M o u n t a i n s
by Jeffrey Lazarow

Note: I met Jeffrey in 2015 while hiking in the Columbia Gorge. It was a stop on his *World Hike-About*, and we've been friends ever since. In a blog post he descriptively penned about our fascination with mountains. With his permission to post this, enjoy.



We can understand that people might question our fascination with mountains. Pictures of mountains, stories -on mountains, -of mountains, -for mountains and volcanoes. **What's with these mountains?** No doubt, we spend much time on them and think even longer about these giants. **What is the attraction of these inanimate objects?** The short answer is we don't know.

The longer and better answer might be that we are consumed by them. **They form, in some way, an integral part of our lives.** We love to hike and climb up them, at times to run down and less often, run up. We love to view them at all hours of the day, to observe sights from them, to watch the changing seasons influence them, to witness the effect of the weather on them and in the case of many, their influence over the weather. We watch their moods, some are smoldering beauties, others only attractive with their make-up of snow covering. Each one, shaped and sculptured in a unique way, no two are ever alike.

They block the sun, deflect it, reflect and shine in it; they cast shadows on the earth's surface and over clouds; they reflect off lakes and other bodies of water. They are constantly in a stationary dance with the clouds, the mist and fog. Some erupt, most are dormant yet even the latter have an enormous impact on the world without ever changing their positions. Perhaps another feature of their beauty is their consistency—come rain or shine, war or peace, harvest or famine, they are an ever-constant presence throughout the ages. **We observe, admire and seek to conquer them in our fleeting lifetimes; they do not know of lifetimes, only eternity**.

We've never encountered a mountain we did not like or one we felt we could not ascend. Perhaps that's where the saying arose with us in mind: 'Often wrong but always optimistic". Truth be told, no mountain is ever easy to hike, climb or scale. The seemingly smooth grassy faces, the gentle rock slopes, the attractive snow and ice coverings are mere illusions. In fact, they are traps for the unwary and those with foolish expectations. Mountains are dangerous, difficult and deceptive. They offer the sojourner no respect. It is a one-way street. The trespasser owes the mountain care, caution and most times, awe.

So when we put a picture of a mountain on the blog, we see more than just the image. After all, it's a whole lot more than just a pile of rocks, boulders and plant life.

These few words hardly touch on our inner feelings but they are a start.