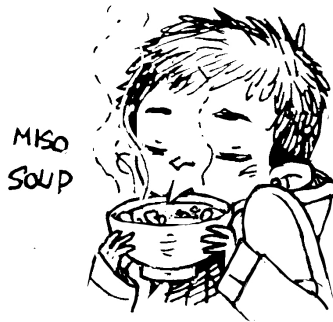
It started with me outside in the cockpit, Pino was running downwind, and I was trying to pull in the main after gybing accidentally. Gybing scares me, I am terribly afraid of breaking something. That event alone had already caused me some stress. I set our course back, then I pulled in the main sheet because I wanted to fix a block that was twisted under the preventer line. While pulling, the boat heeled and I slipped on a rope on the cockpit floor. The floor was wet, and the non-stick in that area is old, and worn. I fell, and hit my ribs on the edge of the seat. I now had a bruise matching the one on my left side. It hurt like hell. I just started cursing. I was angry. Then, that anger turned to tears and I started to cry. I was so, so tired, of it all. My fall, and the morning's difficulties tipped the boiling pot of water that was my brain.

"You okay?" Devine asked, as they came out to see me, sitting on

the cockpit floor. “What happened? What’s wrong?” I just pointed to everything. Yep. I was spent. The vase had tipped, the patience meter was empty, the gloom bug pricked me and the tears came and would not stop. Devine knew what was wrong, really, it wasn’t the pain, it was everything. Our callused hands, our swollen fingers, our bruises, the lack of sleep, our hunger, our impatience and eagerness to arrive. Everything. They felt these things too. They dug out the Chromebook and found movies for us to watch, to distract ourselves from the repetitive tasks we’d been performing these past 46 days. They always know what to do to calm me, to make me feel better.

That’s all I have to say for today, my brain is mush and I haven’t got the energy.

July 25th



Daily progress: 183 km (99 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 550 km (297 nm)

0400 Passed a lighted buoy to the north. It's been a while since we've crossed any sort of structure that isn't a ship. Steering was hard at times, last night the wind gave us forwardness, which was good, but it was hard on the hands. Downwind sailing requires a lot of focus too, making it even harder. Devine is in the habit of making miso soup during their night shifts, for warmth and to calm their stomach. I still rely on small slices of snack bars, it gives me enough energy to go through 3 hours of steering in the dark.

0930 It's that time of the day when my body craves coffee, to revive my flesh and to warm my ice-cold blood. We are lizard people, sluggish, in desperate need of sun. Devine woke up around 0930, and was happy to announce that they'd already pre-ground the beans and that the coffee would find its way to me sooner. Yes. I'd already downloaded the weather then, seeing more light winds in our future. We'll do our best to stay patient, but it is tough. We are lying 481 km (260 nm) away from the entrance buoy. So close. We've got fuel, but want to keep it. We have a small allowance to cross narrow

calms and to charge our batteries.

1400 We put on the movie *Watchmen*, gawking at the cinematography. It's nice to be distracted for a little while. Our little movie marathons make our world feel normal, and to trick our brains into thinking that there are humans out there other than ourselves. We take breaks to peek outside now and again, the sky is gorgeous. The clouds are puffy and dark on the horizon, but there are none above us. We haven't had fog in a while, and are glad for clear days with full visibility, it brightens our mood. Because the seas are calm, I decided to make a small batch of pitas.

1800 We watch *Kiki's Delivery Service* while eating Japanese curry. Wind is still at our backs, we're doing good speed and think we might be able to bypass that coming patch of calm. It's weird to stare ahead and to think that Vancouver Island is out there, that it'll appear on the horizon soon. It's okay to start thinking in "whens" now, rather than in "maybes" and "ifs". We are arriving. It's happening. Looking at our track is strange, I remember doing it but it is surreal. It's strange to have the past, present and future in focus.

July 26th



Daily progress: 93 km (50 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 457 km (247 nm)

0300 Devine has been devouring books. They finished Dante's *Purgatorio*, Cervante's *Don Quixote* and is now nearly done with *One-Straw Revolution* by Masanobu Fukuoka. It is rare nowadays for us to have so many consecutive hours with no plans, no work and no social obligations, it makes it easy to go through books, but I also suspect that Devine is a fast reader. They spend their entire night shifts standing on the companionway stairs, Kindle in hand, rope in the other. Their brain must be whirring hard because they ate two pitas last night.

0600 We have a foot pump in the galley, with a pedal pushing against the pump to draw out water. One of the two pegs securing the pedal to the pump broke yesterday—not an easy fix. We have a spare pedal, but the fitting requires removing both the intake and outtake hoses. Not very convenient. It is hard to do a good seal. The hoses are old, and this late into the trip I don't want to risk losing any water to leakage. I made a temporary fix, with a rope wrapping around the top of the pedal to a pipe running underneath

it, keeping the broken peg down. Let's hope it holds.

1100 After coffee, comes soba. Devine prepares soba for lunch with wasabi and TVP. We cook them in so little water that they absorb it all. It results in soba covered in a gooey secretion from the buckwheat that soba masters would probably shame us for, but whatever, it tastes delicious and there is no waste. Normally, cooked soba require a fresh water rinse or two.

We've got 457 km (247 nm) left. We've awakened Calcifer so we could motor through a calm to get past 130°W, where the wind is scheduled to return. There is a mean system forming a few days from now, and we don't want to be in it. We're done with storms chasing us. It is nice today, with calm seas, a warm sun and clear skies. We're sitting outside, getting some Vitamin D while trying to picture the outline of Vancouver Island in the distance. We see cloud patterns on the horizon that look like land, resembling mountains. It is too easy to trick our brains into believing there's actual land there, it's easy to warp our sense of space. We haven't seen land in 47 days, maybe it's easy to do because our brains long for the sight of land, for the shadows of great snowy peaks rising in the east. Soon, soon. In the meantime, we've got to watch for traffic. The Juan de Fuca Strait is a busy seaway, though after navigating the east coast of Japan I can't say that I'm too worried, instead of 100 targets on the radar, we'll get 20 at most.

2020 We reached 130°W and put Calcifer to sleep around 1600. A bank of fog rolled in, and right back out, we're glad it didn't decide to stick around, we are really enjoying the fair weather we've been having, it's like being fully awake. Fog dulls our senses. The wind is returning gradually, we are cruising along slowly. It's easy to sail with weak wind when there are no waves. Cruising at 4 kn with a full jib and double-reefed main. We don't have to keep it reefed but at this point in the trip we're just lazy, and besides, our speed is good. Soon, we'll be aligned with the top of Vancouver Island.

We are watching *The Incredibles 2* this evening, with some popcorn. A little treat is nice every now and then. We're going to watch it until our night shifts begin. Things should be smooth tonight, here's hoping we make good speed and get there soon.

Week 8

July 27th



Daily progress: 109 km (59 nm)

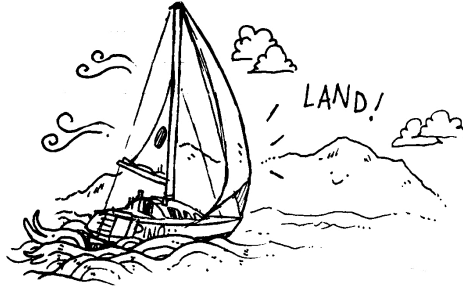
Distance to Victoria: 348 km (188 nm)

0400 Realized that the GRIB files I downloaded yesterday were lower resolution weather, and did not rightly show the severity and extent of the weather running along the coast of British Columbia. Upon seeing the detailed forecast this morning, we triple-reefed the main and braced for impact. The weather was horrible. We got huge waves, lots of wind and thick, thick fog. I was very discouraged, disheartened with what lay between us and our goal, yet another monster on the ocean, one my body and mind were just not up to facing. We were both sad, and angry for a while. We sat inside wishing it'd all end now. Then a group of dolphins appeared in the fog. A large group. Devine saw them swimming around the boat, they kept us company. We could hear them chatting through the

hull, like several squeaky toys being squeezed underwater. Every time I heard a squeak I smiled, I felt better, and found the courage to push on. Thank you dolphins for being there with us.

2000 Because of the very bad weather, and because it will be our last night in the Pacific, we decided to do shorter night shifts. One hour off, one on. It wasn't tiring to sleep less, steering wasn't too difficult for prolonged periods. Doing this brightened our mood. We even prepared another cup of coffee to sharpen our focus.

July 28th



Daily progress: 202 km (109 nm)
Distance to Victoria: 146 km (79 nm)

0300 Beautiful night. Winds are calm now. We have left the patch of bad weather behind. I can see the stars, and there is bio luminescence in the water. Every wave splashing stirs up an explosion of sparkling green light. We feel better, we survived yet another hard moment at sea. The coast lies ahead, we are near but can't see its outline yet.

0800 “**LAND!**” Devine screams at me as I sleep. “**LAND!**” I scream back at them, sitting up in the bed. It's land. It's here. It's real. We are almost home... except, the wind has died. We wake up Calcifer, our little engine has a full tank plus an extra can to draw from, we'll be good to make it to Victoria with this. We hope to sail part of the way, wind permitting. The entrance buoy is 37 km (20 nm) from our current position. When we pass it, we'll be that much closer to Victoria Harbour, another big milestone. Shipping is heavy as we near the buoy, but it is easy to plan with AIS. We do our best to stay out of their way.

1200 We are passing the entrance buoy and the Swiftsure Bank. The current is against us, but it is supposed to switch soon, and when it does we'll have 1 kn with us. We continue to motor. We are lying in the path of ships, we need to steer further to clear the busy lanes.

We can see land on both sides. The day is perfect, just perfect—well, it would be perfect if there was wind. Devine makes soba and serves it with the last of our soft tofu.

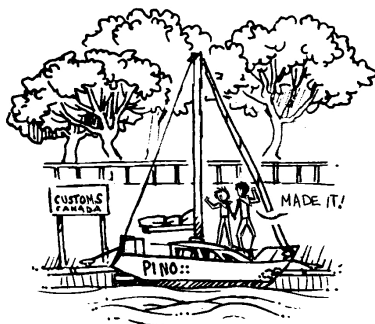
1300 We see something moving in the water a good distance away—a sailboat? No. There is too much wake, and the rig is too strange. A motorboat? No. Too high. Also, it looks like it's pulling something? A tug boat? Nope, it's a submarine. I've never seen one cruising in the water before. It broadcasts no position on AIS, we can see its front sticking out of the water, making it seem like there's a little building moving on the surface. The wake further back is from another bit of the submarine, peeking out of the water near the stern. We couldn't believe it. A submarine? We wondered where it came from, if it was American or Canadian, and wondered where it was going?

Meanwhile, a jet traces line in the sky, a whale-watching boat zooms around us, making our AIS go crazy, there are little fishing boats bobbing around near the Swiftsure Bank too. It is so busy here, and alive. It feels good to be somewhere lively again, so, so good.

1400 The wind came back and we can sail. We're doing a good 5 kn, cruising alongside the shipping channel. We finally made it out, away from the threat of these behemoths. It looks like we'll arrive in Victoria Harbour tomorrow morning, with yet another night spent on the water. It's fine, but it looks like we'll spend it in obscurity because there is fog coming. Glad it stayed away for most of the day, granting us an amazing view of the coast. I make dessert pancakes, using up the rest of our maple syrup.

1900 Devine makes spaghetti aglio e olio for dinner, we drink matcha (Japanese powdered green tea) afterwards and watch *The Royal Tenenbaums*. We take turns looking outside, keeping watch. The fog has only set on the south side of the Strait, on the American side. The wind is still good, we're running downwind.

July 29th



Daily progress: 146 km (79 nm)

Distance to Victoria: 0 km (0 nm)

0200 The wind has increased a lot, we ran at 6 kn under a reefed main all evening, but as we neared Sooke the current turned against us, in strength. To go forward, we had to use the iron wind. Calcifer helped us go forward, but it felt like pushing through jelly. We had trouble making it around the Race Rocks Lighthouse. Its light lay ahead, and we weren't getting past it. Devine was steering outside, and I was in the doorway, telling them to go south or north, zigzagging to work our way east as going straight on was not possible with this current. I was directing them because we had a very narrow corridor to work with, with Race Rocks to the north, and a busy shipping channel lane to the south. I had my eyes on both Navionics and AIS. As we lay south of the lighthouse, 5 cargo ships were moving in the lane south of us, back to back to back. What bad timing. If no one had been there, we could have used that space to tack out to avoid the worst of the current, which is stronger near the lighthouse. This wasn't an option tonight.

Because of the difficult conditions and our imminent arrival, we both skipped sleep, knowing we'd be in a harbor soon, and could rest then.

0500 We worked our way past Race Rocks and turned north to Victoria. The waves weren't any kinder here. We steered outside in the cold, again, dodging ships coming in and out of the harbour. Twice we heard terrible banging on the hull, then saw the source. Logs, many logs in the water. We had trouble seeing them because the water was very agitated, and the sound was loud because the waves threw them against us. Pino suffered no damage that we could see, but the sound was frightening. We came upon a third log, but managed to avoid it. Again, our arrival into port wasn't quiet, but boisterous, and we couldn't wait for it to end. "Where the fuck is the breakwater?!"

0600 We finally arrived at the entrance, tired and tired. Though the sun rising illuminated the mountains on the American side of the Strait, their bottom obscured by a long fog train, thick and going far east and west. It looked like a long marshmallow floating over the water. We worked our way past the breakwater and into calmer waters, following the yellow buoys into the entrance channel. I furled the jib and lowered the main, and began running around deck, looking for our fenders and dock lines, things I was not certain I could get out in time, I knew they were buried deep. Devine motored slowly to give me time to do everything. I never get a good first look at the new harbours we visit because I am always running around deck, setting up lines, lowering sails, fastening items to other items, or talking to authorities on VHF.

We worked our way over to the customs dock, tied to it, without any drama, and we took our first steps on land... well, on a thing that wasn't our boat, a floating pier isn't technically land. It was a heavy concrete pier, and was very still compared to our boat. My steps felt heavy, like I had rocks in my boots, or as if the ground was pushing up against my feet. Devine stepped off then too. "Feels so weird" they said, stumbling, while pulling the stern line in. We tied Pino up, jelly-legged on the pier, smirking like idiots. "Made it!" We said, throwing our arms up. It was finally okay for us to say

this, nothing could take it away, no log in the water, no storm, no rabbit waves, no nothing.

We both took a few steps back to look at our Pino, the vessel that carried us so far, so safely. It looked a bit sad without a dodger. We noticed the front of the bow was covered in green slime, and the stern had a few goose-neck barnacles stuck to it. Pino has looked better, and will look better again soon.

0700 I called the Canadian Border Control from a phone on the dock, giving them details of our arrival and trip. “Where are you coming from today?” They asked. “Japan.” “Washington?” “No, no. Japan.” I say again. “Oh...OH! That’s a lot further!” I laughed. Two officers came to clear us in person afterwards. We were excited to talk to people—other people! We talked their ears off, asking questions, making jokes, being overly-excited and overly-eager to talk about well, anything. We showed them our mouldy passports, they laughed. They told us there weren’t too many coronavirus cases on the island, but that we had to self-isolate for 14 days before setting foot on land. I expected that, but wondered why it was necessary since we’d already spent 50 days away from everyone and everything. They told us it was a blanket rule, gave us masks, and off they went.

The hard part now was finding a place to quarantine from, they told us most marinas don’t want to do it to protect their customers. Understandable. We called the Victoria Harbour Authority to get their advice, we didn’t want to go directly at anchor since we had little water and almost no food left. One of the workers made a few calls and found us a secluded spot on a private finger, near the Johnson Street Bridge. She explained to me where it was on the radio, but by then I was tired, and not entirely familiar with the area. I understood nothing. I asked her to repeat, and as she was saying it— “Break break! Hey I can take you there!” Tim, on a harbour patrol boat called in, we could see him cruising around the

harbour. He pulled up to the dock, grinning, and told us to follow him. What a friendly, friendly guy. We waited for a float plane to land, and then followed him to what would be our home for the next 14 days, a spot between a tugboat, and an empty finger for float planes.

We couldn't go on land, but at least others had access to us. From here, it would be possible to get food, water, to wash our clothes etc. At this point, we didn't know how we'd be getting groceries, most of our friends were in North Saanich, and we weren't sure if we could get a good WiFi signal to contact them. A gate separates us from the real world, we can see people, we can hear them too, but cannot take part in land life, not yet. It's nice to be here though, to know that we are finally safe, that we can cook without having to hold onto anything, that overnight sailing is a thing of the past, that we can sleep at the same time, in the same bed... that the storms are out there and not here. What a feeling. Flocks of geese are flying over our heads, there are float planes and water taxis zooming back and forth, carrying passengers from one shore to the other. We see people in cafes, chatting and eating, teenagers sitting in the park, laughing. At night, the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia building is lit up, the harbor is bright, and even late at night we hear people talking. It's strange. All of it. Strange, but good. We are glad for the noise.

We look at each other, sitting on deck and admiring the view. "Hey—" I say to Devine, "I'm proud of you!" Devine smirks, "I'm proud of **you!**" We look at the Delta hotel across the water. "La bière froide et les frites ça sera pas pour tout de suite, hein?" (I guess the french fries and cold beer will have to wait huh?) Devine nods. "Ouin, le bain aussi." (Yep, the bath too.) We went to sleep that night, dirty, tired, but happy. We're here. Holy *crap*... we're *here!*

Quarantine dock



We'll end this story by thanking our land crew, Morgan, Douglas and Devine's dad Yves.

We'd also like to thank those who helped us during our 14-day quarantine period. Jason, for doing our laundry and for the take-out food. Brian, for the extra baking supplies. Cameron, for happy junk foods. Robert, for the fresh produce. Judie & Colin, for the company. Marie, for the pocket WiFi, brew and fresh produce. Karin & Rick, for the ice cream and fresh produce. Colin N., for the mouse. Warren for the fresh produce and beer.

Thank you to our friends on land and sea, who have followed our travels for many years, and that have offered both moral and monetary support.

We emerged from our 14-day quarantine on **August 11th 2020**. When allowed back on land, walking amongst people felt strangely alien. We smirked as we walked, like we had a secret, no one knew we had spent 65 days at sea, or that we'd skipped across the North Pacific in a small plastic boat.

The rabbits arrived on land, with plans to catch every sunset. It's not because we've seen sunsets a hundred times that they stop being extraordinary.

Closing words



If you ask us why we decided to go sailing, we don't think we could give you a straight answer. Even the authors of our sailing manuals cannot explain what might compel anyone to do it, even after being made aware of the many perils of an ocean. Why would anyone do something with a very real risk of not making it back to shore, and furthermore, for no obvious reward?

It seems unjustifiable, or at least masochistic, that a person would wilfully put themselves through potential misadventures for fame and curiosity alone, mountain climbers might echo these feelings although we don't know any with whom we can verify this. And

so, perhaps we do these things in the name of freedom, freedom to practice direct experience (with all that entails. Discomfort, pain, hunger and so on), here we shall name this calling to live deliberately, using Thoreau's words.

Living by proxies

Smart devices to take away the pain of thinking deep thoughts, social things against the solitude, forever removing ourselves, in exchange for protectedness, for a complete thoughtless socialized inexistence.

A creeping numbness might be to blame for our own search of this direct experience, in the form of long distance sailing, to let ourselves feel cold so we could sense the subtler changes in the weather, to go hungry to appreciate simpler foods.

Similarly, one might begin to talk instead of watching talk-shows and to play instead of watching game shows — To value the entire spectrum of sensations as necessary members of the whole that is the deliberate existence, with its potential for failure, awkwardness, loneliness, harm and death included.

To feel secure

Convenience products will protect those living at odds with nature. Novel and fashionable horrors will be popularized to subvert anyone into docility, else new fears will be provided as obedience demands.

In the name of security, a modern citizen will be thoroughly handled. A modern civilisation will deem itself total as it finally does away with all inconveniences, vanquished the totality of the Unknowable, the Indifferent, the Unorganizeable, of Nature, by means of paving over it.

We have seen the non-participation to the throughput mechanisms of society labelled as escapism, but we look at it in reverse where one escapes by being apart from nature. An illusory sense of dominion

and domestication of nature might make one think of it as a place where one can escape to, and this is re-enforced when seen through the lens of a synthetic protective layer of proxies and simulations, but the protective layer doesn't curve outward upon nature, but inward upon the individual. And that is absolute escapism.

We believe that one can use nature's indifference as a reminder of the actual fortitude of their being, to learn of one's own true capacity for resilience when communing with nature—ideas altogether at odds with modern stories, or an invitation to be part of something.

“Modern man requires more and more comfort both at home and in the car. Sailors, too, want more comfort in their cruisers, but comfort cannot be combined with simplicity. And when life is no longer simple, it loses both beauty and joy.” — Sven Yrvind

Thank you for reading. Find us online at **100r.co**. Our personal pages are **kokorobot.ca**(Rekka) and **xxiivv.com**(Devine).

Pino's pantry

At sea, cooking is an activity that divides our days, and that has the greatest effect on our energy level and happiness. We take turns cooking in the galley, Devine prepares lunch and I, dinner. When the weather's bad, or that one of us lacks inspiration, one may choose to prepare both meals in a day, but overall, it's a task we prefer to share.

Below is a list of the more cryptic items we had aboard Pino on the passage from Japan to Canada, followed by recipes that were mentioned earlier in the book.

Textured vegetable protein (TVP)

TVP is a soy product, made from defatted soy flour that's been cooked under pressure, and then dried. It is a shelf stable product that comes in a variety of shapes, ranging from tiny pellets to larger nuggets. Aboard Pino, we prefer the smaller grind, as it doesn't use up as much volume in a jar. We use it instead of mincemeat in spaghetti sauces, shepherd's pie or tacos. TVP soaks up flavor, and adds bulk to dishes.

Nori

Nori is an edible species of red algae. It has a strong flavor, and is often used in dried sheets to wrap sushi. Dried sheets of seaweed are made by a shredding and rack-drying process that resembled papermaking. Nori sheets should be kept in an air-tight container because they can easily absorb water from the air. We like to use it as a garnish on many dishes

Kouya-doufu

Kouya-doufu is freeze-dried tofu. The variety sold in stores is made with soy, coagulants, and baking soda. It resembles a hard sponge, and needs to be re-hydrated for 5 minutes, and then firmly pressed before use. It can be ground into tofu meal and flour. This type of tofu kept us fed on this trip, we bought many boxes and had many left over in the end. Tetra-pak tofu was hard to come by in Japan, and this was a welcomed replacement.

Japan has a long history of freezing foods that contain a large amount of water, then thawing and drying them to remove all moisture to produce a lightweight, dehydrated food with a long shelf life. This practice is said to have originated on Mt. Koya:

“According to undocumented legend, it was developed by a Shingon priest named Mokujiki Shonin, who succeeded Kakkai-sonja. He obtained large amounts of soybeans from the head Shingon temple and encouraged each of the mountain temples to make their own tofu, miso, and shoyu. In order to preserve some of the frozen tofu until the spring equinox, he developed a system for drying it as follows. Firm tofu was frozen outdoors in the snow on cold windy nights, allowed to stand on shelves in a shed for 5-15 days at temperatures below freezing, thawed in warm water and pressed lightly to expel the melted ice, then dried in the shed using heat from charcoal braziers.”
(W. Shurtleff et.al A. Aoyagi, 2004)

Kombu dashi

Dashi is a soup stock and essential condiment in Japanese cuisine. Dashi contains one or two ingredients, and is often made from kombu (dried kelp), katsuoboshi (dried bonito flakes), shiitake (mushrooms), iriko/niboshi (dried anchovies/sardines) or a combination of these. Dashi creates a sweet, savoury umami flavor.

Dashi is used as a broth base for Japanese hot pot dishes, simmered dishes, noodle soups, it's also used as a seasoning liquid (for rice). Konbu dashi is the easiest stock to make, it has a subtle taste and is often mixed with shiitake mushroom dashi.

We carry kombu dashi granules aboard Pino, as a way to quickly flavor dishes. The alternative is to buy strips of dried kombu strips and to soak them in hot water. The seaweed flavor leeches into the liquid, which we use to flavor foods. On a boat, using whole konbu isn't ideal. Using granules is the next best thing. In grocery stores, they are usually sold in small individually-wrapped packages. I bought a larger 500 g bag of granules, which solved the packaging issue.

Miso

Miso is a traditional Japanese seasoning produced by fermenting soybeans with both salt and koji (fungus *aspergillus oryzae*) and sometimes with rice, barley and seaweed. Miso is salty, but it's flavor and aroma depends on the ingredients used or the fermentation process. There is a wide variety of Japanese miso, it is typically classified by grain type (barley, buckwheat, rice etc), color (white, brown, black & red), taste (sweet, salty, earthy, fruity etc) and background (where it's from). The most common miso flavor categories are: Shiromiso (white), Akamiso (red) and Awasemiso (mixed). Generally speaking, the darker the color, the longer it's been fermented and the stronger it will taste. Miso is a rich source of protein.

The type we use in recipes, is a white, rice-based miso, that is sweet and earthy. White miso is excellent in soybean hummus. We also carry a darker variety, a black miso that is very intense, but very good. The darker kind is used for dipping sauces and soups.

We prepare miso soup often on passages, especially when hungry during night-shifts. Just 1 tbsp in some hot water, with some dried wakame, makes for a comforting, and satisfying snack. Miso will

lose its flavor if cooked for too long, so it is best to add it toward the end of the cooking process.

Nutritional yeast

Nutritional yeast is a deactivated yeast, sold as yellow flakes or powder. It has a cheesy, nutty taste and flavor, and some fortified varieties are a good source of B12. Its often confused with brewer's yeast, but the two are distinct. Nutritional yeast adds a lot of depth and flavor to a variety of dishes, and acts as a dry, shelf-stable replacement for cheese. Nutritional yeast wasn't easy to come by in Japan, but we left New Zealand with plenty in stock.

Store the nutritional yeast flakes in a dark, dry environment, as B12 is sensitive to both moisture and light.

Chickpea flour

Chickpea flour—also known as besan, channa dal or gram flour—is made from ground raw, or roasted chickpeas. Roasted varieties has more flavor, while the raw variety is bitter. Chickpea flour has a higher protein content than other flours. This type of flour has a long shelf life due to the low-moisture, and low-fat content. Chickpea flour has a texture and taste that is ideal for savoury pancakes and omelettes. When mixed with an equal volume of water, it makes a convincing egg replacement.

Chickpea flour and besan flour are both made from chickpeas, but chickpea flour is more coarse and requires more water than besan. This should be taken into account when cooking.

Mirin

Mirin is a condiment in Japanese cuisine. It's a type of rice wine, but with a lower alcohol and higher sugar content than sake. The sugars form naturally during the fermentation process, and are not added. There are 3 types: Hon mirin (true mirin), which contains about

14% alcohol, second is Shio mirin which has less alcohol (lower than 1.5%) and third is Shin mirin, which has less than 1% alcohol while retaining the same flavor. Mirin adds sweetness to dishes, it helps tenderize, and add luster to foods while masking unwanted flavors.

Kirimochi

Kirimochi are rice cakes made from mochigome (short-grain japonica glutinous rice), machines pound the rice into a paste, molds it into shape, before drying and cutting it. Some varieties have added ingredients, like kuromame (Japanese black beans).

Japanese people eat the fresh variety for the New Year and during special events, while the dried, hard version is available year round. There are many ways to cook kirimochi, our favourite way is to pan-fry it on the stovetop until puffy and crunchy on the outside. It's delicious when added into soups, or if cooked in the oven. In Japan, kirimochi is served both sweet, with anko (sweet red bean paste) or kinako (roasted soybean paste), and savoury, with soy sauce or other condiments.

Kinako

Kinako is roasted soybean flour, it has a deep, nutty flavor. The Japanese use it to make or coat desserts. Some varieties keep the roasted skin which alters the colour of the final product. We like to add it to baked goods, it makes a good peanut alternative.

Japanese curry (kare)

The British brought curry to Japan from India during the Meiji era (1868–1912). The Japanese adopted and adapted the dish to their own taste, they like it so much that it's become a national dish. Japanese curry is milder than Indian curry. They make the sauce by frying together curry powder, flour, and oil, along with other ingredients, to make roux, then, they add the roux to stewed

vegetables, and simmer the mixture until thickened. The basic 'kare' vegetables are onions, carrots, and potatoes. The curry is delicious when served atop of rice, but it's also great over a bed soba.

In Japan, instant curry is popular, sold in the form of powder and blocks. We like to carry many boxes of blocked curry, for times when making roux from scratch is not feasible.

Konyakku

Konyakku is the food made from the corm of the Konjac plant, the meat is processed into a jelly-like substance. It is typically mottled grey, brown-ish, and springy in consistency. It has a vague salty flavor, with a slightly fishy taste and smell (from the seaweed powder added to it). In Japan, it is valued more for its texture than flavor.

I've come to value the texture of food because of my time living in Japan, anything chewy, or slimy, whether it be nattou (fermented soybeans), okra or yamaimo (Japanese mountain yam).

Recipes



Plain onigiri

This recipe makes 6 plain onigiri. Plain rice balls go down easy on sailing trips!

Ingredients	
Japanese short grain rice	190 g
Water	350 mL
Salt	to taste
Nori	2 sheets

Wash the starch from 190 g (1 cup) of Japanese short grain rice (white), rinsing with fresh water until it runs clear. Let soak for 30 minutes, then drain the water. Transfer rice to pot, along with 350 ml (1 1/2 cups) of water. Bring water to a boil, at medium heat. When water is boiling, reduce heat to a simmer, cover, and let cook for 10 minutes (or until all water is absorbed). Resist the urge to peek into the pot before the 10-minute mark.

Remove pot from heat, and let steam with the lid for 10 minutes. With a spatula, or rice paddle, fluff the rice. Let the rice cool enough that you can touch it with your hands, but don't wait until it's cooled completely.

For the wrapper, cut the nori sheets in thirds. Wet your hands so the rice doesn't stick to your skin, I like to keep a bowl nearby to dip my hands in. Put some salt (dip 2 wet fingers in salt) on your hands and spread them around your palms. Pick up a handful of warm rice in one hand. If you want to use filling, make a small well in the centre of the rice, and put 1-2 tsp of the mixture in the centre. Then, mold rice with your hands around the filling to cover it up completely. If you're not using filling, skip this step.

Shape into a rough triangle, or ball, with your hands. Press rice firmly, so the rice ball doesn't fall apart. Place rice ball in centre of

1/3 of a sheet of nori, and fold corners over it.

Yaki Onigiri: Instead of wrapping the rice ball in nori, alternatively, you can leave it as is, and season the outside with sesame seeds or furikake (Japanese spice mixes). Another option, is to grill the plain rice balls in a lightly-oiled pan until browned and crispy, and to brush the outside with soy sauce.

Onigiri with filling. Add pickled plums (remove the pits), seasoned kombu or steamed edamame (young soybeans).

Sweet and sour lentils

Ingredients	
Soy Sauce	30 ml
Japanese rice vinegar	30 ml
Peanut butter	15 g
Maple syrup	30 ml
Roasted sesame oil	5 ml
Arrowroot starch	15 g
Chili pepper flakes	10 g
Garlic	3 cloves
Ginger root	15 g
Brown lentils	100 g
Vegetable broth	350 ml
Carrots	1 cut into small cubes
Daikon	4 cm, cut into small cubes
Chives	3 stalks, chopped thinly

Mix first 7 ingredients together in a bowl. Stir until well-incorporated. Add 3 minced garlic cloves, and roughly the same volume of minced ginger root.

Rinse 100 g (1/2 cup) of brown lentils. Transfer rinsed lentils to a pot, and add 350 ml of vegetable bouillon (or plain water). Bring to a rapid simmer, then reduce heat to medium, and simmer uncovered. After 10 minutes, add the chopped carrot and daikon to the pot. Let mixture simmer for an additional 10-20 minutes, add extra water as needed. If lentils are tender, they are ready. Strain lentils and return them to the pot. Pour sauce onto lentils, mix well.

Serve into two bowls with some chives. Eat wrapped in salad or cabbage leaves, or with crackers.

Soybean hummus

Hummus	
Soybeans	300 g (150 g, dry)
Tahini	15 ml
Lemon	1/2, juiced
White miso	15 g
Olive oil	15 ml
Garlic	4 cloves
Black pepper	to taste

Soak 150 g of dry soybeans (yields 300 g cooked beans) overnight, or for a minimum of 8 h. Then, cook in a pressure cooker for 15 minutes. Strain beans, rinse and transfer to a bowl. Alternately use one 300 g can of soybeans.

Puree the cooked soybeans with 45 ml (3 tbsp) of tahini, the juice of 1/2 a lemon (or some other acidic ingredient), 15 ml (1 tbsp) of white miso and 30 ml (2-3 tbsp) of water. I used a potato masher, but any blending tool will do.

Bring a pan to medium heat, add 15 ml (1 tbsp) of olive oil, then add 4 cloves of chopped garlic. Pan-fry for 2-3 minutes, then add 2 chopped jalapeno peppers and continue to pan-fry for an additional 5 minutes, or until well-cooked. Add mixture overtop of soybean hummus, and season with black pepper.

Nutritional yeast kishimen

Pasta is available in Japan, but it isn't cheap. It is better to seek local alternatives. For the trip, we bought pasta, but also plenty of kishimen. Kishimen are wheat-based, cut into flat strips, that don't become soggy when cooked for a long time. We consider them to be the Japanese equivalent of linguini.

Sauce	
Kishimen	2 portions
Water or Soy milk	250 ml
Dijon mustard	5 ml
Smoked paprika	3 g
White miso	5 g
Lemon juice	5 ml
Arrowroot starch	7 g
Olive oil	15 ml
Yellow onion	1, chopped
Garlic	3 cloves, minced
Nutritional yeast	15 g

Cook kishimen (wheat noodles) according to package instructions, drain and reserve for later.

In a bowl, add 250 ml (1 cup) water (or unsweetened soy milk), 5 ml (1 tsp) dijon mustard, 3 g (1/2 tsp) smoked paprika, 5 g (1 tsp) white miso, 5 ml (1 tsp) lemon juice, and 7 g (1 tbsp) arrowroot starch (cornstarch is also fine). Mix well, reserve sauce for later.

Bring heat to medium. Add 15 ml (1 tbsp) olive oil to pan. When hot, add 1 chopped yellow onion. Cook until browned. Then, add 3 minced garlic cloves, and cook for 3 minutes.

Lower heat, add sauce and mix well. When thick, take off heat and mix in 15 g (1/4 cup) nutritional yeast. Serve over kishimen.

Peanut butter rice noodles

Sauce	
Peanut butter	60 g
Soy sauce	20 ml
Sugar	10 g
Cornstarch	10 g
Garlic powder	1 tsp
Ginger root	5 g, grated
Curry powder	5 g
Water	60 ml
Rice noodles (flat type)	200 g
Koya-doufu (dry tofu)	1 block
Daikon	2 cm, cubed
Sweet potato	1 small, or 1/2 large, cubed
Garlic	1 clove
Chili flakes	5 g

Mix 60 g (1/4 cup) peanut butter, 20 ml (1 1/2 tbsp) soy sauce, 10 g (2 tsp) sugar, 10 g (2 tsp) cornstarch, 5 g (1 tsp) garlic powder, 5 g grated ginger root and 5 g (1 tsp) curry powder. Then, add 60 ml (1/4 cup) water, and mix until well incorporated.

Cook rice noodles according to package instructions. Drain, set aside. Soak dry tofu in water. When soft, drain and squeeze water out. Cut into cubes.

In a pan, heat some oil at high heat. When hot, add 1 clove of minced garlic, and 5 g (1 tsp) chili flakes. Cook for 30 seconds. Add the 2 cm of cubed daikon, and 1 small cubed sweet potato. Cook until the sweet potato is soft.

Add dry tofu and cooked noodles, then add the sauce otop. Cook for 1-2 minutes until sauce starts to thicken. Divide into two bowls.

Deconstructed shepherd's pie

Shepherd's pie is a Québec recipe, which typically consists of a baked dish with 3 layers: Mincemeat at the bottom, a mixture of corn niblets and creamed corn in the middle, and mashed potatoes overtop. When underway, we prefer to prepare the ingredients together in a pan on the stovetop. The result is satisfying, and takes a lot less time and fuel to prepare. We prefer to use sweet potatoes, as they cook faster than white potatoes. In a floating kitchen, cooking time matters.

Sauce	
Olive oil	15 ml
Yellow onion	1 medium, diced
Sweet potatoes	2 medium, skinned and cubed
TVP	40 g
Soy sauce	15 ml
Vegetable broth	60 ml
Smoked paprika	3 g
Corn niblets	1 small can

Bring a pan to medium heat, add 15 ml (1 tbsp) olive oil. When hot, add 1 diced yellow onion, and cook until browned. Add the cubed sweet potato, and sauté until tender. Add the TVP (textured vegetable protein), as well as 15 ml (1 tbsp) of soy sauce, 60 ml (1/4 cup) of vegetable bouillon (or 1 tsp dried vegetable broth in 1/4 cup of water), and 3 g (1/2 tsp) smoked paprika. Cook together for 3-5 minutes, then remove from heat.

Cover the bottom of the bowls with corn niblets, and add the potato and TVP mixture overtop. Season with salt and black pepper.

Optionally, sprinkle with nutritional yeast, and serve with Sambal Oelek (hot sauce).

Kirimochi with vegetables

Ingredients

Roasted sesame oil	15 ml
Kirimochi	6 blocks
Black pepper	to taste
Carrots	2, julienned
Cabbage	1/4 head
Kimchi	320 g

Heat a pan at medium heat, when hot, add 15 ml (1 tbsp) of roasted sesame oil. Then, lay the 6 kiri mochi blocks in the pan without overlapping them (cook in groups of 3 if using small pan). Using a pepper grinder (or mortar and pestle), grind some whole black peppercorns to season the 6 blocks of kiri mochi. Turn them over when the bottom sides are puffed and brown, wait till the blocks are slightly browned, and puffed. To know if they're ready, try and poke a fork through the middle, it should be easy to pierce — although it will stick to your fork!

Remove skins, and julienne carrots (or cut into thin, long sticks). Finely shred 1/4 head of green cabbage. Place vegetables at the bottom of two bowls. Cut each kiri mochi block into 4 smaller pieces, and divide into bowls. Top with kimchi.

Chili garlic spaghetti with nori

Ingredients

Spaghetti	2 portions
Olive oil	30 ml
Garlic	5 cloves, minced
Red chili pepper flakes	5 g
Salt & black pepper	to taste
Nori seaweed sheet	1, cut into thin short strips

Cook pasta according to package instructions. Drain, and reserve.

Heat pan at medium heat, add 30 ml (2 tbsp) of olive oil. When oil is hot, add 5 minced garlic cloves, and cook for 2 minutes. Add 5 g (1 tsp) red chili pepper flakes, and cook for an additional minute. Take off heat, add pasta and mix well. Season with salt and black pepper and transfer to bowls. Using scissors, cut thin strips of nori on top of pasta.

Corn pone

Ingredients

Cornmeal (medium grind)	150 g
Olive oil	15 ml
Salt	1.25 g
Boiling water	250 ml

Place 150 g (1 cup) cornmeal, 15 ml (1 tbsp) olive oil, and 1.25 g (1/4 tsp) salt in a bowl. Pour 250 ml (1 cup) of boiling water over the cornmeal mix, stir well. The cornmeal mix should be wet, and easy to form into shapes.

Cover bottom of a 20 cm (7") cast-iron skillet with some olive oil, bring up to medium heat. When the oil is hot, press the cornmeal mix into the pan, and fry until bottom is browned. Put a plate over the top of the pan, keep your hand on the plate and flip the pan so that the corn cake ends up cooked side up on the plate. Then, slide the corn cake back into the pan (cooked side up).

Brown bottom for an additional 4 to 6 minutes, or until well-cooked. Cut corn cake into two, and slide into two bowls. Serve with some stir-fried vegetables, or kimchi.

Optional: instead of making one big corn cake, you can divide it into 4, or 8 smaller cakes.

Soumen with a red lentil sauce

As we had a limited supply of pasta, we used many alternatives, like kishimen (mentioned earlier) and soumen. Soumen are fine white noodles, wheat-based, similar to vermicelli.

Ingredients	
Soumen	2 portions
Olive oil	15 ml
Yellow onion	1 medium
Cumin seeds	2 g
Turmeric powder	1.25 g
Carrots	1 medium
Potatoes	2, medium
Green cabbage	1/4 head, medium
Red lentils	100 g
Vegetable bouillon	350 ml
Salt	to taste
Black pepper	to taste

Because they are thin, soumen noodles take less than 3-4 minutes to cook in boiling water. Stir the noodles while cooking to prevent sticking. When soft, strain the noodles and give them a quick rinse to help remove the excess starch.

Heat a pot at medium heat, then coat bottom with 15 ml (1 tbsp) of olive oil. Add 1 medium diced yellow onion, and sauté it until browned. Add 2 g (1/2 tsp) whole cumin seeds, and 1.25 g (1/4 tsp) of turmeric powder, and cook for 2-3 minutes.

Add 1 medium diced carrot, 2 medium (chopped into small cubes) potatoes and 1/4 head (chopped) medium green cabbage. Mix well, lower heat, cover, and cook for 5-7 minutes. Add water if vegetables are sticking to the bottom.

Mix in 100 g (1/2 cup) of red lentils, and 350 ml (1 1/2 cups) of vegetable bouillon (or plain water). Mix well, and bring to a boil. Lower heat to a simmer, cover, and cook for 10 minutes. When ready, season with salt and black pepper. Serve over soumen.

Soba

Soba are brown noodles made with buckwheat flour, often served at room temperature, and served with a dipping sauce. Soba is also served hot with broth. It is usually sold dry in supermarkets, divided into portions.

Ingredients	
Soba noodles (dry)	2 portions
Daikon	1 cm, grated
Black sesame seeds	to taste
Konbu dashi granules	3 g
Water	120 ml
Soy sauce	30 ml
Mirin	15 ml

Bring water to boil in a pot. Add the soba noodles to the pot, submerge noodles, and lower to a simmer. Cook according to package instructions, which is usually anywhere between 5 and 8 minutes. Check for doneness. When done, drain and transfer back to the pot. Cover noodles in cold water, and run your fingers through the noodles gently, agitating them to remove the excess starch. It's possible to skip this step, but the noodles will be gummy. Drain noodles, and divide into two bowls.

Grate 1 cm of daikon radish, and serve otopotop of noodles, along with some toasted, black sesame seeds.

Combine 3 g (1 tsp) kombu dashi granules with 120 ml (1/2 cup) of water, 30 ml (2 tbs) soy sauce, and 15 ml (1 tbs) of mirin. Serve as a dipping sauce, or pour over noodles.

Pasta salad with mustard dressing

In this recipe I used whole-grain mustard, also known as ‘grainy’ mustard due to the presence of whole mustard seeds. It’s a good idea to prepare jars while still in port, and then you’ll have plenty of mustard for the passage. We picked up seeds while in Fiji, and have been preparing our own mustard ever since. See following recipe for instructions.

Ingredients

Penne	2 portions
Olive oil	15 ml
Apple cider vinegar	15 ml
Whole-grain mustard	15 ml
Nutritional yeast	4 g
Salt	to taste
Black pepper	to taste
Yellow onion	1, medium
Green pepper	1, diced

Cook pasta according to recipe instructions. Drain, reserve.

In a small bowl, mix 15 ml (1 tbsp) of olive oil, 15 ml (1 tbsp) of apple cider vinegar, 15 ml (1 tbsp) of old-style mustard, 4 g (1 tbsp) nutritional yeast, and a dash of salt and black pepper. Mix well.

Heat a pan at medium heat, cook 1 diced yellow onion until browned. Add 1 diced green pepper and cook for an additional 3 minutes. Turn heat off, add cooked pasta as well as the mustard dressing, mix well, and divide into two bowls.

French mustard

Ingredients	
Black mustard seeds	60 g
Apple cider vinegar	45 ml
Water	20 ml

Soak 60 g (60ml) of black mustard seeds in a mixture of 45 ml (3 tbsp) of apple cider vinegar and 20 ml of water. Let soak for a few days, or until seeds have expanded 3 times their size (from 3 to 7 days). If the seeds have soaked up all of the liquids, add more water.

Drain the seeds from the liquid. Reserve liquid for later.

If you've got a blender or food processor, purée the seeds until smooth. Otherwise, add a small quantity of seeds in your mortar and grind them down with your pestle. Repeat until the seeds are crushed and puréed—the mixture doesn't need to be perfectly smooth. Add the reserved liquid from before, bit by bit, until you get a nice smooth consistency. Store into a glass jar at room temperature, and enjoy.

Note: For traditional yellow mustard, add turmeric (for colour) and a sweetener, and switch the apple cider vinegar to white wine vinegar.

Kimchi-fried rice

Ingredients

Short grain white rice	2 portions
Olive oil	15 ml
Yellow onion	1 medium
Garlic	3 cloves
Kimchi	320 g
Tofu	175 g (1/2 of 350 g pack)
Soy sauce	15 ml
Sesame oil	5 ml
Nori sheet	1 sheet, cut into short thin strips
Black sesame seeds	To taste

Cook short grain white according to package instructions. Washing the rice to remove to excess starch will make the rice less sticky, but I tend to skip that step while at sea, as it uses up too much water.

In a large cast-iron skillet, add 15 ml (1 tbsp) olive oil over medium heat, and add 1 diced yellow onion. Cook for 2 minutes, then add 3 cloves of minced garlic, cooking for 1 minute before adding 320 g (1 cup) of kimchi (as well as some of the juice). Cook mixture for 3 minutes. Add tofu, and cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Add the cooked rice to the skillet, breaking up the clumps while stirring, and cook for 5 minutes. Add 15 ml (1 tbsp) of soy sauce and 5 ml (1 tsp) of roasted sesame oil. Divide into two bowls, and garnish with strips of nori seaweed and some black sesame seeds.

Japanese curry

This recipe uses ready-made, store-bought curry bricks, which are concentrated cubes of spices with a thickening agent which creates a thick, spicy sauce when simmered with water. These bricks are inexpensive, and easy to use on long, ocean passages. Instead of Kouya-doufu (dry tofu), you can use TVP or 175 g (1/2 of 350 g pack) or jouon tofu (tetra-pak tofu).

Ingredients	
Short grain white rice	1/2 cup, dry
Kouya-doufu	1 block, cut into cubes
Sesame oil	15 ml
Yellow onion	1 medium, diced
Carrot	1, cut into small cubes
Potato	1 medium, cut into small cubes
Water	250 ml
Curry bricks	2

Cook short grain white rice (sushi rice) according to package instructions.

Re-hydrate dry tofu in a bowl of water, chop into cubes. Reserve for later.

Heat 15 ml (1 tbsp) of sesame oil in a pan over medium-high heat. Add 1 chopped yellow onion, 1 chopped carrot, 1 peeled/diced potato and the dried tofu. Sauté, stirring occasionally, for about 5 minutes. Add 250 ml (1 cup) of water, and simmer for about 10 minutes. Add 2 curry bricks, and simmer gently until the curry bricks have come apart, and that the liquid has thickened — about 10 minutes. Serve over hot rice.

Stove-top chocolate cake

Ingredients	
All-purpose flour	180 g
Cocoa powder	35 g
Baking soda	5 g
Salt	1.25 g
Granulated cane sugar	100 g
Canola oil	120 ml
Coffee	250 ml
Vanilla extract	10 ml
Apple cider vinegar	30 ml

In a bowl, mix 180 g (1 1/2 cups) of all-purpose flour, 35 g (1/3 cup) of cocoa powder, 5 g (1/2 tsp) baking soda and 1.25 g (1/4 tsp) salt.

In a separate bowl, mix 100 g (1/2 cup) of granulated cane sugar, 120 ml (1/2 cup) of canola oil, 250 ml (1 cup) of coffee (instant or brewed), 10 ml (2 tsp) vanilla extract and 30 ml (2 tbsps) of apple cider vinegar.

Mix wet ingredients into dry, until well incorporated.

Oil the inside of a 20 cm (7") cast-iron skillet, and bring to medium heat. When hot, pour cake batter into the skillet and spread it out with a spatula. Cover the skillet, set the heat to low. Bake on top of stove for 20-30 minutes or until the cake is firm to the touch. Turn off the burner once the cake is done.

Pancake

Ingredients

Unsweetened soy milk	240 ml
Apple cider vinegar	1 tsp
Spelt flour	120 g
Vanilla extract	5 ml
Baking soda	1.25 g
Baking powder	2.5 g
Vegetable oil	5 ml
Maple syrup	to taste

Mix unsweetened soy milk with apple cider vinegar to create ‘buttermilk’, let stand for 5 minutes. Add vanilla extract, mix well.

Mix dry ingredients together, then add soy ‘buttermilk’. In a cast-iron skillet, heat 5 ml (1 tsp) of vegetable oil at medium heat. When pan is hot, add 60 ml (1/4 cup) of batter into pan. Help spread into wider circle using the back of the spoon. Cook until bubbles form on the top, then flip, and cook for another 2 minutes. Repeat for rest of pancake mix, and serve with maple syrup.

For a savoury version, omit the vanilla extract, and add spices into the pancake mix.

Mapo tofu

In Japan, there are two tetra-pak varieties, o ryouri-muki tofu (firm tofu for cooking), which has a yellow packaging, and kinugoshi toufu (silken tofu) that comes in blue packaging.

Instead of 175 g (1/2 of 350 g pack) of tetra-pak tofu, you can use 2 blocks of Kouya-doufu (dry tofu).

Ingredients

Rice	2 portions
Vegetable stock	60 ml
Miso	15 g
Chili pepper flakes	5 g
Mirin	15 ml
Soy sauce	15 ml
Cornstarch	15 g
Vegetable oil	15 ml
Garlic	3 cloves, minced
Ginger root	1 cm, minced
TVP	25 g
Soft tofu	175 g, cut into cubes
Sichuan peppercorns	ground, to taste

In a bowl, mix 60 ml (1/4 cup) of vegetable broth (or kombu dashi), 15 g (1 tbsp) of miso, 5 g (1 tbsp) red chili pepper flakes, 15 ml (1 tbsp) mirin, 15 ml (1 tbsp) soy sauce and 15 g (1 tbsp) cornstarch. Mix well, and reserve for later.

Heat a pan at medium heat, add 15 ml (1 tbsp) of vegetable oil. When hot, add 3 minced garlic cloves and 1cm minced ginger root, cook until fragrant. Add 25 g (1/4 cup) of TVP, mix well, and sauté for 2 minutes. Add the sauce to the pan. When sauce is boiling, add 175 g of (1/2 of 350 g pack) cubed tofu, and cook until heated through.

Serve atop of rice, and season with ground sichuan pepper. I normally serve it with green onions, or chives, but it is a fresh ingredient I tend to lack at sea.

Stove-top pitas

Ingredients	
Whole wheat flour	225 g
Salt	2.5 g
Olive oil	60 ml
Water	180 ml

In a bowl, measure 225 g (2 cups) of whole wheat flour, mix into a bowl with 2.5 g (1/2 tsp) of salt, 45 ml (3 tbsp) of olive oil and 180 ml (3/4 cup) of water.

Knead until smooth and not sticky, add extra flour if too wet, and extra water if too dry. Cover dough, and it rest for 30 minutes. If you do this, the dough will be easier to work with. You can skip the resting period, it'll just be a tiny bit harder to roll. Cut the dough into 8 even pieces. Roll out into thin circles.

Heat a cast-iron pan at medium heat, and add 15 ml (1 tbsp) of olive oil. When oil is hot, add one flatbread. Bubbles will form on the surface. Cook on each side for a minute or so. The edges will puff up and darken, giving a good indication that it's ready to flip. When flatbread is thoroughly cooked, transfer to plate and cover with a damp towel (to keep moist). Cook the rest of the flatbreads.

Timeline

Dates	Events	Distance (nm)	Days
02-04-16	First sail	16	1
27-05-16	Port Angeles, US	20	1
02-07-16	1st offshore trip	142	2
11-08-16	San Francisco, US	700	6
09-10-16	Los Angeles, US	350	4
17-10-16	San Diego, US	160	2
01-11-16	Ensenada, MX	80	1
05-16-17	La Paz, MX	910	10
02-03-17	Nuku Hiva, PF	2700	28
25-04-17	Rangiroa, PF	580	6
02-05-17	Papeete, PF	210	2.5
05-06-17	Huahine, FP	90	1
01-07-17	Rarotonga, COK	534	6
22-07-17	Alofi, NU	580	6
03-08-17	Vava'u, TO	234	2.5
21-10-17	Whangarei, NZ	1199	10
15-12-17	Pakatoa, NZ	40	1
25-05-17	Opua, NZ	110	1.5
11-06-18	Savusavu, FJ	1210	15
04-09-18	Suva, FJ	120	1.5
25-09-18	Musket cove, FJ	110	1.5
03-10-18	Vuda Point, FJ	20	1
15-11-18	Majuro, MH	1724	24
22-01-19	Chichijima, JP	2100	21
08-03-19	Shizuoka, JP	550	4
17-04-19	Minamiise, JP	126	1.5

Dates	Events	Distance (nm)	Days
29-05-20	Shimoda, JP	128	1.5
28-07-20	Victoria, CA	4111	51

Appendix A Recommended readings

- Irvind, Sven. With four square meters of sail and one oar. 2017
- Hill, Annie. Voyaging on a small income. 1993
- Neumeyer, Kenneth. Sailing the Farm. 1981
- Moitessier, Bernard. The Long Way. 1973.
- Evans, Andrew. Thoughts, Tips and Techniques for Singlehanded Sailing.
- Berry, Wendell. What Are People For? 1990.
- Leopold, Aldo. A Sand County Almanac. 1949.
- Simon, Alvah. North To The Night. 1998
- Odell, Jenny. How to do Nothing: Resisting the Attention Economy. 2019
- SY Robusta, personal blog: <https://sy-robusta.ch/>

Appendix B

History of Tofu - Page 7". www.soyinfocenter.com. Retrieved 2020-04-23.

Edition

The first digital version of this book was released in October 2020. The first paperback version was released on December 15th 2021. This latest revised edition was published on December 14th 2022. We will continue to release revised editions if we should find more errors in the text.

Because we are a small two-person team errors are possible. We self-publish and are not professional editors.

