

full of bugs, but not so bad.
Was a very uncomfortable, bloated
feeling - like my stomach
was puffed up and tight as
a drum.

Wed. 10 Sept.

Mon. night was our 2nd
Anniversary. Had a lovely,
quiet evening, with a
wonderful meal of chef's salad,
white wine minestrone, and
peach cobbler! Scrumptious!

Ate by candlelight and
played cards. Decided to
try for a tie - quit when
we both had 480 points! Things
with us are much better,
and I'm feeling much more
content with the idea of
growing old together!

Mon. morn. was a
gathering to celebrate the
distnt. Day of alphabetisation.
All the regional political
notables gathered in Tandjari
for three hours of speech-
making & political animation.

Speaking of politics, our friend
Atoukou is being transferred to a
desk job in Lomé. Though largely

the result of his wife's not
insubstantial insistence, these "transfers"
are an all-too-common aspect
of life as a civil servant here.
Disregarding a worker's family
stability and emotional well-being,
these transfers often seem
arbitrary, impersonal, and can
be very disruptive. In this sense
I suppose they resemble the
corporate transfers which were not
so long ago - you move, despite
the disruption of family &
friends, or you lose your job.

Mr. T, our illustrious and
infamous boss, has also
decided to reshuffle his
personnel empire. People are
being moved hither & thither,
almost just for the heck of
it. I asked what happens if
one refuses such a transfer.
The answer: decommissioned.
Sound like the army?

It is... The Togolese
gov't. is run along military
lines. Interesting when we

of the "industrialized" world dwell so on separation of church & state - when in many countries, the real issue is separation of military & state. Anyway, a civil servant here is treated much like a military recruit. His political loyalties are closely monitored, nuances of word & action often used against them. A "wrong move" can cost you your career - though firings are rare, demotions - permanent usually - are common. People never criticize openly, but it's easy to read the body language. Mr. A, for example has suffered undeserved littings - about for a few years now and this latest blow has hit hard. His strained smiles & shrugs of reluctant acceptance are unconvincing.

Yesterday was a long and busy day - mostly talk, talk, talk, until my brain fizzled - from

French to Moba to English & back again. Suddenly, and a bit to our surprise, we find

ourselves busy as can be.

The longer we're here, the more people we meet, the more liaisons, commitments, and obligations, many unspoken, develop, until I dread going into town, for fear of all the people I may run into.

With each of them I need to instantly recall, who they are, what language they speak, is there anything I need to talk with them about, and I need to try to second guess what they might want from me, so I can be prepared.

There's that age-old struggle to prioritize commitments, and to learn to say no - I simply don't have time. I find myself avoiding meeting new people, for fear of the commitments that may develop.

This next year my goals are 2-fold: to train as many stores agents as possible, and to do tchakvalo stores

with the UNFT in each quarter
of Dapaong. The main problem
I can foresee is that I'll
be meeting so many people
I'll go nuts trying to
remember who's who. I
expect I'll also get adept at
saying "sorry I don't have
time". I hope my French
improves.

I think a lot about
this time here in Togo,
as something I could &
should write about. Certainly
many people have written
entire, lengthy books about
~~less~~ personal experiences of
less "general interest". But 2
things are missing from my
journal: good people descriptions,
and descriptions of happenings-
anecdotes.

Sunday Sept. 14

Driving to Dapaong & back a
lot lately. Images of the
landscape, its changing moods,
with sun & shadow. Thoughts
of how I'll miss it, and

wondering where else is like it.
Part of me could live in this
landscape of choice. But I'd
miss the other landscapes:
ocean, forest, mountain.
Which reminds that Washington
is an awfully nice place to
live, by reason of its variety
of scapes, among other nice
things.

Driving to Dapaong in cloudy
moonlight after a light,
freshening rain - wearing
3 layers of coats! Moon-
shadows on bushes, suggestive
of elephants, only recently
departed for a while, otherwise
a moonlight encounter could
be quite possible!

Driving home along the cliffs
of Bombonaka, marvelling at
their changing character depending
on time of day, sun angle,
cloud shadow. The flatness
of color, like solid crayon,
without the shading caused
by shadow. The flat pearl
gray of the sky as back-
drop, as sun block. The
distinctness of lines w/o shadows.

the first rainbow - here they call it Chameleon, and say the water droplets that cause the rainbow are the chameleon giving its child a bath.

The frog music of late, as the fields flood, and puddles enjoy their brief legitimacy as full-fledged ponds, and even lakes.

The frogs here don't croak, they chime - a crisp, clear single note, a monotone of varied rhythms, sounds like a wood block of some very fine, exotic wood.

20 Sept. Sat. Dapaong to Ouaga

12 hrs. in the taxi to go about 360 kms. - a grand total of 30 km/hr! This is due to the number of stops en route - 26 of them in our case. There's the borders to cross, each of which require customs, police, & gendarme checks. All told we had our baggage checked 4 times, and piled in and out of the crowded ⁵⁰⁴ about 23 of the 26 stops. In route we were harangued by beggars - many more than one sees on Logo routes. The children were also a hassle, crowding round us and begging for cadeaux.

No ploy to get rid of them or shut them up works, so I guess it's best to learn to ignore them. And I'm finally learning that being mean never works, always backfires.

Burkina - land of a very ^{LEFT} right-wing military revolution. Everyone is "comrade", the military presence is very strong. The national symbol - a crossed hoe & machine gun.

Kompela - the T-junction where one

turns left to go to Ouaga and right to Niamey, Niger. It's been very muggy lately - hasn't rained in

Dapaong for a week, and the gathering weight of pregnant, overdue clouds is pressing down, making the air seem heavy, saturated.

By mid-day we were sweating in the crowded taxi, and the stops often meant sitting or waiting in the full sun. It's directly overhead now, and very intense. But as the day wore on the stops grew less frequent, and by late afternoon we were tooling along in a fresh breeze. The landscape never really changed, and looked just like the Timbou to Cinkassé area all the way: a monotony of ephemeral green, not quite hiding the naked red earth underneath.

The quarry reigns supreme for just a few short months. At one point the landscape did cough up a few concessions to sightseeing - some low, flat chunks of mesa, and patches of enormous boulders, strewn into impenetrable piles.

The people's faces began to change, to thin out & elongate,

to be reminiscent of northern Africa, Arabia, caravans of nomads. Began to see many Fulani women. They drape themselves in intimidating piles of jewelry. The hair is pulled ~~to~~ together into 3 or 4 "buns", leaving the head looking knobly and misshapen. Over this they drape strings of silvery "coins", and often a veil, reflecting Islamic influence. Heavy silver earrings distort the ears, and orange string is used to further misshape them, pulling the top of the ear down in a fold. Layers and layers of "amber" necklaces encircle the throat and hang down the chest, and the arms are often coated in silvery bangles.

Once in Ouaga, the taxi dropped us off at a centre, and right by a very likely-looking café. We were eager for a real meal and to just relax. Had great Chacarma sandwiches. A street boy took us to a Frenchman's place to look for a room. His rooms are 1,000 a night and incl. breakfast. ~~4000~~ He's an old guy who's been here years and works with deprived and handicapped youngsters. Proceeds from the rooms.

go towards this. But his house was disgusting - filthy dirty, smelly, piled high with junk, dust, animals scampering everywhere. Pierre himself was a sad old man, sickly and melancholy. We were very relieved to leave. Stayed at the Amitié for 4500 for 3 of us. Nothing special, but OK. Slept till 11:30!

Sun. Sept. 21 Ouaga

Spent most of the day walking.

☒ Ouaga is a small town, and quite walkable. It's Sunday and all is very quiet, and brown & dusty. Ouaga feels closer to the desert, like it's already received a first coating of sand, portent of the encroaching Sahara?

Noticed lots & lots of motor scooters, esp. in comparison to cars or bicycles. Ouaga feels more like Dapaong than any other city I've been in, but parts of it are much nicer.

One section of town boasts wide paved streetlit avenues, and a series of ~~large~~ ^{large} modern, architecturally creative buildings. It seems the main market.

has been moved down and moved several kilometers out of town.

Onaga has a city bus system - little orange half-busses, that look like big busses put through a press. Noticed very few taxis. Lots & lots of donkey carts - metal wheelbarrow-like carts, like large grain scoops. Football is also quite popular here. Noticed many women with elaborately tressed hair - braided strands of brunette and chestnut spilling all over the place. An attempt to imitate western hair. Women here long for long, flowing locks.

Found the American club in the afternoon, and inhaled tacos, carrot cake, popcorn, etc. Watched "Plenty" a supremely depressing Meryl Streep movie in the bar. Nice club - not as fancy or large as Accra's, but much more hospitable!

Staying tonight at the Hotel Kilimanjaro - quite nice & clean, but a bit chere, esp. the food.

Mon. 22 Sept. Ouaga

After an expensive and unappealing breakfast at the hotel, walked to the P.C. office nearby. PC has been asked to leave Burkina; so there are no new volunteers coming in. 15 are cosing now which will leave only 31 in country. The mood is a bit subdued. Met the

Director, a round-faced talkative young ex-Togo PCV. Walked to the Faso Louis office to make bus reservations for Bobo. Very organized & friendly - I was impressed.

Heading for a pastry shop, we were sidlined by a young French guy Dave had met in Togo. He invited us into his restaurant for a drink and a chat. Very nice. Then walked to Hotel Aubi to meet a friend of Dave's. Had fabulous brochettes for lunch, with tomato & onion.

Then tried the Lido Bar for a drink. Was feeling over-sunned and a bit queasy. Then hit the Jardin Village for another of their wondrous Chawarma.

Spent the afternoon flaking in the PC lounge, rereading a great book: The Magus by John Fowles.

Tried 2' Eau Vive for dinner. Turned out to be a pretty fancy place, and expensive, tho' very tasty. It was a long walk back to the Hotel, and the 5:30 alarm to catch the bus came early!

Tues. 23 Sept. To Bobo

Up early to catch the bus. It's very organized. They call your name, in order of tickets purchased (we were the last 3!) and on you climb. We pulled out at 7 sharp. One of the employees comes along as a sort of hostess even.

~~Logo~~ Ouaga impressions - lots of trees, and young ones for sale. Many mud concessions, esp. compared to Lomé, where most are cement.

Mass hair pain. Coffee mess w/ real butter. Saw no omelet men.

Many mosques, zebu cattle with big humps (not resistant, so do best in dry areas, not in Logo).

Today it's overcast and pleasantly cool. Landscape still looks just like

Dapaong. Stopped after 87 km in Sabon to see a crocodile at the Campement. Seems there are quite a few (perhaps 100)