

Please note – if I use italics and you are only interested in facts about Fes or the Music Festival, skip the italicized parts. (This probably applies to footnotes too)

The World Religious Music Festival in Fes Morocco was in it's 23rd year and held in May of 2017. What follows is my day book reporting and thoughts getting there and being there and some getting back.

9 May 17 Day 1

This was easier than expected. The TSA lines moved well, my seat is on the aisle and though told that the aisle would be to my right it is to my left i.e. room for my arm to write (left handed).

Had a conversation with a man going to a whaling conference in Slovenia. Struck it up because he had a Martin case on his back but it was so small I asked if it was a tenor uke or parlor guitar. He pulled it out and said it was called a 'travel guitar' small half sized. Then he said 'it's plastic'. Then explained it was laminated but loud (he strummed it said 'ooo it's out of tune') his wife bought it for him. Works out of Alaska. Talked about increasing numbers of bowhead whales, melting ice, polar bear crossbreeding with grizzlies so that with climate change their gene pool is saved for the if it changes back or... This drifted into evolutionary biology. He was hesitant to go into detail about his work. As a conservationist he works with Native peoples hunting and fishing which with science/data can be sustainable.

Me, the longhaired older (he younger but also grey haired) I could tell that he didn't (nor did I) want to get into a debate about whaling or hunting. But it was a pleasant way to wait to board the plane.

I put in my musician filters but they aren't strong enough – the roar through the air is so loud. I am seated just behind the wing which means the engines are loudest where I am. A long flight, being on the aisle, near the toilet, emergency exit, I can stand as I will need to...my fountain pen just splurged due to the change in air pressure an excuse/need to stand and rinse/wipe hands and pen ~ happily got none on my clothes.

The travails of air travel. It's a plane bigger many times bigger than my house. Packed together with the realms of humanity and we are all hoping that peace goodwill is the prevailing "mood" - the baby is going to cry. It's what babies do when they are uncomfortable and we all know – flying is, faster but, nearly the most uncomfortable means of travel (submarine worse? Probably) that many of us indulge in. I stand to stand in line for the toilet, it is a gentile taking of turns somehow clear to each person waiting.

In the airport waiting, many had their phones, Chromebooks, & laptops out but it was generally the few American voices who were loudly talking to someone on them. The announcements constant and for other, not mine, flights. The TV screens on loud enough to hear ads and more ads coupled with concrete and face to face conversations. If one is not stressed about travel, in particular air travel, before arriving at the airport – the entire experience once inside is disconcerting and at best trying.

My dietary needs did not get communicated, it is not a big deal (yes it turned out to be)

and the hostess tried to make up for it which was kind and told me how to proceed (to get it fixed on my return flights) but I'm not sure how to get what I need or how to do what she has told me, but I know something. The wine was liquid red and maybe alcoholic but didn't go with the fruit- no matter, really, other than it's only 4:30pm my normal naptime, I'm not tired everything is fine some of it interesting. Not being adapted to screen life it's visually arresting to look around and see all the seat back screens flickering with different images and it seems that the same movie is shown on different seats in different scenes....I didn't know tech had progressed to make that possible. It wasn't years ago (the last time I remember flying).

It remains true that judging an actor by how they act without the sound on, exposes their skills and it would appear to not be flattering.

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The world travels down there below if we wish we can follow the coast lines the snow glimpses of land & water, we are nearly a mile above it all. Telling clouds from snow and ice ~ it's all water. We as sacks of water bound by skin in this foil tube compacted in rows of 2 4 2 up and down. There's nowhere to go but down. Down eventually we want to go, just not yet, Augustinian.

~ ~ ~

Paris, CDG the gate we go to is a 2 story open promenade, a moving conveyor belt then none. Starbucks coffee (airplane's was not to my taste) and looking at the food available ~ tres impossible, butter & cheeze on everything, my stomach growls as though it needs to eat itself.

The windows are also floor to ceiling making shaded seating a premium.

The mix of très chic, Eastern Orthodox, and Orthodox Jews is a bit of breath-taking. There are video game stations scattered and ATMs with English/French options, so easy to use.

She sits across from me a small smile dressed 'well' young not a child not mature, make up well done, sits in the sun, waits, looks at me when I look up. Fantasy of invitation where there is none. This is the kind of masculine non-sense that I wish I had no part in. Then I notice she moves a foot, movement as though a danger, the beast in the jungle I will not move. Her hands show me that she is older than I thought. This is not someone I would ever know. This is no dream it is not close to real either. The voices inside outside numerous languages some fluid some more guttural.

She turns her head and a waddling older man looks up from his passing, looks away from her waddles to his wife sitting near.

There are beeps with no meaning not constant this is not Chicago. This is Paris but not Paris the airport is not Paris this is barely France. The international Gates surround, are we/am I internationals? Somehow I doubt it.

Even here even in this France but not France I draw looks. I assume it is my hair though perhaps I don't or can't know.

It is the unknowing that makes life what it is.

I do not will never know her.

This is not romantic.

What is most remarkable is that in 30 minutes she has not pulled out, to look at, a device. I/we are surrounded by people talking and looking at devices. She does not.

Holding a boarding pass and a passport of a color I do not recognize, she picks up her oversized leather purse, stands and walks out of sight.

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Caught a bus to Sea-Tac at 09:24 plane took off 13:08, arrived Paris 40 minutes early so that's 40 minutes more to sit here waiting, the space is open and walk-friendly, my body wants sleep and that isn't happening any time soon. By the time I get to Fes I will be thoughtless.

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I read my traveling book as far as I could and discovered that it was depressing instead of odd. Read 60 pages, read the last 10 (spoiler he hangs himself), left it on the plane in the pouch.

Seatmate was a musician of electronic sort and in IT somehow. Played a video game¹, ate² and slept; ok that was interesting. *However one is supposed to use a semi-colon.* At some point during the 10 hour flight he raises the window shade revealing a full moon. Oddly I saw this full moon for the next 3 days in Morocco. Perhaps we can blame the bad book, the lack of food on the moon.

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Plane to Rabat the capital of Morocco. The airline staff made a big deal about measuring carrying on luggage but after subjecting everyone to this and taking some suitcases and putting them in the hold...after I am seated (in a seat that is not on the aisle) a tour group of Chinese with big suitcases fill the plane and all the overhead bins which can barely hold them (they're big)...only one of the people in this group can speak English and none can speak Arabic or French, this 4 hour flight was uncomfortable again there was nothing I could eat.

Coming into Rabat. Blackened areas look like burned off crops but we are too high up, large areas of land look like they might be solar panel arrays (which I had read Morocco was investing in). We are so high cars can't be seen nothing moves. As we get lower to the ground the black becomes forest or dark leaved orchard and the solar panels are green houses. Cars move. The coast looks straight as far as I can see from the airplane window. There is surf and looks ok for surfing, probably not but this far away those waves have to be big.

I later read that surfing is something that is done in Morocco.

Rabat looks old/new. The train engine is flat fronted beat up paint job the cars a bit better.

At the airport a bus that I read was a cheap way to get to the train station, never arrived, I

¹ Stardew Valley was the game and it was sort of a farming game not a shooter, more like old style pacman or Mario stuff.

² They found some fruit and offered it was not much.

tried to bargain with gypsy taxis to the train station. They insisted that they could take me all the way to Fes for 1000dirham (about \$100) but I don't have that cash on me only 50Euro and the ATM in the airport didn't work. We argued on the way. At a fork in the road, the last chance to convince me to use the taxi – no way (old beatup diesel Mercedes suspension shot upholstery broken torn covered with a musty blanket).

He charged me 30Euro way too much but then he broke my 20Euro bill a straight exchange for 200d so he got a tip no matter what.

A second classe ticket to Fes was 85d (\$8.50) so I felt ahead³.

The reality is that it's \$25-30 (or it was) from Sea-Tac to Downtown and Rabat's Airport (first glance very much the same as John Wayne airport in Orange County) is way outside the city center. So it probably was too much to pay but equivalent, maybe I'll do better on the way back. (*no that's what it costs from city to airport*)

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arrived at Rabat an hour early.

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2nd class on the train is a push in the crowd to get into any car (cattle car-like) and a rush to grab a seat if possible. The train was an hour late- no announcement just was – The heat and humidity outside was interesting, inside the train it was just too much. Mainly because I had to stand for 2hours of the 3.5 hour trip.

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While standing outside at the airport it was windy, warm and there was a haze but the smell and feel of the atmosphere was familiar. Waiting for the bus that never came I kept on thinking I've been in this environment before...finally realized that another reason I thought of the Orange County Airport was that this felt like August in Newport Beach.

~ ~ ~

On the landing in the Rabat train station, I was struck by how young men would give up a shaded bench seat for older women- but no one else. There was a sense of respect (?) or at least some sort of kindness involved. (It was about 90F and high humidity shade was scarce and seats on the few benches non-existent. Given that they moved for no one else, and that once on the train the press of the crowd – only the feeble were so treated , it impressed me even more.

There were single women without head scarves though young – the percentage of young and old with or without scarves was 30% without.

There was a trio of young men standing by me, one of them barnacled himself to me. He had a broken command of English but it was adequate as he tried to explain himself (finished exams in law but there was some step that comes next before he gets a job)....China is pouring

³ There was more to this ticket buying – it's possible to buy a ticket at a window (as I did Fes back to Rabat. But here in Rabat there was a machine where you could get the ticket – like a vending machine. I had a man offer to help – he took my bill and got it changed then asked if I wanted to travel 1st or 2nd classe. I said that I wasn't a 1st classe kind of person and this should be an adventure. So I get a ticket and the train should be here in 15 minutes.

money into industry in Morocco and a cousin of his in Tangers has a company making cable cars – for Moroccan use, using the money the Chinese have invested.

At first how bad Trump is, then “we have our own idiots, something about the military (service?) - there were armed camo-ed men patrolling the Platform in Rabat and ...police in Uniforms I see at traffic circles, but the guards, 2 soldiers carry automatic rifles, the camouflage and a beret always accompanied by a senior officer (?guessing) in black, body armor and no rifle. (This was something I saw many times while here.)

He implied something that sounded like corruption. Gave me the standard lecture that Islam is not about killing, killing is anti-Islam, jihad is against Islam, pure Islam that Moroccans practise is for/about Peace.

Aren't all religions somehow based on an idea of Peace? If not world peace inner/personal peace?

Between politics & religion while standing in a slowly moving train, hot, filled with bodies, language difficulties, I felt woozy and afraid I was going to pass out.

The conversation was also too persistent. When he went to smoke someone tagged me about an empty seat, which I gratefully sank into keeping an eye on my bag.

This seat at a table of three men, one in western business costume, one in a Djellaba (a large man with a red beard), and one casually dressed in jeans and a Henley t-shirt. The djellaba and business men spoke Arabic together but when talking to the third man switched to French. They were going to a conference in Meknes and all three were in the process on completing Phd's in Zoology. Finally they asked me if I spoke French (un petite peu) the bearded man asked in English where I was from (I tried to keep my answer to USA but the discussion that there are 3 Americas went nowhere it just either didn't matter or wasn't understood- later on I gave in and just said America) then Seattle and he smiles and says 'oh Frazier was in Seattle'...

At Meknes they depart and the 1st man is done smoking, motions me to an empty set of seats where he presents me with a pair of little green pages that he wrote (*an approximation of what I remember*) “I want to have a strong American friend who will help me translate a story for a film”.

I'm spooked as I do not want him stuck to me or hopeful that I can help him. So I possibly poorly, corrected what he wrote and gave him my email. He wants to buy me coffee in Fes I say 'thank you no.’ Hoping this would ease me out of the connection as I do not have internet here and I tell him I don't use chat or facebook.

This reminds me of a time in Turkey with Semih and Gulat in a car- they ask me if I want to do something (I don't remember what), and I say “No”. Whether that was impolite or just a surprise I do not know but they both laughed and repeated my 'no'. However whatever it was we did not do it.

The lesson applied in Morocco was for me to be strongly clear about boundaries.

He continues to effuse about 'his American Friend’.

We arrive in Fes. I know he has a phone but say that I believe the Riad (Hotel) will have

someone waiting, otherwise I will need to find a phone.

There is no one waiting and there are no public telephones in the train station.

He and his two friends have not left the ground yet because one left/lost his wallet on the train (or somewhere). I ask him to call the Riad which now meant that he had the phone number of where I was staying – he says he will call me to visit me there and again I strongly tell him that he may not do that. He agreed but we'll see. His phone didn't actually work and was in pieces. As was his other friend, it took pieces from all three of their phones to get one that worked. I called the Riad and they are sending a car 'in about 10 minutes'. I bid the trio goodbye and wait for the car.

~ ~ ~

Impressions: Out side Rabat airport the wind constant, palm trees flapping the air moist but the wind cools even though you can tell it's hot.

In Fes the wind makes the heat tolerable (keep in mind this is my first day in Morocco⁴) I am wondering if this will be a constant during my stay.

I had been warned about pickpockets and thievery, my impression is that unless stupid thievery is not an issue but everything is a haggle⁵ and like the currency exchange everyone seems to be working an angle ~ which is understandable. "Americans" make so much in a year than they do (4800 a year average) that getting more out of me was impressing, I appreciated it as it was happening.

~ ~ ~

I was picked up in a very nice car in Fes sent by the Riad .

This driver offered extra services while I'm in Fes – Omar – we'll see. I needed sleep & water. He delivered me to the Riad and my 1st thought was how do you find a place like this – a narrow alleyway near the new 'bab' [gate] then I see there are one or two other Riads in the same alley.

The owner/manager (never was able to get this straightened out) was driving away as we arrived. He stopped and took over leading me to the entrance.

The travel has taken 32 hours to arrive here.

⁴ On the 17th May The Oaxacan Americans tell me that it's lately been between 90-100F and the wind has not been dependable. There will be more about this when I get to the 17th.

⁵ But not, it's more complicate see towards the end of my stay, it's kind of funny

Thursday 11 May 17

Woke slept woke slept. At one point the smell in the room was natural gas – unlikely – *[later I found the smell to be outside in this neighborhood so I believed it to be from a tree(?)⁶ as there are few other kinds of planted areas... Trees provide shade and shade is at a premium.]* Entering my room was a strong smell of rose(?) but first

The Riad.

The owner walks up a narrow alley past another Riad sign. I don't notice the sign to 'our' Riad but the door is dark brown studded and braced (*there will be more about doors later*). There is a bell/buzzer that seemed above the head height and from inside a man dressed in silver satin and white pointed slippers comes/opens the door he is Alaladi (this first hearing is not quite correct and when his friends or other staff call to him it is shortened to 'Adil'⁷).

We have difficulty because I am so tired so I rush to answer before I understand. He has me sit in a velvet cushioned chair near a central fountain with a live tree and free birds chirping in it. He asks me if I would like a drink I ask for a lot of water – a glass and 1.5 liters of water is brought and poured. It helps. He asks for my passport leaves returns it and then brings me a map of Fes. I am barely able to focus but have 2 senses. 1] things are closer than the seller of my Festival ticket implied and 2] it is a maze.

But I am desperate for sleep.

I am mistelling, the door opens to the Riad and it is a wonderland, mozaic colors so lovely, columns with the intricate stucco (much of it carved wood, marble or plaster. More on this later) that I came to love when I saw it so long ago in the Alhambra (Granada, Spain). There is a pool in the large courtyard blue tiled so the water is blue below and open to the blue sky above (the space has retractable coverings during the rains, and also are closed when the sun is too hot/bright and that will provide shade/coolness during the daylight hours). This Riad may have been 2 houses and they made it one. The pool courtyard covering is canvas, the other one is either glass or plastic.

I don't think the fountain was going last night, the birds were distracting... but now (0800?) it is and though 'noisy' to me is a kind and gentle sound.

In one corner there is a dark wooden 'thing', at first it resembles a Buddha (not likely) now closer is is metal or ceramic.

It is a head with a crown and a symbol above it (that looks a little like the arrow on the coffee carafe showing when the lid is open and can be poured). From across the room the face seems to be frowning but those are creases from nose to chin, the mouth is almost a smile (on my last day I look again and see a frown). At each side of the head are daggers.

On an X frame art stand is a stone plate that has fossils of what look to me like tube worms and some sea creature that resemble a flower- subtle.

{there is something important/symbolic about marble floor, then tile/mozaic, then stucco

⁶ Possibly citrus or eucalyptus both exist here

⁷ On June 1st he emailed me so now I know how he spells his name with Western Alphabet

(plaster) and cedar or wood above. I was never able to grasp completely what it all meant but all the washing places, used to clean yourself before entering a mosque to pray, have this set of layers. }

My actual Riad contact Fatimazahra, this morning asks me if I've had breakfast- "I don't know where to go".

A smaller open room off the pool. There is another couple (who last night I saw with goblets of an orange/apricot liquid off in another corner) are already eating.

I sit on a divan looking into the pool courtyard, a little bird⁸ comes to the step into the 'dining room' seeking crumbs. The round dining table is pushed to me and coffee (carafe) a pitcher of milk, cheese, butter, and 4 pane (breads) and 2 double trays- a berry jam, a marmalade looking jam, dark amber honey, oil cured olives (plumper and more fermented, winey and larger, than those we have access to in Seattle)

I practise eating choosing foods with my right hand, not easy as it is still not strong and the travel has left my body stressed, the surgery to that hand too recent so that I am still in recovery from that- I am dehydrated, virus has broken out and my myoclonus is heavily affecting my hands and eyes ~

The breads – a roll like any roll in the world...(I am a jerk this was not true it was herbed, it was freshly baked and everyday was slightly different and unlike any rolls that looked like them that I had ever had)...Then a bread dark brown that is a chocolate cake-like bread, a flat fried pancake spread thinly on a hot metal surface and then folded into a square. I ask Adil the name of it and he says 'pane' (bread), last a whole grain warm bread not very thick 2cm(?) a round the size of your palm with a fork punched in the middle, this is also warm/fresh baked.⁹

I do not have enough saliva to really swallow this so the jams help but a relief to eat to enjoy. The sweet is too much but I am happy to eat. The coffee is so much better than I expected, a bit strong but not Nescafe, not Turkish flavored, just coffee.

It is difficult to avoid comparing this trip to my other travels but some may help.

*Turkish breakfasts were nearly always eggs hard or soft-boiled, bread white or brown, Nescafe or tea, cucumbers tomatoes (fresh and sliced). Morning or even daily coffee not Turkish coffee was just not to my taste so it was easy to accept the tea **always**.*

There is background traditional music, it seemed loud last night (mid-day like the Fountain it is off. During the week it is often off) but now is quiet. Perhaps depends on where one sits.

⁸ Birds- I listened so much to the variety of bird songs/calls and tried to notate them wrote music using ideas from them. Above on the roof of the Rabat Airport I could hear a hooting unsure if it was the wind through some part of the building, I eventually see it is a pigeon or dove like bird.

In the tree fountain atrium in the Riad are at least 2 kinds of birds a sparrow and something unseen but bigger sounding. Outside in Fes I see mostly swallows.

However there is one morning sound that doesn't happen often or in a row a 1-5-4 or c-g-c triplet then two whole steps down quarter notes that sounded very bird like- I eventually connected it with one of the staff who cleaned the pool area every day.

⁹ Later I understood there are many different types of rolls some sugared some sesame some with fennel or anise and some with caraway. One day there were pan au chocolat and a croissant, another two diamond shaped crumbly tart like pieces that were coconut and ?...The owner tells me that bread is a big deal to Moroccans, 'every meal a lot of bread'. Every morning freshly baked.

The staff of women cleaning have head scarves (Fatimazahra did not) and a work dress over their 'street' clothes. The scarves were a sort of uniform like the silver satin suits of the men who were the 'hosts' and interacted with the guests (which generally except for Bon Jour or Sabaas al khair and lovely smiles the women did not). There were numerous damp towel swabbings of the marble tiled floor around the pool (unheated btw). The women have bright cheering voices, the men a lower and not as cheering but all seem helpful (language generally got in the way but if understood service was more than I deserved).

This amazing place is the one place I could see the reason to take photographs happily (since I am totally without devices even a watch or alarm clock and there are none to be found in the Riad- well an old clock on one wall stopped a century ago at 06:32, yes I am making a joke though at first I thought it really was running – that lead to being way off for much of the day). However their site was a good selection of what the place looks like.

[Www.riadelaminefes.com](http://www.riadelaminefes.com)

My room was Neftaha, on my computer the colors look very yellow tinted and that is not true to life but it will give you a pretty good look at what I considered more luxury than I had had in my life.

As I write I will write more and more about parts of the place as I am still so overwhelmed by the trip (have I said it took 32 hours to get here? Well it did.)

I expected a double bed – my room resembles a small monks chamber, a window faces into the courtyard and another into the alley. The single bed sheets are so tight I truggle to get them loose. The blanket is a sort of thick and sheet covered duvet. There is a large pillow soft perhaps down? (no) and 2 small square pillows very firm. The mattress¹⁰ so so firm I have no idea (and never get one- someone suggested straw- I don't know) what it is but it is nothing I know. Some give enough for my comfort but this is not an 'American' mattress. The voices, cars, and dogs sounding through the window continue all night long. I sleep wake sleep.

Morning call to prayer wakes me and I think “I love being in a Muslim country” smiling. I know many may disagree but to me waking before or at the call delights me.¹¹

I lay for some more time. Shower after removing 2 (one dead and one dying) cockroaches from the shower floor¹², and refreshed try to understand my day.

Afternoon is orientation with a guide. This AM I do not think I will do much as recuperation more important. I have enough to pay for the guide and will get more while out and about.

About noon(?) I decide to do an easy walk. Nearby is a main road and I will follow it to a square up one side back on the other. At any corner I turn around looking for landmarks, happily there are many including graffiti and unique buildings to help me orient myself.

The breakfast couple have what looks like a bigger map than the one provided by the Riad, perhaps I will find one later. (Nope then much later yep.)

¹⁰ The mattress is firm but day/morning 2 I see that it has the punctuation like on a usual mattress it is the stuffing that I don't know.

¹¹ By the 17th May I do not always rise and have begun to sleep in. Still rousing at the call but not truly waking.

¹² Never see bugs again after this morning.

My 1st adventure out; There is old and very old, all windows have ironwork and many (most) have screens behind it. Many doors are metal (looking) as though under siege at any moment. I wonder if that was true at one time. *I never get an answer, all doors have huge (no exaggeration) deadbolts inside the main door so when I ring the buzzer to be let in I can hear them sliding through the clamps- the deadbolts in the Riad are brass looking and look like a caulking mallet.* Older conservative doors are being replaced with wooden ones as they last longer (I don't understand how that can be but is what I was told). There is a knocker at head height (visitors and the postman) and a larger/louder one higher up- if no one answers the lower one.

There is no real 'typical' dress here. Men in djellabas but mostly in casual western dress. Most in sandals (wish I'd brought them instead of the slipper shoes I brought more on that later). Women not in long dress have leggings or pantaloons which are often bright in patterns paisley to nearly Hawaiian. Men may have skullcap, most not. Along many blocks people sit or stand begging for money.

In the square were 2 men in ornate red clothes extravagant hats with fur balls hanging from them, offering water in gold(?) plated small bowls. One had a bell he rang against his thigh the other did not. This water was not free – as the toilets are not free (like many in Europe)- but at times sort of free?

Donkeys and burros/mules, dogs mostly prone (not many) on sidewalks, one team of 4 donkeys carrying sheep skins. A man passes me carrying 4 freshly cut goat or camel(?) legs skin/fur still attached – must be goat as the legs were short.¹³

At the square many small alleys of shops and shops. Some ornate metal work dishes trays etc. On my way to the square were a series of woodcarving shops the carving of screens of things intricate as mentioned like the stucco.¹⁴

Then foodstuffs. On sidewalks mostly cilantro and beets, one person had onions. In the alleys sweets upon sweets and grains and nuts. No prices posted so I imagine it is all bargaining.

~ ~

Post guided tour } Re: sweets Ramadan is coming (after the festival is over, in fact usually the festival is in June but because Ramadan starts late May it was moved up to now. So people are fattening themselves up. Stocking up or at least there's a connection.

The guide has been to America (USA) many times. Spoke well and gave me more history than I could absorb. Also more politics and religion. This was or is a danger of knowing a little about many things. Having been to Andalusian Spain and now staying in the Andalusian section of the medina my questions provoked more detail than I may have gotten from a regular tour.

¹³ My guide later when I see this again though charred with no fur says 'cow' and the char is to remove the hair. I ask if for soup? I did not understand if he answered.

Yet another example of too much input and my poor brain cannot keep up.

¹⁴ The guide told me that the plaster/bricks like the wood carvings were all done after the plaster or bricks were made. There were alleyways that the bricks looked chipped very deliberately and I assumed it was a mold that they were created in – nope.

Example: In a Medrasa (school) we stopped and I was lectured on 1000 years of Morocco, from indigenous to Christian/Jewish to Islamic, the establishment of Fes in 849 for the University, and because I knew who Maimonides was and why he was important (wrote Guide for the Perplexed¹⁵) - but I was excited because I was shown (we walked past I don't think it is open to the public- could be wrong though) his house after his family left/got expelled from Spain. My guide said there was proof that it really was his home and not hearsay from well...I didn't understand about that.

Fes also had Ibn Khaldun, Averroes (Ibn Rušd), the oldest university in the world (begun by a woman) is here and the library has some of the only copies of works by medieval and older scholars in the world. It was supposed to be open to the public in 2017- I never found a way to enter and look around. Late I was told by Heather {see more the day I met her} that because she is a librarian/data specialist she did gain entrance a few years ago. However the restoration is supposed to be completed now and some photos of the place are available online.

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Distracted by the birds here in the courtyard, looking up I see small green fruit and am told it is an orange tree. I am using a fountain pen to write this and it will be interesting to see if I brought enough, though I have pencils and a sharpener (which made it through all the security checks though I had a pair of short scissors that I had to argue were small enough or they would have been confiscated- I gave them to an Oaxacan woman (more later) as I did not want the hassle on my return) for backup.

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My guide (who's name I have both forgotten and didn't really learn¹⁶) took me 1st to the main concert places and from there he led me on foot literally hither and yon. Down alleys shoulder width and avenues with cars. The Medina is closed to cars so animals and human tote the cargo shouting balak (close to that) which means 'watch out!'. There are numerous feral cats and very few dogs inside the Medina - but lots of very scraggly cats.

I saw [early morning] a cage with bees, and they seem more numerous than flies, like flies they crowd around the nougat and sweets. I saw one boy try to 'play' with one and even friendly ~ bees ~ he did this with a long stick...

The souks (shops in the alleys) have one shop after another in some way the effect on me is tiring into boredom. Perhaps it is everywhere in the world but too many shops begin to seem the same. They aren't but as we walked through/down/up the alleyways they mashed together for me.

~ ~

I get my pass for the festival and have marked or looked at the schedule. Most event begin at/after 16:30 (4:30pm) all time is in this format I will probably confuse you using either

¹⁵ Guide claimed it was written in Fes but wiki says he left Fes at 14 years old and wrote it later in life in Egypt.

¹⁶ The next day I am looking for a concert venue and he is guiding 2 American women down an alleyway towards me. We grin embrace I tell the women that they are in good hands. I ask him how to find the venue and he misunderstands thinking I have moved residences when I say no to that I still don't get the answer, but it was a happy moment.

as I write along. It gives you the same experience I had when trying to know when to go somewhere or what time it was – ever.

What this can mean is that I have a lot more time to wander, more if I wish or not and that if I want I can walk to the events beginning the day and taking a taxi (petite taxi) 'home' will cost from \$3 down to \$1 in the evening. (*according to the guide and my experience*)

My Riad is near Bab Jdid (which is one set of words I learned to speak as clearly as possible and did pretty well as the stay progressed- meaning I did get home at night).

There is a labyrinth/maze method where to get out you put your hand on the wall and follow it however long that may take and you will find the exit....I look at the map and decide that I can do this to find the first venues everyday...it worked very very well and took me to places off the tourist routes completely.

~ ~

Geepers, everyone wants to know about my religion. Just now I told this man¹⁷ that I wouldn't answer that question. (The guide talked so much about religion I was full and I didn't want to talk about it anymore.) He was surprised, maybe offended and he (and anyone else who has asked) wants to tell me how they have an open mind and respect all religions.

The guide said he was atheist until 7 years ago and that he had a 60 year old friend who had no religion but was slowly coming into some kind of belief. I suspect that this may end up being the main topic all the time with Fassi¹⁸ Moroccans, and just as I don't talk about faith in the USA I don't really want to talk about it here. Perhaps it is like the air they breathe. Then they want to know what air do I breathe? Ack.

Fatimazahra recommended a restaurant up the street so I went and I think ate at the right place¹⁹.... I have friends who are vegetarians and when I mentioned I was going to Morocco he grimaced and said that it was difficult to eat there when the restaurants were told vegetarian. I don't know how long ago their trip was but....

I ordered a 'salade' and a meat tagine. I thought two dishes would be a small meal - wrong, very very wrong. 6 plates of vegetable spreads and a basket of bread appeared. Zucchini, cauliflower, eggplant, pepper, sliced carrot (spicy), all except for the peppers and carrot cooked spiced and pureed. AND a tomato almond paste that was sweetened (this preserved with sugar vegetable was common when ordering salad- I discovered that I don't like sugar preserved vegetables. This makes sense as I don't have a particularly big sweet tooth.)

As a 'starter' this nearly finished me. If my friends meant fresh vegetables- maybe yes but this was *vegan*. [*later in the stay I found 2 restaurants that served creditable fresh vegetable salads- and many cafe/restaurants had menus that very specifically mentioned dishes that were*

17 This is Aladin (Adin) of whom more later

18 Fassi = people who live in Fes (not Fez that's a hat) we might say Fezian but we'd be wrong

19 Later I discover that the Riad is full service not just breakfast but if I want lunch and/or dinner I need to ask/tell them and what time I want those meals...in fact I had to tell them when I wanted breakfast too as generally I was too early. I had been in the habit of 2 meals a day at home...here partially due to the size of breakfast and the heat and the size of any meal this works here. The main issue for evening meals was that concerts began at 16:30 and ended between 23:00- and midnight so figuring out when I could find time to eat was a strategy that I never completely solved.

vegetarian (for the tourists? Don't know.)

Next came a kefta tagine – little tiny meatballs (size of a nickel) in a tomato sauce with an egg on top, bubbling hot not spicy but spiced. This and a bottle of sparkling water was 300dirham (\$30) including tip.

Until I feel better I am avoiding alcohol, so today I don't know what that would have added, perhaps later I will find out.²⁰

I return to the Riad and discover that Adil thinks it was too much and that's when I am told that I can get lunch and dinner here. So perhaps I will try that in the future.

He asked me when I wanted to eat breakfast, when I said 0800 he was surprised. Turns out Morocco time is like Spanish, breakfast is 0900-1000. So I said wake me at 8 unless I am up already. If I've come down already there is still no rush.

Tomorrow night the opening night of the festival the concert begins at 2100 (up late for me but I have no idea how I am adjusting to Moroccan time zones²¹). My festival pass says that I have to be at the gates 30 minutes in advance.

I have been told that the princess (King's daughter or wife?) *wife*, will be attending and that this is a big deal so many people will be there just for a glimpse of her.

The friend of Adil who was the last person I said I wouldn't talk about religion (Aladin =Aladdin- adin) said he was going to go with his 'real' girlfriend (as opposed to an internet European 'girlfriend' who he has never met face to face).

We tried to talk music but when he said he really liked Bollywood the conversation fell apart. Just as the one about how he was trained by Otis elevator Company and that my grandfather worked for them too. That my grandfather was also Australian was of no interest to this young man²²

~ ~ ~

20 Generally a glass of red wine was \$6-10. Most open to the outside cafes did not service alcohol but a number of places with indoor or rooftop terraces served alcohol beer, wine, and some even mixed drinks. The Riad served only wine and sometimes it was excellent and sometimes undrinkable.

21 I probably should emphasize that I had no devices, no cellphone/smartphone, tablet/laptop, alarm or wristwatch. I generally woke to birds as the sun rose or morning call to prayer. It's likely that due to the disruption of 32 hours on the road with little to eat and not much sleep my body clock just automatically adjusted to sunrise...at least I'll stick with that for now.

22 I will be writing more about Adin as this goes on. He was a bit hyper, 27 yrs old, very full of plans and dreams and acted more like a 17 year old who had just gotten his drivers license and smashed into a tree (of which more very much later). He was friends or related so the owner/manager of the Riad and was there many times when I returned later after concerts. I found him alternately annoying and fascinating, there were times when (because his English was more than adequate- *most of the time*) I could get questions answered from him more easily than other Moroccans and just as often we'd hit total confusion where I couldn't make myself understood and he garbled whatever he was trying to say so badly ... we'd just have to give up.

Day 2; Friday Day 1 of the Festival.

Long time getting to sleep (it's hot) morning Prayer woke me.

Last night thought of a response (as trying to drift off) what to say about asking about religion.

When someone asks they are making distinctions between us, it does not bring us together but makes us apart. By saying "I have open mind [1] perhaps it is not so open [2] you are saying I must have this open mind because you are different and it is likely we do not agree.

Yet we are human we share this space we should try to keep us safe it safe. Mostly we are human and no more distinctions need be made.

The guide pointed out women at the Mausoleum of Idriss – they patted the carpets, and kissed them, that covered the sides – hoping for a child or luck or a husband..?

Pointed out how an alley was mozaic like wainscoting because women who had bad marriages would come and smash eggs against the walls in hopes that the husband would go or ask for divorce. It used to be plaster but with mozaic is easier to clean. This means it is still going on. (In fact later I do come across a broken egg on the ground). My image of breaking eggs was more of *no babies* than no husband ~ perhaps that is the same?

He (the guide) disparaged them – called it black magic and commented that they were not 'advanced'.

His example of open mind was about the different ways men held their arms when they prayed – after showing me all the different ways that it was ok to pray he then declared that his way was the true/correct way. But he 'did not judge'.

So many distinctions and I think of mine the ones I am constantly making between you and I. Holding myself apart. I soften the meaning for myself telling that I am outside and that I am striving to understand how anyone else is/can be/can live. <are we all playing a role? Actors on the stage (W.S.) and when done then discover who we are who we've been? How we really lived?> What is the meaning their actions give or are, always how different we are.

So it is not that making distinctions that is the problem.

It is the distinctions made about faith.

We live. We live as best we can, making decisions as we go along for ourselves to comfort ourselves. It is only for ourselves that these decisions apply.

If you believe in a god/s and that comforts you, gives you a pathway that makes life bearable, so be it. It is not my way, I wish to be more flexible to think each moment anew. What I may know today is not what I will know tomorrow.

What is is. What will be I do not know. I trick myself into thinking about tomorrow but it will surprise me.

Seeking comfort outside my comfort zone. A way to be but not the only way.

So much symbology – colors of green and blue, mozaic then stucco then cedar from the mountains tall and for some reason it does not burn well or fast, not like our cedar. The oldest fountain to wash before prayer somehow has these with cedar at the top. The water is from a spring and was always flowing but now has a faucet.

Maimonides is also called RamBam, because Rebbe Moises Ben Mamonides RMBM was the origin of his alternate name.

~ ~ ~

We all create narrative – the Skagit Valley Judge who wrote the words to Acres of Clams to a version of Rosin the beau taken by Ivar Hagland for his restaurant(s) theme song- sung on a children's TV show in the 50's. But the song is a stretch to get to from the original melody. Each step is a leap of faith that it will/does work. But the narrative makes sense so it is as true as it needs to be.

The relativity of true stories is what is making life difficult in the USA, in the world. We claim to know facts and that facts are what we can base our way to live and that currently facts are in questions. Perhaps facts are not in question – it is the meaning of the facts. The interpretation, that Jesus of Palestine lived seems factually true. What is reported of his life is a story, what each part of the story means ~ this is where the conflict comes. Wrestling with this makes me crazy. To a great degree I don't care or it doesn't matter. This is mine and I would hope has nothing to do with you. However please leave me alone. This concern with belief/faith seems to me to be young people's talk.

What is is what comes is a surprise, and for me in the long run if I can be comfortable – I will find contentment. [Of course in this kind of heat being comfortable has a very different meaning than it did after the night rain of this day]

~ ~ ~

It took a long time to fall asleep last night. My mind is so full of details. I was surprised to find C & D coming to mind, how they are fading again from my life.

How the music of life outside the windows fits together, motors, voices, animals, wind, rain. I can't yet hear the rhythm of this place, today is not like yesterday in the morning and it seems like the birds woke later, the sky darker the swabbing the marble/time floors a different schedule.

~ ~ ~

On the train we passed an airport and there was a faded camouflaged helicopter, the wings sagged making it look sad and the end I could see looked like a face (turbos above an oval opening [exhaust?]) with mouth and two eyes as if about to 'transform into a Japanese toy.

~ ~ ~

A group of boys approach my guide with some bills asking how to change them. The

leader held 2 20pound notes. I wondered where they found or got them. The guide did not help, I think.

Later as I was walking to the restaurant, the lead boy comes to me asking if I remembered him I said 'no' automatically then remembered when he said he liked my guide thought of him like an uncle.

This was not an adventure I sought so I continued on my way. We had nothing to do with each other.

~ ~ ~

After break [there was a Spanish couple at another table²³] I see more tables set up so maybe today more people will be here.

I go adventuring. I looked at the map (inadequate but a general idea) and try (succeed) to get to the big garden Jnin Sbile where many of the concerts will be held. There does not seem to be a direct route and knowing the maze/labyrinth 'rule' – follow the wall in this case keep the wall to the Medina to my left ~ I *should* come to the garden. Sometimes there are signs but then either they stop or I got off route. No matter follow the wall.

~ ~ ~

I walk on the sidewalk or not (*there were few sidewalks on this route*) as I get close to the garden and it turns out the main stage (the opening ceremony tonight- is near and I walk by it)
1] National security does not know Fes so if I ask they cannot read my map any better than I can
2] there is a bicycle race on the streets *and* through the garden. The bicycles are road bikes not racing tires and I think I see the same rider twice so they must (maybe) go round the circuit at least 2 or more times, it's like Le Mans, sharp turns stairs cobblestones whistle from police warning pedestrians the way for foot traffic is not always clear and sometimes a sudden surprise – I'm in the way of the racers.

The garden is lovely and large, I will be happy to wander there more later in this week. I did find the stage and the seating area is not large – I wonder how many people attend? That will be interesting to discover.²⁴

In fact a glance at the “main stage” (Bab al Makina) did not look so big either but I think I must be mistaken. I think, leaving the garden that if I continue in one direction I will get to the center and be able to find a way to the Riad.

I end up in the vegetable souk and completely outside the Medina.

Passing a number of schools (medrasa) children are always shouting at me in (mostly) worse French than my own or just the words “excuse me” or a name of a country. For today (as yesterday) I do not want to engage the kids. A bit threatening but also after Turkey I know that

23 This was one thing I missed while in the Riad- in other places it was due to language and suspicion (I think). The tables were large enough for many (6) people yet we all ate separately divided by space that seemed inviolable.

24 The garden is a problem and refuge. Guards will or won't let me in early, I lie and say I'm with the staff, that works for 2 days then doesn't.....as for the number of attendees? My pass said #22 and the 'regulars' seemed to be under 200. Many people visiting Fes didn't know about the festival and once here bought single tickets (which it turned out was easy, tickets ample and saved money though the tickets generally were inexpensive).

it is mostly curiosity and not engagement they want to fulfill. I may not have what they want or need to offer.

I decide since I know I don't know where I am I take a road that goes up. At the top I also know that I have had enough and hail a taxi to Bab Jdid near the Riad. I have no idea how to get the cost to I hand him a 50d (\$5) and it is too much and it seems that he needs less but does not want to give me change. In the end I just get out. The look on his face tells me he thinks I am an idiot but ok ok. No help for it.

I get back and can not find the one gate near where (I can't find it on the map I have) I was that I could read so I don't know where I was.

However the maze theory did work to get to the garden but once there is no wall? I could not tell what was correct....the bicycle race was a problem too.

~ ~ ~

Returning to Riad my room is not made up I lay down for a while then watch at the courtyard window while people clean & empty (to refill) the fountain. (*water and rose petals*)

I finish 2nd liter of water and bring empties & glass to kitchen. Explore more of the Riad. It is larger than I knew, it is at least 3 floors tall in a 'new' section the ornate carving in plaster draws your eye up to the glassed in Roof. There is a way to the roof too, but the view is just, for me, more homes *and* you are exposed i.e. HOT.

~ ~ ~

The guide pointed out some alley windows with wood or metal round jutting out from the walls into the alley and explained that before now, women should not be seen at windows, so the round enclosures allowed them to sit and look out while still hidden.²⁵

~ ~ ~

Ago, men and women attended medrasas separated. Now that is often the case but it is possible if not usual for schools to be co-ed.

~ ~ ~

I just asked if the Riad will be full tonight for the festival (yes) so I asked for dinner and He (owner) said he would arrange it.

Many tables are out and place settings are ready. So coming early (days) was a good idea especially since even today I am not completely recovered from the travel.

~ ~ ~

This is like Southern California in one other way (or like Spain was) in the closer to the equator the more even is the day to night. So it is getting darker and probably by 5pm (probably wrong but I think). It is the time when I wish I had something to read, not pretend (as I could probably find a copy of LeMonde somewhere – though maybe not as I've only seen one shop with “books” and I will not pretend to read arabic. I am trying to learn at least one word everyday laa' = no, na'am = yes, shukran = thank you, saabas al-khair = good morning, alhan =

²⁵ Perhaps a different version of Romeo & Juliette?

hello (and proved to be useless), salaam alikami has proven to be beyond my ability as the dialect has defeated me in Fes. There is a 'w' in the middle of the greeting that I cannot seem to manage.²⁶

The names of people are also escaping me and that is embarrassing.

I will have salade & lamb tagine before the concert tonight, It does not feel hot anymore and is cloudy (so it is very humid). I saw wet cobblestone on my walk this morning. It was not in front of the Riad so I think it did rain last night and if this was Seattle, I'd say it is going to rain soon. But it is not (*Seattle*) so 'inshallah', if you wish.

~ ~ ~

²⁶ Salaam turns out later to be very useful as greeting a taxi with it almost guarantees me a ride, without it I might get a ride...the taxi may be empty but if they don't want to take you or don't want to go there they just drive off, sometimes they even shake their heads no sometimes not.

13 May Saturday

Slept through call to Prayer but not the garbage man 8-10am garbage is collected, if it is not out 1st he/they call out (it is *not* balak sounds more like aspeok, I don't know what it is) if he still gets no response he will actually knock on the loud higher up door knocker and then move on if there's no response. Some people miss and some will just bag it up and put it in the alley. Some will go away from their doorway and just dro it somewhere.

~ ~ ~Report on last night's concert night; outline

1]Dinner 2]Gnaoua book 3] Taxi to Bab al Makina 4]opening night 5] couple from San Diego 6]phones 7]Riad occupancy 8]Seating for meals 9]Breakfast

1 } Fatimazahra asks me about dinner so I can get to opening night on time which is 30 minutes before show. I ask or agree to Salade and a Tagine (chicken and get lamb). After my exploring and walk I am tired, nap then because it is not yet time, I try to find something to read from a shelf near the fountain. Get a book in French an ethnography on Gnaoua and after 3 pages (skipping some) I drift into nap and it is time to eat.

The owner, before this when I am about to go up to my room, say “moment” as he wants to greet me with a drink. Something viscus (eggwhite?) and a creamy green. I ask what is in it? Told it is lemon & mint. Tasty and sweet.²⁷

9 } Breakfasts are SWEET except for the olives and coffee (that I have to sweeten) it is all jams etc. The rolls I dismissed before today are fennel flavored. Every morning it is a slightly different selection of breads, the jams are not, well yesterday one was fig but today back to strawberry. The round or square fried bread (daily) yesterday a round griddled with soda like holes or like injera. Rolls yesterday were vanilla and sugared. Today French bread, the rounds of whole wheat with a fork stab in the middle also have semolina and they come every day. The french bread today is golden other days standard white. Today's coffee is thick other days less so but always needs sugar = sukkar.

1 } The salade here was similar but different from the other restaurant. Carrot roasted and julienned instead of rounds still spicy. The zucchini sliced not mashed/paste. The peppers not spicy but very similar, no cauliflower, this version of baba ganoush spiced differently. Instead of a sweet tomato almond paste there were sugar preserved eggplants (small) I tried one and there is something about sugared vegetable that I don't find appealing – I just don't have that kind of sweet tooth. The salade here included lentils- cooked but cold.

Some bread have sesame seeds on top.

1 } Lamb was with skin and some small bones, may have been from the neck(?). Rich in a tomato sauce long cooked tender and at first I thought too big of a serving, by not eating all the fat reduced it to just right.

3 } Dinner done, I go out find Taxi and he gives me most of my 50d back. I tip something, the coins are very close in size so I think it was 10d but might have been 5d (*how do*

²⁷ I see on the 16th someone (Moroccan) get this – it was slightly different but look very milky; fear that this and other foods have been my “problems”...happily my asthma has not kicked in/up, but I have been religious about taking my meds.

On the 19th at the Ruined Garden Restaurant I get a melon juice it is thick – so I think it is not milk but something else.

the blind manage money?). Surprised at how little it cost. On the way back late the mad man (taxi driver) got me back to the Riad (there was already a couple in the taxi) and when I showed what was left from the 1st ride he just took it all....live and learn.

Arrive at Bab al Makina it is a crush – what line? How to get to it? Police, National securite (Princess/wife to King in attendance security is tight, you pass through a metal detector and the xray machine like at airports. A tall black woman beautiful is with her (the princess) – someone important from the Ivory Coast- (later I am told the Queen).

A full pass allows you to sit closer to stage but not that close and it is on the flat. Arriving 30 minutes early really isn't early enough and the less expensive seats are on raked risers which actually may allow you a better view.²⁸

Everyone is saving seats (there are padded VIP seats very close to the stage.

I eventually find out where I am allowed to sit (asked and ushers don't really know and they have to ask). It is near the rear of the 'good' seats, not VIP just in front of the risers.

There are 2 empties next to me and a man comes asks “open?” I nod.

5 } He asks me something in a very American accent – he is with his wife from San Diego. His name is Mustapha, at age 4 his family from Iraq. His wife is Moroccan, I never caught her name. At first she sits next to me then they trade. This is when he and I engage. He has an AA in music but I think he works in tech, as he has worked in Qatar. (*as did Gulan my Turkish friend*). During the performance at one point he says “Hijaz is so beautiful” and I think yes and I am so ignorant.²⁹

4 } This is an introduction of theme, a spectacle, the Princess enters most/all rise, many clap. There are TV and video cameras everywhere, including two on cranes that swing over the audience and makes a shadow inside the many projections on the walls of the castle and it's towers used as backdrop.

The theme is water and the sacred, so India, Egyptian, Chinese, Amazonian musicians are sequentially on stage.

The Pipa was appealing. The India was a tea cup xylophone playing off an excellent tabla player, it was very much a raga back and forth. The Nile musicians had some microphone issues. The onstage orchestra accompanied when appropriate. Balafon(?) player and a Gnauoan gimbri player traded licks. There will be a Bluesman and a flamenco player, they were not part of the night.

Santir opened for a singer, the women singers were good but to me not special just vocal with orchestra in traditional musical settings. A verse then orchestra plays the melody of the verse by itself then singer sings, possibly new words to the same melody accompanied by the orchestra back and forth sometimes seeming endless. The music doesn't get more complex as it goes along just goes along.

²⁸ I generally sat up on the first range of risers from then on and could have sat there opening night but the chaos was great enough that when pointed to the flats that's where I went.

²⁹ Mainly because I know the mode/taksim/makam Hijaz but couldn't recognize it –ever.

7} Before my mint lemon drink. There is a great deal of activity and tables set with many place settings. Owner says Riad will be full for the weekend 3-4 days. I ask 'for festival?' apparently not really. Though at Bab al Makina I do see one couple from the Riad³⁰

After opening night, back at the Riad, there is an oud player near the pool and the eating areas are full of people. After I retire I hear a very long multi-verse version of Happy birthday (arabic). Closed the courtyard window, crashed asleep after about an hour.

~ ~ ~

Interrupted, there is a group of NY music producers (6) here and so we've just had a chat. They are here to scope out other acts but mostly with Moroccan music interest for possible events in NY. Brought (?) by Moroccan Tourist Dept. I think. Gave a recommendation – mostly Gnaouan as they brought those musician to NY earlier.

~ ~ ~

Leaving Bab al Makina after end of show. A TV crew from China asked if they could interview me. I fumbled through, afterwards realize I said nothing about the Pipa Player or the Chinese Opera part of the show – sort of undiplomatic, but such as it was. The opening to exit is small and sort of swaying tiny steps side to side wobble to exit. This was not a jostle or harsh almost gentle sway to move forward, once outside a crush to find a taxi many black cars which must be a version of limos here.

~ ~ ~

Leave Riad and after asking owner for a new way to Jnin Sbile, he tells me to go to the square.

Again like yesterday some ask if I want a tour. I do not, but when one asks if I am a musician I say yes and he says his family has musical instruments, I mime a jewsharp, he does not know but says his brother speaks better English and will help us.

I have suspicions³¹ but it is an adventure so I follow. I recognize some things and he walks too fast for the heat, he goes up and down turns to see if I follow wide and narrow light and dark alleys he tells me there are more than 9000 alleys in the medina. We end up near where we started but not exactly. His 'brother' sits in a Berber phamacia, does not know instruments, does not seem to know English and the 'guide' points and dismisses me – what? I go and find a sign that points to the garden and a new man takes me over; again very fast up and down wide narrow light dark this time I know we are in circle, then he asks for money ½ for him ½ for his brother who is in jail- what? We argue/bargain ~ he will not accept 20d or 70d must have 100d. "Americans are rich" I just want to get away, he starts yelling at me, finally I give him 100d just to get away.

So again I learn something. Do not accept offered help – accept help when I ask for it.

Now I follow signs feel lost again like yesterday but know/can see the garden but all the gates are locked! I wander find a manned gate someone comes out the guard says 'no' I say

30 They are French and must/may have been producers or consulate people as they had status and after 3 days left.

31 He took off in a very fast pace, unusual, no one walks fast in the alleyways.

'musique' and pull out my badge/pass and he lets me enter.

Marc Vella is doing sound check. It is Keith Jarrett like improv with some prepared piano. At first I think that the piano is a bad one until he removes whatever he placed on the strings....it's actually a good piano.

The staff manning the sound desk and crew doing the production of the stage etc greet me (in French) I feel welcome (accepted) but I think it is slightly false. I am audience.

What is is. This practise/philosophy will either make me strong or dead.

The garden- a few cats, men sweeping with rush brooms, fountains, bamboo, cedar, cypress (I think) and tangerines....suddenly I realize Tangers-tangerine, perhaps I knew this but today it is a revelation. Before the garden I buy 1.5 liter water 16d but I don't have 1d soe they sell it for 15- ok. After the wild goose quick walking I need water.

The sky is mostly clear, in the sun it is hot I see that I am already getting tanner even from overcast yesterday³²

There is an island in the middle of a pond in the garden behind the stage and a flock of crane/egret/storks cover it young & old. One of these flew around the Makina at the concert last night to "ooos and aaahhs, que belle" I think it was the same kind of bird.

Morning doves, doves that purr, chirps and songs with flowing water in streams and fountains. I have no idea what the time is

wha who hoo 4x I think morning dove nearby
(see 13 May snippet for small musical example)

~ ~ ~

I am not bored but now I am tired.

~ ~ ~

The security is high. Bomb dog, a man with a mirror on a rod to check under chairs, a group of sunglassed black suits (Men in Black) sit to one side of the stage. Attendants at every possible entry way.³³ The clouds have come in, if they hadn't there would be little shade. Red chairs have padding, closer to the stage, behind are chairs in black vinyl with little padding. Last night the vinyl squeaked as I shifted around. Made me think I had a fat butt.

There is going to be an oud player too so I stick around to hear him. (*because the main attraction Marc Vella is not very interesting and his ego is already evident, unpleasantly so.*)

~ ~ ~

It seems the Riad has hired a series of oud players for the weekend.³⁴

³² I thought I would look very tan compared to Seattlites when I returned but t'was not so.

³³ The attendants become sort of a fun interaction as they are there for every outside concert and great you with bon jour, hello, welcome or whatever language they have that they think you may speak....I get greeted by at least 3 languages every time I go anywhere. But the fun part is they start to recognize me and we laugh because of course I am here and they are here and we are doing the same things day after day – I probably am not explaining why this was joyful but it was and was shared.

³⁴ Every weekend it seems. This is kind of fun because I bow in honor to them when I come in and thank them with another bow when I go to my room. They return/acknowledge and that feels good. Do I really know what is transpiring? No...the mutual respect between musicians is my story, true or not.

- - -

I will sit behind the soundboard as there is some shade, no reason to sit in the sun.

- - -

The concert of Marc Vella, was as I expected and have described except there was only one improv with the oud player and Vella spoke long and between each of his 'pieces'. He uses a set of metal bowls or plates on the strings sometimes. So the piano can actually sound like a rebec or Santir and other times like a thunder stick.

I wandered afterwards thinking to find a restaurant but nothing look appealing.

In front of a 'musicians pizzeria' a strikingly beautiful man invites me in asks if I am musician, tells me he has an open mic if I would like to perform. I say maybe another day. Always another day.

I get confused (of course) and ask him how to find Bab al Makina as I have missed (first of many concerts that I miss because I can't find them) the pipa player (and I really was looking forward to it) and...

14 May 17 Sunday

Today I will miss Berber music as no one at the Riad knows where the Dar Adiyel is...(it is hard to get to and to find)³⁵

I make it early (still stand in line) to the Chinese Opera Concert. Buy water, take meds. Find an ok seat. Think how different this would be in USA. With a full pass I would get a separate line, first entrance and good seats. Here is VIP line (not pass holders) ok to not great seats, though to be honest the VIP seats aren't good for viewing just for being important/honored.

I sit and am suddenly surrounded by English speaking people.

Farouque from Zanzibar, Üni from Norway (both have something to do with Film Festivals- I think though later Üni says that's not really true for her – Bonnie and Matt (she's a flautist) from Albuquerque, and a woman who visits Seattle(Kirkland) on Weekends once a month who lives in Texas but is Iraqi or Iranian and her works is with or about child refugees.

The joke became 'we are the English row'.

Üni and Farouque sat next to me so I talked to them the most. Üni comments an how disorganized the festival was...that after 22 years you would think they could provide a map with arrows to help you find venues.³⁶

~ ~ ~

The Jnin Sbile concert today is Marilui Miranda from Brazil. Her short presentation on opening night was not very interesting but may surprise(?) so even though I was going to take a pass on it, I like the garden so much that I give it a try.

~ ~ ~

Wandering after Marc Vella I heard the sound check for Said Guissi-Issam Kemal, a large ensemble of drums, zurna, and singers. This was in Boujloud Square which is a large open space near the "Blue Gate" (Bab Boujloud) and since the performances there are free – even at the sound check there must have been 1000 people (Fassi) young mostly but all just hanging out. Nearby was a different open space (Place Bahgdad?) a bazaar open and tables and the ground covered with clothes (seemed mostly used- again not all) shoes, socks, underwear (men & women's) electronic bits and pieces – older models of cell phones (galaxy S4's was one piece of paper attached to the box) closer to buildings and alleys were vegetables again mostly cilantro (since I've not eaten anything I could have tasted with cilantro in it, who uses it and in what?³⁷), onions and beets.

There are venders on the side walks with charcoal to roast ears of corn, oranges they will

³⁵ Carmen from Madrid tells me it is actually a music conservatory. I do get to it the next day by following a bunch of other people who all say they are lost too.

³⁶ The pipa concert was in the Medina but buried that after walking near(?) past it earlier I knew I could not find it again. Like when I asked at the Riad about where the Berber music concert was and no one knew- they looked it up on the internet and showed me and I despaired. From yesterday I know that if I ask once inside the medina that someone will offer to lead me there but may not get me there.

An adventure yes but also a disappointment, what is is.

³⁷ I never found out and never found it in anything I ate

slice and freshly squeeze for you.

~ ~ ~

The Chinese Opera ended after 3 hours, long after midnight. The best part for me was the er-hu player, she was very good and her tone was beautiful. Oddly(?) she was accompanied by a recording! It was not so but I had the thought that she could have mimed the entire solo ~ why not bring the/a full orchestra instead of 25 acrobats/actors/singers and only 6 musicians? All of whom had to play at least 2 different instruments (the er-hu player had 2 er-hu a concert & solo then played percussion drums and cymbals). The reed player (also soloist) played Chinese zurna/oboe and a metal chen/shaing, the brass player conducted on woodblock – on and on.

There were a lot of battle scenes some of it good, slapstick all played broadly. Translations were projected high on the towers above everything which I didn't notice until about half way through (in Arabic on one tower and French on the other) *I think my French is improving by the hour despite everything.- joke*.

Taxi to Riad starving and exhausted. I enter and ask the owner (he has also been to the show and liked it a lot) if there is just a small something to eat. I get a plate of fruit 2 apples (red and yellow) a hard pear, a good kiwi and a banana to take to my room.

THEN seated I am served Bread and a chicken/green olive tagine. HALF a chicken! Delicious and too much for a late snack. I do not eat the fruit but am (barely) able to finish the tagine. The salty tart/sour of the green olives, with the chicken was wonderful.

There is/are moments where I miss having someone like Semih (my Turkish Friend) here because the little things I have no one to ask "what is?" fruits or vegetables ~ other objects, I am curious and my French is inadequate, my Arabic non-existent, and it seems English is just not a good fall back. I'd hoped Spanish might work but no, and Dutch isn't close enough to German so the few (Taxi drivers) with 'a little' German and I cannot really communicate.

So what should be the plan? I am wondering if Sunday is a busy day in the alleys (will find out) if too busy I will lay low. Go to the garden and if not interesting return to Riad if it is ok then try to find the Berber music.

The big show is Songhai who I've heard on recordings but may go to just go. I hope for surprise and since today does not promise surprises it will be filled with them.

~ ~ ~

I leave the Riad go up the main road to the square (which is more like a round cul de sac). I think I want to find the library and of course accidentally come upon it, doors locked with chain and padlocks. The medina is jammed- tour groups Chinese, Spanish, some French (who seem more independent not on tour) and English speakingers.

Hilarious because my idea is not to follow signs to Bab Boujloud- and there are signs. Which I follow and end up where I began. So following the signs is not how to get there. I remember Adil said on day 1 that going to Bab Boujloud was up very up from the center. So all my decisions when I have to choose is – to go up.

I find that not only does this work!, I see new things, bookstores, better postcards (later

buying things is for later or maybe last day) and a bigger map. Which still leaves out important things (like Jnin Sbile) but I know where I am from the gate and now return to the Garden.

Eat a banana get bitten by a ground bug. 'Sa Va' from a crew man (*Damien- see more later*) who shook my hand yesterday and now I'll wait for the afternoon concert.

15 May 17 Monday

Marlui Miranda was better than opening night would have made you expect. Lots of single line (poetry) repeated again and again. She had a drummer who had a trap set and a 'box' electric drums and samples.

She and the drummer did one short piece (with sample box) where they did a vocal duo of huhs and vocalizations similar to both mouth music and some gypsy recordings that I have and love. (She said something about Yanomami).

Made me think that perhaps all people with fewer resources make this kind of music. A back and forth, just a set of grunts. (The gypsy music has a singer over the top of the grunts, perhaps that is the next step)

My new acquaintances Farouque, Uni, Sebastian (one of the music producers from NY), were there later we met Bonnie and Matt who on a sort of wild goose chase led us to Dar Adiyel → a Riad changed into a small concert venue, carpets on floor, a few chairs near the walls, a balcony (closed at first) and Inoraz a berber group joined by a ney/sax player and a woman singer. They played rebec, lotar, percussion and guitar/bass. The group is a quartet officially. A 'press kit' handed out pretty much gives the impressions of just the 4 men.³⁸

~ ~ ~

During sound check for Miranda the drums took almost an hour. Left me thinking how glad the Turtling Dithers don't have a drummer.

Both this (there was a ringing from one drum that took forever to kill) balances and microphones falling off the stands during the Inoraz concert and~

Songhai – with Kora Player Toumani Diabate and a trio of singers from Mali (for only a short set) the Kora mics were picking up(?) a high pitched tone that hurt as it was loud and I had to leave early as I think it caused me to have a tremendous headache.³⁹

Took taxi back to Riad. Had a glass of wine (owner looked askance 'is it your birthday?' jokingly), salade, went to bed before the 'crowd' returned from the concert but just in time for DRUMMERS to greet the returnees- drumming in the alley below my window. Thankfully they only played twice and I went to sleep. Woke before call to prayer and before Adil could wake me at 8, took a shower, found either a bite or bruise (bite) and that my shoes -STINK, it is as if I've been wearing Keds for a week.

Rinsed them out last night (they're still wet) but now they have damp stink- blech. Maybe I'll get some sandals or something later today.⁴⁰

~ ~ ~

38 I found their latest album online and it includes the ney and singer on it whereas the album available at the festival just had the core group.

39 Chris the soundman at the garden later told me that there was a 3000hz tone inside the instrument that he tried to help them kill but since it was inside the instrument (meaning part of the sound of the body of the Kora) he couldn't get it much quieter and it was impossible to 'kill'.

40 Never happened, I never saw anything I wanted on my feet and there was the hassle of trying to find something I could try on without looking like I was going to buy it that I never felt strong enough to go through. So I every other day washed the slipper/shoes I brought.

Seems as though most of the music will be in the garden today. There is also a sort of masque parade from Sardinia (we'll see [no we didn't]) . Today is the Blues player who may talk too much as did Miranda and Vella and the director (Alain Weber) of the festival.

~ ~ ~

Maybe I got too much sun yesterday. Feel kind of punky. May lay around all morning see if that helps.

~ ~ ~

Left the Riad around 11:30, decide after looking at the map(s) that everyone goes East, all the touristic sites are center or East. What is West? There are gates and medrasas and mosques but but really what? I had the thought, 'where do people live?'

I first^t head up the 'main drag' it looks like at one of the "Place⁴¹" there is a way (there are always many ways but they may not lead where one intends to go), to get to Bab Ftouh and then South perhaps to Andalusian area?, think to try for Bab Sidi Boujida.

But my idea is general. Nothing is important, no goal just walk & observe - buy water.

My scarf (white cotton) protects my head a child passing says "Shia". Narrow ways have shade for some reason as the sun is directly overhead. I find mostly wider ways- oh well.

I locate a place where the water (river) crosses the Medina wall and go up.

1st vegetables, then car parts, then flooring, food stuffs, over and over. Milk is in plastic bags. A livestock area chickens and turkeys. There is a small kid (goat) behind a cart. Birds in cages a sheep skin leaking blood onto the cement. In this neighborhood more head scarves and djellabas - not on young men. Early on my wander men are delivering bouquets wrapped in plastic, white and red roses outlined by a heart of red (rose petals?).

In my Riad they put rose petals in the middle pool of the fountain and spend time retrieving them from the lower levels back to the middle, it's pretty and maybe scents the air? No matter.⁴²

It is helpful to not know where you are or where you are going it is perfect because it is all interesting and there is no where else you can be.

I suspect none of my friends, if they read this, will believe me but without a guide and surrounded by a language I don't understand there really is no other choice/way to be. It's all good or at least as good as it can be.

Last night I got a fruit, eggplant (Thai) shaped orange smooth skin, green stem and dark blossom end. 2 large brown seeds in the center, the flavor mildly sweet, flesh a bit firmer than apricot (similar to papaya?). Today for the first time I see some at a stand - not before, so perhaps whatever it is, is just coming into season?⁴³

Yesterday, going in a circle passing a cart squeezing oranges I say when he asks and I am still on my way that if I see him again I will buy 'inshallah' ...and I do so I sit and drink a glass

41 Place is a place, but what it means in Fes is an open square/space. Like a park generally a flat open area.

42 I am allergic to roses, rose scent which should explain the "no matter"

43 Loquat is the name of the fruit a tropical(?) fruit tree of Chinese origin.

(and think how does he clean the glasses? But ok ok). I am tempted but not yet to get some dates, there are at least three different kinds that I can see...Maybe another day.

I come to a gate, don't know which one, flag a taxi to Jnin Sbile and sit in a small breeze under the tree and wait for the musical day to begin.

~ ~ ~

Spoke to one of the sound engineers Chris. He was playing a Max Richter composition based on 3 novels and the suicide letter of Virginia Woolf (Gillian Anderson narrated)⁴⁴.

~ ~ ~

Sounded a bit like Michael Nyman - wasn't, we talked music Grunge/garage of Seattle, and his job etc. (He came on board about 20 years ago roasted (heat) and underpaid, they asked him to come back he asked for twice the salary and for an assistant and he's still working here.)

~ ~ ~

⁴⁴ The title is **3 worlds**

16 May Tuesday; day 5 of Festival, day 7 of trip

Later, as the crowd arrived (now that it's not a "Big Show" day there are fewer people.) A woman lays next to me, covers her head with her shawl in the spot I chose yesterday that ends up in the sun.

This is Heather from the UK her 5th or 6th time to the festival. She is a librarian at a post-graduate University in Bedford(shire?), 58 years old and found a family here who when she began coming was just getting started in the Riad business.

She knows the Medina better, of course, than I do at least the parts she knows and travels solo, it seems, to interesting places (Mali where she said you basically can't go anymore due to religious\Al-Qaeda etc danger). She has arranged an excursion outside Fes for Friday invited me to go along – we'll see as that is the day of the one concert I am most intrigued to see.⁴⁵

~ ~ ~

Chris the soundman (see above) revealed that the Songhai concert was not just a reunion from 30 years ago but that it was nearly a duplicate of a record the group and Diabate made then.

Takes nothing away from the music produced except that last night Eric Bibb play 2/3rds of the music from his "new" album...I'm getting the impression that the festival is more a commercial event than a 'world religious music' event.

Bibb's music was fun, made me think about asking Maurice if he ever used a slide (no) and how Bibb was essentially playing a bass line of 3 notes with *some* fingering up above. He also kapoed his 3 guitars way up like the 10th fret. I was too far away but seems possible that it was sometimes a half kapo. Also one guitar was a 1/2 or at most 3/4 or parlor guitar.

His partner vocally wasn't mic'ed very loud but he played archtop, 12 string, and mandolin (program said violin, nope no violin)....and to me he was much better than Bibb.

~ ~ ~

Heather joined me (had not intended on going to this performance, had not bought a pass just buying single tickets – seems plenty are available, except in the small venues like the Riad of Dar Adiyel. She revealed that something had changed this year. Some of the venues are different and that over all it is less organized – I think she said that there were better signs on how to get from A to B – that's definitely not so this year. And that some of the previous venues were nicer and she couldn't understand why they weren't available this year.

~ ~ ~

She took me to a small cafe up to their terrasa, she wanted something cold and had an almond milkshake. The ice wasn't entirely crushed so she had ice lumps and scoops of almond ice cream, perhaps with soda water?

I ordered shaay (mint tea) which I had read was the main drink in Morocco much like black tea is in Turkey. Nope – all the men in the cafes along all the streets are drinking espresso

⁴⁵ I never saw her again, despite her saying that everyone sees each other all the time during the festival, so I didn't see the forest or the monkeys living in that forest.

with containers of water alongside. My mint tea comes in a very small metal pot, a glass that might hold 2 shots and packets of sugar.

It is cane sugar, there are vendors who bring canes to their shops and crush it for their drinks(?) or what they sell.

The pot had a small leather envelope to protect your hand, over the tiny handle.

The pot/tea was very hot. At first very minty and as I got closer to the dregs more bitter (which should be expected).

~ ~ ~

Farouque and Uni must of snuck in for the Kuwaiti⁴⁶ Performance while I was napping but I saw them and since we were all 'kicked out' between concerts, rejoined them for the Bibb concert. (When introducing Heather, Farouque said where do you find these people?)

I had said I would be back for Dinner at 10pm so left during the 'encore'. But it seemed dinner hadn't really been messaged very well. Chicken was dry. But potatoes, beans, and under the chicken a vermicelli that was spiced and moist and tasty and not a huge portion. So ate and went to bed.

Woke at morning prayer, snoozed. It was darker & cooler but isn't really going to be for the rest of the day. Though the wisps of clouds if this were Seattle, would mean a weather change, not sure if it means anything today. (*it didn't for the next 4 days it was basically 40C (100+F) and in evenings down to 35C.*)

~ ~ ~

Soundman Chris was given a stuffed sandwich like a variation of gyro or the Berlin version, it looked good. I'm thinking that's something I'd like to try to find to eat. (*didn't find it anywhere so where did this come from?*)

Otherwise this morning may just be laying around. I have some music ideas which if they survive breakfast....

There's something at 2pm that might be interesting (or depressing) then 2 performances (one in Dar Adiyel again so hard to find), perhaps an early day though not shorter.

~ ~ ~

If you can find yourself at Bab Boujloud with nothing more to do, find a spot of shade and sit. The world passes by (until summer). You can tell foreigners from Fassi.

What follows may seem sexist and can't be helped.

Across from me two men are talking (in shade) by a Police car "Girl watching". There is a point to this for me because everywhere in the world body type preference is slightly different except for one (so far, I do not pretend that I have been everywhere)... YOUTH, a young woman is watched/found attractive and these men follow those with eyes, head, and comment to each other. These men are not young men they are in their 40's, I think.

⁴⁶ A group of men ritualized singing and standing and turning choreographed leaping up in unison. All dressed in traditional white robes with the black headband. Lots of hand drums. The leader stood most of the time while the rest sat in a circle around him.

I have never given much thought to bras. The women in more traditional dress have bras that keep their breasts very high close to clavicles. Not a push-up bras (I think) but if you (me) are not used to seeing this it looks uncomfortable.

For married women the bra is lower.

Headscarves- some solid color. In the medina many are offered for sale in patterns colorful and interesting.

One woman in a tight fitting falling below her knees dark blue dress, sunglasses and headscarf was of particular notice to those men. She was unusual in that most head to calf dressed women are wearing at least sort of loose dresses. However another woman had a dress that was tight around her hips, she too drew their attention and comment.

I sat for about 45 minutes, there is a cash machine and American (5) women clamber out of a taxi and try to get money. They empty the machine and have to wait for the bank attached to the ATM to refill it.

After a bit I see Uni in line, to get money too. I go over to say hello and behind her is a young man from France who plays cajon. He is here (Maroc) for a month traveling around.

~ ~ ~

There is supposed to be a film at Dar Batha but no one seems to know where the entrance is, all the guards at Museum Batha send me elsewhere. A passing Spanish woman (Carmen) tells me she knows but then directs me back to a guard who has already told me to come back tomorrow.

~ ~ ~

I enter the medina via Bab Boujloud, bored. Go down an alley outside and pass a barber, ask how much for a shave 30d, I say 'ok'.

I think while someone is cutting hair off your face that perhaps one has '*arrived*' when you trust someone to approach your neck with a sharp object.

The shave was thorough, not as pleasant as in Turkey but made me even more aware of all the different directions my facial hair grows and no wonder I don't do this (well) myself.

~ ~ ~

I go to the garden as they are kicking everyone out. I lie and say I work for the festival so the guard let's me in, but Antoine (Chris's assistant) tells me it is only 1pm and that's too long even for me to bluff that I belong.

I leave and in a cafe across from the gate I have a salad that is mostly fresh vegetables (beets are marinated, olives cured) not much of a dressing (could have used more lemon or other acid). Lately I've been thinking about salt. I was happy to taste salt on the tomatoes but wish the cucumbers were salted too.

The sky is thin clouds which makes it more or is the cause of humidity, today feels similar to the first days here.

Salt- walking around in the heat, drinking a lot of water, also sweating, finally think that some of my punkiness is lack of salt....maybe.

~ ~ ~

From my table I watch people get out of taxis to find the gates to the garden locked. Some Fassi are able to explain but only half, I try to help saying that probably at 1600 the gates will open again. Now that I write this I realize without a ticket or pass, they may not get in even then.⁴⁷

It is such a beautiful garden that if you are only here for a few days and not for the festival, what a disappointment, since unless you come in early morning you will not get in.

~ ~ ~

Younger men's hairstyle ~ Close cut (not shaved) on sides up to crown and then long and gelled or moussed. Slightly older men it's not so long on top and kind of in 3 layers, part nearly shaved at neck, then a bit longer to the crown. Sometimes there is a line cut to the skin between sections (usually only one line). For the youngest men the tops of their heads resemble a sort of rooster's thing but it's not mohawk and it is poofed and combed.

The Secret (ha!) police are literally Men in Black. I was a bit lost saw one and followed him back to the garden but still have 30 minutes before the gate opens.

T-shirts - "Fashionably late" another said "Aberdeen" took me a moment to remember that the original Aberdeen is in the UK

Farouque recommended Memoire of an Arabian Princess from Zanzibar (Dover keeps it in print) Uni recommended many times books by a Moroccan Feminist Fatima Mernissa both found in the library.

⁴⁷ May 16th...Later I am told by Farouque that after the concerts at Bab al Makina begins the guards & ticket people disappear(ed) and people came in for free.

I don't think that happens in the garden as the performances are only about an hour long. [and some out last their welcome at that] que sera.

This is partially true, the ticket takers are there but there is no security so the young come and go, maybe they have a ticket, maybe not.

17 May 2017 Day 6 of festival

At one entrance to Jnin Sbile (the garden) is a promenade with a series of fountains. Everyday all day & evening long is a woman in 'western' clothes sitting on a bench talking on her phone. Uni says she is secret secret police talking to a man in gardener clothes who pretends to sweep the ground.

~ ~ ~

The series of fountains and the tile walk ways blue & white surrounded by the trees and bamboo (I found one section with black bamboo another with a variegation yellow and green stems). It is not shaded but it seems we all (Maroc and non) dip our hands into the water to cool off.

~ ~ ~

There are two women (USA-ers retired to Oaxaca) staying in the Riad. Jayne and Kirsten, I overhear them talking about the 'news'...Even Farouque & Uni seem to be keeping up although he said that news yesterday was that BB King just died so I'm not sure how current the news he is getting can be.

The women began talking about Chaffetz and article 25 and that it is a set up for Pence(?). Do I want to know?

Not now.

They also said that it will be 100F around 3pm today – and only maybe cooler in the coming days. It is not cool in the Riad already so now what? (need water)

~ ~ ~

I am here at a music festival yet find I cannot write much about the music I hear.

Yesterday was odd in that a group from Crete⁴⁸ played some music that sounded very Irish, then an Irish group⁴⁹ that played the oddest set list for this situation, mostly slow dirge-like “poor mouth” kinds of things, even their closing number wasn't all that exciting. I couldn't understand exactly what their thinking could have been.

~ ~ ~

There is another theme, both the Cretan group & Irish were 'collectors' of tunes from respective countries and the variety of peoples there.⁵⁰ They didn't always talk between about the songs origins but it didn't always help. Not academic, just not exciting at least from Brazil and Ireland. Crete & Kuwait groups just performed (mostly) and that worked much better for me.

~ ~ ~

At the Petrakis concert, Carmen and I join Farouque & Uni, I half expected Heather but if she was there I didn't see her.

After the show Farouque & Uni took us next door the the Salade place for beer and a

48 Stelios Petrakis Quartet.

49 Lankum

50 Miranda made the same claim but I knew some of the people she referenced and ended up not entirely convinced that she was authentic.

snack. Which is an olive tapenade, baba ganoush and a hummus served with this crisp slices of a bread (rounds). Near us is a NYer with a margarita. Farouque is disappointed, he would have wanted that instead of the beer – didn't know they had mixed drinks.

Carmen works with allergy things, was reading Tony Judt's last book. Uni was loaned by Farouque the biography of Maria Callas and Farouque reveals that while 'dressing' her Nina Simone was mean to him. (For a concert, he was designing costumes for her).

We are joined by Demian⁵¹ (French lives near Tokyo, he is part of the production crew and the "Sa Va" man mentioned earlier) I believe he said today (17th) is his birthday⁵². We talked shop and he confirmed that it did rain hard that one night and got into the equipment happily didn't ruin anything. Seems he works more with theater and maybe outdoor venues.

I gave him my card (I give everyone my card, it's probably nuts to do so but time will tell) we spoke briefly about John Cage.

Then we all went to the Irish concert.

~ ~ ~

Farouque and Uni are going on an expedition this AM. Since it will be hot I'm kind of hiding.

~ ~ ~

Took stock of money – in a week outside the Riad I've only spent \$100, 1/2 of what I got out of the ATM that first day. I think I will go to it today and get the maximum again.

I have just replaced the ink cartridge for my pen, I only have 4 left, so as I suspected I *will* run out before heading home. (*I don't because I use pencil for a whole day*)

- - -

Question, is this writing for me, or friends? What is important to tell and for whom? I am uncertain.

- - -

My myoclonus has returned not as bad but it's back – so is this all about heat? No way to know, will ask neurologist on my Return. Perhaps there is some way to avoid or ameliorate.

~ ~ ~

Go to ATM, think 'of course I know how to get into the alleyways, go off thinking **up** and find myself back in the "normal" Fassi section.⁵³

Find a Bab, find a 'map' "Ici" take a different road that looks like I will get to the University (center of the medina) and end up near my Riad.

So my neighbors who said 'you will know Fes after being there so long are wrong & right.

51 I don't know how he spells his name and it seems there are a number of alternatives, so if it looks like Demian or Damien it's the same person.

52 This was true, it was his birthday. The Mezzanine Cafe (with the booze) at midnight actually made a cake for him and brought it out. He gestured tears while telling me this after the 8th day of the festival. Which he offered a copy of but that didn't happen.

53 19th May; Mostly at Bab ((gates) you can find really clear maps of main/wide alleys or streets. You can't really get to another place using them but they are great in a general way for orienting and at least you know where you aren't.

I know at the Bab that I'd been there before and when I got to the 'Place' (open square) near my Riad I knew that.

So I start again up & up vacant alleys past children who stare and slightly older boys who want to 'help'. But if they are persistent after I say laa laa laa then they say "where do you want to go? -Nowhere, "what do you want to see?- Nothing, and this is either not understood or so perplexing that they stop and let me go. Even when they say "Ferme" what that seems to mean is there is nothing tourist there only us. Which of course makes it more interesting⁵⁴

~ ~ ~

I ended up finding (?) The Ruined Garden Restaurant and not knowing the time hoped it would be open - it was. What I did not know was that I was late 3:45 (concert begins at 4:30). I ordered apricot juice, soup and what I thought was going to be more like a salad but was a saffron vegetable tagine. Too much food, though tasty, and I'm afraid that I'll be late.

The restaurant tells me that the orange eggplant shaped fruit is loquat and gave me directions to Bab Boujloud but I miss the 1st turn and have to find my own way - hurry hurry assume I'm going to get there just in time or late. Not only am I not late, Uni & Farouque don't attend. Jayne & Kirsten from Oaxaca are there, Carmen is there we wave.

It is piano (mostly French composers last century or earlier) Michael Lonsdale⁵⁵ an old bent over long grey bearded man helped to the stage who begins reading in French Poems and stories. The pianist has chosen pieces to follow/respond to the poems. 2 or 3 times a young man, who has been helping turn pages on Lonsdale's music stand, stands and reads a poem in Arabic (I am never sure if it is an Arabic poet or Arabic translation from the French- at the end he says {in French} that translating the poems into Arabic poetry was difficult). It struck me that Arabic has so many open 'ah' sounds that (maybe) it is easier to rhyme in Arabic than French or English.

Sometimes the pianist plucked or pounded the strings but mostly it was classical pieces everyone should/could know.

I stay for the whole thing, hoping fruitlessly to find it interesting. Other than the explicit connection to gardens and water, it was boring and naptime.

54 19th May The women from NY/LA also found that as often as not "ferme" doesn't mean closed, and sometimes *may* mean you are going wrong. Right after she said that we found ourselves in a dead end.

55 Actor Film Director was in Moonraker, still doesn't explain why but there he was.

18 May 2017 Day 7 of Festival

After that concert I asked Chris if the Lebanese rock star was really going to be pop or what? He said she was going to be interesting but loud.

Carmen was going to something else so I walked her to Bab Boujloud and then took myself to a restaurant from the day before where Ty and Gloria from LA are and we talked a bit.

I tried to find the event I was interested in and at the location, was told 'no it's at Bab al Makina' strange, but walked there and was told nothing here until tomorrow (which is today and on the schedule but not what I was looking for.

Ended up going to the Lebanese concert – found Uni and Farouque there, we stayed for a few songs, Jayne joined us and remained while we went back to the restaurant for wine and snacks. There we were joined by a Dutch couple from Groningen, she a child psychologist and he a GP.

I opened my Dutch mind⁵⁶ and we spoke in a wide mix of English Dutch and French, about Norway, northern lights and literature.

They are going hiking in the Atlas Mtns and had biked around San Juan Island 3 or 4 years ago.

Farouque and I discuss fashion and it is firmly established that that is what he does.

When we leave, we pass Place Boujloud and maybe the event I wanted was there as it looked & sounded fun. But I am tired it has been too hot ...so petite taxi to Riad and immediately to bed.

~ ~ ~

It is now Thursday. I heard that the medina is closed on Friday (which is only sort of true) but since it is closer to the end I think I will buy gifts and see if I can find this one location for a Sephardic music concert between Jnin Sbile & Bab al Makina events.⁵⁷

I get really close. End up seeing the tanneries led there by a woman she thinks I'm Spanish. We pass someone he tells me that she would make me a good wife. We go though crowds⁵⁸ up to a terrace overlooking the tannery which looks exactly like all the photos of it. 'They' hand out sprigs of mint for your nose to cut the smell but I do not need – she did or at least took some. I look and thank her ask how to get to the Bab Boujloud. Pay her 20d and the

⁵⁶ I lived in southern Netherlands for a year a very long time ago. With help and encouragement I can still speak Dutch.

⁵⁷ 19th May At the Jnin Sbile after the 4:30 concert as F/U/&I are about to leave, 2 women ask me if I've seen Carmen Yesterday. I said yes. They thanked me as they hadn't and were concerned (and later I found out that she has been ill –possibly with heat sickness and fasted for 3 days to get over whatever it was). The days kind of drift into each other , it has taken me until now to sort out that Carmen was 2 days in a row though not yesterday so the questions at the time confused me but I did answer correctly. I think that between Farouque, Uni and I we have become 'seen' as we (2 women yesterday) were leaving Ruined Garden a couple asked me if we had found Palais Amani (no) and then asked about the food (good) because they can cook or do cook in their Riad and then said they knew I was at concerts because no one else had long wild grey hair...

⁵⁸ The crowds!!! Spanish, American, Chinese, Japanese, Tour guides in French, Spanish, broken Spanish/English. But as tourists everywhere (and me?) don't understand how to make way for others or even to move through these narrow passageways.

- I asked my guide if there was a passing on right or left rule, he said no, just don't bump into someone. .

- These tour groups make it nearly impossible not to bump into them or and actual Fassi.

- The one time I did bump into someone I was passing and she suddenly turned into my way. We were both surprised but the look I got was a message that I was the one who had done wrong.

man asks for something too...I say 'no you wanted me to take her as wife! That's no help.' we laugh and I go on my way.

I wander toward the gate. Uni has been touting a book by a Moroccan woman feminist. I found the bookshop but not the book, so I will ask her again about it later.⁵⁹

Wander some more – earlier I pass a shop there is a man weaving. I think I should return (this happens a lot) to get something for friends. Don't know if that can happen (thought counts?) - come to a set of headscarves. They have no “made in” (earlier I had found some polyester or silk?, scarves that had pashima tags when I look closer “made in Turkey”) so perhaps these are Moroccan I ask how much 40d, he pulls that color out, then I say how much for 2?

He gives me a Clint Eastwood squint as if I'm trying to trick him or bargain or?, says 70d, sees that I have a 100d bill and says 3 for 100d, this is too much fun. I choose a 3rd and give him the 100d. I ask him the time I think his watch says 2:30 I go to the place from yesterday across from the garden and the gate is open. Odd maybe they won't lock it?

I enter the cafe across from the garden, enter but though the door is open it doesn't have people/staff and maybe closed? Someone comes and say 10 minutes...it's 12:45...oops.

I go up to the terrace (open to the air but covered) order water and potatoes thinking salt as it *IS* hot just better due to the wind.

Soon a man who I had seen in the Ruined Garden yesterday reading Patrick O'Brien appears this is Victor...originally from Valencia (Spain) works for IBM and is a painter, lives in London.

We talk, he is reading O'Brien, he got them for his father and is now reading them for “the poetry/language” himself.

He is staying due or to the extreme North of where my Riad is and still be in the medina. He is less happy with his as it sounds like the food isn't as good⁶⁰ and at first he says that it is far away from everything but I am much further, it is perception not competition.

I order fried chicken 'fingers' they are white meat, the coating is flour and something like cornflakes (the cereal) a reddish sauce with a little heat and a brown sauce close to hoison but not. More water.

It is not busy I suspect we could stay until the 4:30 concert or it gets busy(?) or just sit.

~ ~ ~

⁵⁹ Fatima Mernissa, she has two books translated into English.

⁶⁰ 19th May It seems that there is a great variety in Riads. Victor's didn't sound very good in terms of location or food. His location is actually (compared to mine) not that bad but description of the food sounded bad.

The people who cook their own...given how easy and varied each eating place is, and how inexpensive, I would not go in that direction.

Heather's family Riad sounded comfortable but at first was 'rustic' and now?- may not be glamorous like mine, however she is comfortable.

Uni and Farouque's Riad, I haven't gotten much sense of it except they aren't allowed(?) alcohol. This means they go out to eat.

There is a service that rates the Riads (which I know nothing about their biases – or whether you pay for rating or anything) and it rates mine at 9 out of 10.

Farouque and Uni are in the garden, Victor joins me on my shawl/scarf⁶¹. A guitarist, a drummer, a woman on Tambura and a man in what looks like a silver sport coat, come out and sit. There is no table and no tea cup xylophone. There is the eternal introduction (in French). I lean back against the trunk of 'my' tree and use my bag as a pillow. The tambura begins & guitarist starts, drummer plays, the silver man is a countertenor,,, this is not what I expected ... and it's very cool.

The woman sings in Hindi(?) the man sings in French & English, but for whatever reason only speaks French. They play/sing Dowland & similar period India-n Poets, sometimes trading off....eventually a sort of harmony. The woman is mezzo or alto, she begins below the man.

And it works. It is pleasing, a surprise, something more to think about⁶²

~ ~ ~

61 This scarf I got in Bodrum, Turkey and has served me in many ways and days. A coarse cotton about the length of a table runner (which I suspect it was intended to be). I would wrap my head in it while wandering anytime the sun was out (always) and sit on it in the garden if on the ground, and wrap myself in it if the evening got cooler (which it did comparatively). It disappeared between Paris and Seattle on my way home.

62 Occasionally I have had mezzo/alto singers in duets and it has always struck me that I should try to arrange more of that as it always sounded so nice.

19th May Friday 8th day of the 9 day festival

Again and again there is something that makes me consider what the Turtling Dithers do ~ how we present ourselves and how the concerts are shaped. The fact (?) that the worst acts here did not build or there was no show....we (Turtling Dithers) sit (most of the time) the last piece is often something like Drift and Drip (which is not rousing). But I found myself thinking "no commercial potential"⁶³ as we/I do what we do and we are getting better at that...a conundrum.

~ ~ ~

Vincente Amigo – flamenco- 1st half of the concert just his group, cajon, 2nd guitarist who also sang, and a singer.

2nd half was, I believe, 2 concertos for flamenco guitar and orchestra & flamenco grupo⁶⁴.

What interested me most was the 1st half (with small reservations) it got cooler and windier so the microphones for grupo were these big, really big, pointy woolly looking things and since Amigo is pretty typical flamenco he couldn't be close mic'ed so that mic had to be hot, i.e. loudest for both halves of the concert. Not sure how they did it – except he was so loud that I put in musician filters to protect my ears (this concert was evening and in Bab al Makina – all the concerts here are loud). The balances, the engineers got were really good.

~ ~ ~

The TV cameras are both hilarious and frustrating, it took them ½ or the 1st concerto to find the oboe soloist, would focus on the cajon when Amigo was doing something, showed french horns for the trumpeter's solos etc... There are side panels for the close ups (if there are any) that give a view of the musicians which would suddenly cut to a full house view when a solo ~ ~ generally the camera work was comedy.

During smaller venues a large tripod Video camera might suddenly be set up blocking the view of a significant part for the audience. That along with the ipads, tablets, and smartphones raised overhead, just made this a unique (for me) experience – something I found peculiar and unpleasant.

Speaking once again of devices; I met 2 Americans who had gone on the expedition with Uni and Farouque yesterday, one a lovely NY-er and the other from LA....

They insisted on trying to use an app. 1st to find the next concert (which **if** we'd even gotten there would have been ½ hour late and it didn't work in any efficient way that I could understand). Lost, I said we could eat at the Ruined Garden and then they tried to use the app again, even though I knew 'going up' would work...in the end we used my method and arrived.

After dinner they knew how to get to one place but it was dark and I didn't recognize it so we took taxi to Bab al Makina (for the Amigo concert). I was glad to take taxi as I was tired and needed that break. We were cutting it close but got me there in time to find F & U.

Today had an interesting conversation with Jayne (from Oaxaca) about Turkey *and* the

⁶³ Frank Zappa was told that may even have titled one of his albums that way.

⁶⁴ I think that Amigo wrote the concertos, or one of them.

tour she is seeking for today. A guide who could take her to the Saint places and explain how people use/believe the line of power to connect to Allah for what they need/want.

I told her about the eggwall & carpet kissing/patting but said that my guide had called it “Black Magic” which is not what she wants. But it will be interesting to hear if she gets what she seeks.⁶⁵

The idea makes sense as her work has been to go to remote communities and discover ways that fit naturally into their way of life, to improve health without imposing something that would be dropped once she and the support leave.

So the tour and her (previous, she's retired) work intersect.

~ ~ ~

She just returned from a hammam and after 9 days her lost suitcase has arrived, she is so glad to have more clothes to wear and she said she like to do embroidery, had part of something begun for her daughter. Who she meets soon and had hoped to finish it before getting together. At least she can continue the work.

She said the hamman was great as it scrubbed off more dirt than she could imagine (I asked but it turned out the hammam she went to, more than once, was women only).

~ ~ ~

I don't think I've described this – yet – in some residential alleys, people are twisting threads. My guide said agave – so fibers from the cactus are strung a long ways around short studs poking out of the alley walls, then either by hand or with a dremel- like tool, they spin them into thicker thread and then wind that with colored or metallic covering, for embroidery on the women's djellabas, and scarves. Wedding thrones and elaborate belts and sashes, which I'm guessing are ceremonial costuming.

Have I mentioned funerals? My guide showed me boxes and platforms (both wood) the boxes are for women as only the family (and maybe only the women of the family?) may look on the body, so the body is enclosed in a box with a peaked top (like a roof) while carried to the cemetery.

Men are wrapped in blankets, shawls etc and the platform is flat open to the world. A few days ago I witnessed this. Even his feet were covered as 6 men carried the platform/corpse through the medina. A jarring distinction, narrow alleys jammed with tourist/tour groups, shops on either side and this dead man and some friends/family (all men) following the body through the medina, not solemn, not happy just was.

~ ~ ~

It is supposed to be *only* 30C by 1500 but as cool/cold as it was the morning in the sun it is VERY warm (about 11am).

I wish I could be more active in the morning but am in no hurry so most of my wandering is in the heat. Today in slightly heavier clothes, I am reluctant to leave the Riad anytime soon.

⁶⁵ She did not. I am not sure how hard she tried but trying to explain that search/information would have been difficult with the most Westernized guide here.

Uni is gone (left this morning) Farouque leaves early tomorrow, so will only be at the garden concert not Bab al Makina.

Unlike people who go and find lovers for the duration, my connections are conversational and I was surprised to feel so emotional parting with Uni last night. The connections are stronger than I allow myself to know. I think it is the pleasure of meeting. That is certainly what the Tea-Table⁶⁶ is, so perhaps that is who I have become. Not a chatty Cathy so much (as that is disparaging) but someone who will – finally, actually as Semih said “talk to anyone”. Semih saw what I could not see.

~ ~ ~

It is midday (lunchish time) I had explored the Riad, was going up to the roof terrace but it was closed, secured with along thick iron rod with a hook on one end painted black, fit through a big iron ring in the door. Someone of the staff led me up now and brought out cushions, raised an umbrella and I am at the top of a world. Morning doves in the distance, a tree covered hillside to the east, a different part of the city further east, mtns to the west, to the south and behind me is Fes and it's medina. The plants on the terrace are desert plants, cacti, palm (peakéd) and sedum-like things. Without the breeze or out of the shade this would be unbearable. As it is the bearability comes and goes.

The retractable glassed in Courtyard is only partially open. The canvas one is open on one side and the sun chased me around until there was nowhere to sit in shade so coming up here was the option.

The smell of grilled meat may draw me down for lunch though I have no sense of hunger.⁶⁷

what follows is that on the 19th I went back over the previous pages and found things I had not properly written. Some have already been noted in footnotes but these are the rest.

Re; the mint & lemon drink- I got the melon juice (it had mint too) it is thick so I think it is not milk but something else.

However the melon gave me intestinal difficulties

~

My lack of diplomacy became an issue inside me as outside, the people I meet maybe shocked or surprised but most often laugh. A few days ago I returned to the Riad (late) and Aladin has a sprained wrist and a black eye and it was a motorcycle accident, he went to the hospital {not sure what that exactly means, could be a clinic, or a hospital}. When he tells me what happened I blurt out “you were stupid!!” He laughs and the owner who was standing there say “yes, yes” and shakes my hand saying “you are a good man”, we laugh.

This morning Jayne is telling about her hopes for the tour and when her companion indicates no interest and not in particularly strong language, Jayne tears up.

⁶⁶ <http://www.soundand.com/T-Table>

⁶⁷ There have been very few trips that I have taken in the last 35 years where I haven't on average lost 15 pounds yet in Turkey and here I lost no weight, even with traveler's disease for a few days, and the heat and all the walking I returned home the same weight as I left.

At a level of overwhelm and exhaustion we are all becoming more who we are, for me this is a mystery – who am I and what am I becoming?

~ ~

Skipped a page early on so on the 17th wrote:

The beams in my room are about 6” apart and have 2 lines each about a cm from the edge. Beams look to be similar 2X3 that I have in my cottage just a lot closer together...they support the floor above which is the underlayment for the tiles/marble.

When I look out through my window into the fountain courtyard I see the beams are painted in an intricate knot many colored design and that all along the ceiling on the walls are another set of repeating patterns.

I remember from Spain that all the stucco was designed to direct your eyes upwards “towards god”. Here in the Riad raise your eyes high enough and you see open sky.

Both courtyards have retractable roofs one side is canvas the other is glass or something like plexiglass.

This is how the birds get in and out. It is also how to keep the Rain out *and* the sun partially out.

~ ~ *I think this is a repeat but here's the whole page*

If I had seen Heather again I intended today to accept her offer to go to the forest that had monkeys. But I watched out for her and never saw her again, so no monkeys for me.

I am a bit disappointed to not see her again as I have questions and just would like to meet before leaving. Who knows? the shows at Bab al Makina are too packed to find anyone. Though at the ticket gate...who is there? The owner of the Riad with his wife – I only see her from the back, she seems tall and her dress is white. I don't know why but I thought she must be beautiful. I perplex myself.⁶⁸

~ ~

I found myself (near the tannery) where the walls were a variegated green to shoulder height. Later another section was blue. I wonder if that means a tour route or just a neighborhood choice, or?

~ ~

Jayne keeps going to the Sufi nights (they begin at 11 or midnight and go on until possibly 2 or 3am) and extols them so maybe I can try. I keep on thinking I will but by 10 or 11 I doubt my strength and taxi home.

~ ~

When I leave yesterday from the Ruined Garden Restaurant, I took the turn that I thought I missed the day before and it was wrong too. So my rule of 'up' works better than anything or just ask an adult for Bab Boujloud, it is the Rome of Fes medina (for tourists) ...all

⁶⁸ Before leaving Fes I do find opportunity to tell him that but instead of taking it as a compliment he acted as though I hadn't said anything of note. Perhaps you are not supposed to compliment another's wife? **NO**

roads don't really lead there but once lost that is your way to become 'unlost'.

~ ~

20th May Saturday last day of the Festival

Yesterday was a red letter day (I don't know exactly what that means), tears in my eyes great joy. The morning began with some angst. A disagreement in meaning. There is poetry in motion. After breakfast I walk in the Medina and much of it is closed. There are Fassi moving about and some neighborhoods are busier with selling household goods and food but it is more motion going to bakery or to mosque or just somewhere. Motorcycles, motors with wagons, batman labeled, used for hauling bulky items and people. (only on bigger alleys/road are motor vehicles allowed so inside the walls of the Medina there are only a few opportunities for motors). There is a lot of restocking going on so this version of Islamic Sabbath is not exactly a day of rest. Though tour guides get a Medina day off.

Poetry in circles, 3 times I am at Bab Ftouh look at big map take one of 3 streets end up at the map each time. Each route goes through something else, different people good etc. but not out of the neighborhood.

So I return to my 1st method...I am outside the wall and walk (mad dogs & Englishmen out in the noonday sun) back to Bab Jdid, grab a taxi to Jnin Sbile and head to the Mezzanine Cafe but no Farouque or Victor and the cafe next door (fresh vegetable salad place) there is Damien eating couscous, he invites me to share it I get a zero coke and a spoon and we talk. He is crewing Bab al Makine will miss the garden concert (the one I most want to see) but says he has worked on shows with both the percussionist and the Mongolian performer before and says it will be a good show.

At 4 we part ways.

Violons Barbares

Carmen and Farouque join me for this show. I cannot find words – can it suffice that I had tears at least 3 times during this concert? This was my Çatal Huyuk⁶⁹ experience of the festival, so happy so much learned such a good show. Afterwards 2 cds were available and I bought 2 copies of each. Farouque was short on cash so I bought another for him.

The 3 (the program said) had never performed in public together but had the cues or in fact had practised (A LOT) before this (2 encores)⁷⁰.

Morin-dhuur is 2 strings tuned in 4ths and not fretted, the strings bowed above not threaded through like on er-hu, are touched like one of my instruments or many other instruments in the world. Obviously to play a melody all one needs to do is stop the string in the right place to get the correct note, not press it down onto a fingerboard.

It would be interesting to know if there is a historical 'development' from a touch method to pressing to frets. Or if there is even any progression at all. Materials often determine technique – that may be all it is.

After this what can be better? I have some of this music at home but it's been many years waiting to see and hear this music performed live. In just 1.5 hours in person I learned more

⁶⁹ To read what I mean see <http://www.soundand.com/TurkeyJournal.html>

⁷⁰ I have no idea why the program said this was a premier- you can find them performing on YouTube videos in live concerts from 2-3 years ago. No wonder they were so tight.

about it than I ever could staring at photos and listening to recordings.

This concert made all the little irritations moot. I felt like all the time, money, heat discomfort had been made worth it by hearing and seeing this.

F & I went to the cafe for a goodbye glass of wine, Damien joined us, we ate & drank. D offered to get a copy of the concert he said to give it to me in the garden today. I think I will skip closing night as I hated not really but didn't want to ruin the afternoon's music with so much pop)

The Bab al Makina (*the timeline here is confusing I am writing about the day before – Friday's concerts not the last day's*) – I saved 4 seats on the off chance that I saw anyone I knew (Farouque said he might show but he is leaving very early in the morning) . Ty and Gloria walked by I offered and they joined me. (I had excellent seating as I went very early). We had met at the cafe the day before over snacks they are from LA.

The 1st few sections (This concert was titled Songs of Moroccan Women) songs/singers were fine to great but then an older man clearly popular (but clearly not a woman)...The women sang one or 2 songs – He sang and sang and sang and the lyrics didn't change and even the music (melodies) didn't change much if at all. The crowd clearly loved him but I found it tedious – waiting for him to stop, he sang at least 4 songs, then finally bowed. A pop woman singer followed and sang 2 songs AND THEN Went back and got him to sing a duet - enough, I left, said goodbye to Ty & Gloria asked them to write me so I could learn what they do in LA as they were leaving in the morning too.

Grabbed a taxi to Riad, Aladin is feeling better, but for me → bed.

I had trouble falling asleep and woke early. Have a plan but it is going to be hot so my plan is seeming stupid...to walk to the Jewish Cemetery, then go to Garden show and dinner here in the Riad.

I may just walk around instead of the trek to the cemetery, or whatever I don't know.

~ ~

I do walk towards the cemetery. I get really close according to the map(s) but never find the entrance. I think I was there. I did get to the Americaine Fonduk which is an animal shelter/hospital funded and begun by a Mrs. Bull. There is a Sutra in English about treating your beasts of burden well. Also something about the SPCA.

While standing there I ask 1 then 2 then a 3rd who says go back and left but back is right however left after right is a wall and it looks like the cemetery is behind that wall.⁷¹ I cannot find the porte (door) and walk through blue-green alleys back to the main road.

So I do not know Fes but I can get from point A to B and if B is corect know how to get somewhere I actually recognize. In this case the main road can take me to the garden and does.

From there to the Blue Gate and after choosing the wrong alley I find the bookstore with old photos of Fes on new postcards @ 5d a piece but the owner does not want my 10d piece and insists on 2 5d pieces- ok.

⁷¹ Kirsten and Jayne say that the entrance is through what looks like a garage/autoshop/

~ ~

Cafe Restaurant Laglali – a group of Chinese are eating skewers & fries. I decide to do it. The mix skewers are beef lamb goat(?) and chicken. I get a mint tea watch the crowds the Arabs and Fassi. A quartet of Chinese pass by, a beauty looks and smiles, I smile back they go on, they return sit nearby order she keeps on looking so this maybe a flirtation? She looks to her phone asks for wifi? She is using it as a mirror more arrangements. Her partner is a large man (in many ways) They exchange places, flirting is over.

~ ~

A darker 'African' works a nut shop. There are pistachios, I am tempted, walk on, it is not the time. *I have time there is time in some ways here time even at festival time is nearly meaningless.*

Listen to all the voices the languages footsteps crackle of crisp paper clank of plates, chairs scraping back or forth to from table, silverware snurk of snot attention to waiters. When one says the babble of the crowd, here is a true Babylon.

If a virus were to attack- the result would be opposite of myth we would all be transformed into a new language, never heard, never known perhaps we would be rendered silent and only speaking by gesture or wiggling toes everyone looking down to watch conversation.

There is the chance that there would still be dialects a movement becomes offensive due to some accident. A trip, broken knee skin or a bell rung against a thigh becomes an invitation to smoke hashish⁷² and you find yourself in jail chained to the wall. In the darkness there is no one to see your toes, it becomes a different kind of silence.

~ ~

The mint tea is super sweet, overhot a paper napkin is wrapped around the glass so you can pick it up. A cautious sip, surprised it is possible to sip the tea.

This is how one can occupy a table for more than an hour, sit, pretend you are an artist, a Pierre Loti in Fes, Paul Bowles in Maroc, I am neither.

~ ~

On my walk I know I am not in the right place cross a thoroughfare, a shepherd with a flock (10-11) of sheep is behind me above a runoff gutter with water. In but outside the city, shacks, there was a man splitting reed and weaving baskets. Examples are at the side of the road, he is in the shade a lean-to below the road working quietly.

~ ~

Working- men carving script into slabs of marble, metal workers- one place shaping, in another place they are stamping designs into already shaped platters, the weaver, the leather area where you can hear/see stamping of impressions or machine cutting out soles for slippers.

Quiet hand tailors and others using machine gurrrrrrddd.

~ ~

⁷² Farouque said that nearly everyday he was offered hash. This happened to me on the last full day in Fes.

Another time/day one man asks to come up – his family hand makes carpets all made her “please stop or wait I will go get you a card” he runs up some stairs perhaps many and brings me a very polished card “inshallah” I may come back. I have no idea where that was – probably on the way (one of many) to Ruined Garden.

~ ~

Back to Jnin Sbile closed so it is after 1300 – good sitting at 'fresh salad' cafe more tea and water.

Saw tour bus this afternoon with the musicians, expect to hear soundcheck soon. A child with an empty plastic 1.5 ltr bottle is banging it as he walks along. We all find a way to make our music. Voice or a plastic bottle.

~ ~

Yesterday F & I talk about how music is **not** a universal language. The 1st time he was taken to the Opera he thought they were in pain and being tortured (the singers- well maybe the audience too).

~ ~

As I was walking [all the days] I accompany my steps with melodies, some I believe are mine and most I think come from something else. Something I've heard, somewhere perhaps from the window of a passing car, familiar but nothing with a name.

I was wondering if we all do this? The rhythmic of our stepping doesn't it make our bodies sing? As our steps infect the rest of our bodies and our hearts pumping, this is not Whitman singing the body electric it is individual each of us singing a different verse melody, mode and passing in the darkness of our souls our blood.

~ ~

Perhaps/maybe (it is all maybe), I have moved from what is is to what will be will, to nothing is certain and it is all ok/fine/ this has nothing to do with good or bad.

~ ~

Today is the last day of festival and I will not (I think) attend closing night at Bab al Makina – it will be too much like last night, too much of a good thing?- probably.

This does mean that most of the people I may recognize will be or are gone.

Sunday will be quiet. I feel like gifts (except for one) are covered. Sights are seen. An interesting (I suspect) day to rest. As if I am not resting in some ways already.

[the whole next page is hand drawn staff lines and music in 2 sections.]

~ ~

It is over, the festival, for me. I pretty much melted during the last Cuban/Morocco/Gnaoua concert in Jnin Sbile. Then couldn't quickly get a taxi so walked back to Riad. Part way felt a rock but it is a blister, from so much walking today and tomorrow will be much less as there is no festival.

~ ~

So I said a goodbye (of sorts) to Carmen⁷³ after the concert, a smile, a hand shake. As I suspected no copy of the Mongolian concert from Damien and he said hello but nothing more and after tonight he is gone. Not really disappointed had it worked out I would have been delighted and just having him be one of the people to talk to has been an unexpected prize of this adventure.⁷⁴

Back at the Riad Kirsten took time and we talked Seattle and Opera and baseball(!) of all things. She & Jayne leave in the morning so I will see both at Breakfast.

Had too much dinner and a nearly incomprehensible conversation about makam with the oud singer here. What little I understood was how the octave is not divided strictly in half in Kabir. But what that really means if I even have that right is only maybe clear.

~ ~

Jayne asked me about tipping I told her what I intended and that I saw a French couple give Adil 100d. She said 'but they'd only been here 2 nights – something I hadn't really considered to be relevant. Then Aladin said Adil works everyday but one per month because he wants the money, so that changes my thinking but I am not sure in what way – yet.

Money is a difficult issue 1] we have so much more than they (Fassi) do and yet they also have an economy that is so much smaller.

The postcards @ 5d (50cents) can you actually get a postcard for so little in the USA? Or a full meal could be with a glass of something for \$25 or even \$10 – a full meal. It, at times, feels like 1d = \$1, it isn't but a liter of water is 10d = \$1 equivalences get confused. Tipping, which they are dependent on, how to do this well? I don't know or even know how to find out.

73 There is more to be said about her as there was a mystery to her. The parting look she gave me has inserted itself in my mind's eye a smile that held secrets.

74 Something I've left out is that his English is adequate but there were lots of conversations that were half French then English and our back and forth was often mostly not understanding one another. And that was ok. Slightly comedic.

21 May 2017 Sunday

I went to bed/sleep so early that I woke just before morning call, rinsed my scarf, soaped the insoles and drank all the water in the room fridge.

I think I've never stayed awake here after 1st call, today there is a chorus of roosters call and response as the city wakes. The roosters actually began before the birds. Before the rattling rhythm of this one cart that rolls below my window each AM. Even traffic from the highway that circles the medina was quieter, now begins along with the smaller birds.

The scarf is nearly dry. There was a bit of a breeze though I feel or am still pretty warm. The blister on my foot will be troublesome just because of where it is.

I have almost 1000d in my wallet and have gone through the papers of travel plans, ticket stubs of flights already taken, the print outs of 'stuff' before I came, I am conflicted about what to bring home and what to toss. My inclination is to leave, what I don't need going forward, in the waste can. I know that I rarely look at any of the miscellany from my trips to Spain or Turkey. My thinking is to try to find just a few items. The cd's, the plastic festival pass. If I find the idiosyncratic thing today maybe that will suffice.

Given how much I use the Turkish table runner as my scarf, if I can find an equivalent today...and I still need to get something for S...it won't be exactly what she requested as that does not exist as she imagines, or perhaps I imagine she imagines.

The mosaics here are not tiles in the sense we think – large patterned pieces. So I want to get something but don't know exactly what. The one tile I found is not ornate though it *is* about as Moroccan as I can imagine – that would be for me I doubt it would fit the bill.

I must pack once today, see what fits what doesn't. I brought too much *colder* weather clothing and wish I hadn't now that I have to get it home. Packing will be gifts 1st, essentials in Seattle, then the extras. Maybe/might have to look for some kind of bag to carry what can be lost.

~ ~

Close to the end and there is an internal temptation to be on my way. Resist! I have the luxury of a day in Fes and no schedule, no sights left officially to see (I seriously doubt I can get into the library). Since Jnin Sbile is so lovely that seems like a place to return to. I've been told by Carmen that the courtyard at Batha is lovely and it's near the garden but this blister could interfere.

~ ~

If I were to do this again in this weather: T-shirt, linen sweater (which I brought and notice that it's near the end of it's useful life), a lighter long sleeve linen shirt, long pants, sandals and *maybe* in case a light weight rain coat, and *always*, a long scarf always.

The scarf doubles, triples, quads, hat, neckwarmer, shawl, pillow, wash cloth, face mask against dust or cigarette smoke or perfume, hides you and marks you out.

Maybe nail clippers.

~ ~

Do I know more about myself now? Not sure. Some ways since the people I've met have asked me who I am I've had to admit or reconcile how I feel in Seattle with what I actually do.

Too many words I use about what I do seem unconnected to who I feel to be internally.

Do I become one before I die? Seems like a good question, one that can't be answered until then and one that doesn't matter after that.

~ ~

I am surprised that I have actually used this notebook up during this trip. There must be a lot of dross that will not make it into the typescript but I won't know until I'm home.

~ ~

Sun rises, time to snooze.

~ ~

We are all travelers. Gathering when we do exchanging what we know for what we don't. Each one observes with different eyes, ears, our minds do not work the same, our language changes within each conversation, never intentional.

We don't see the same things even while looking at the same time, direction, place. My colors are not your colors. The sounds I choose to give import to are not yours.

We approach the desert on different paths. The wind erases the footsteps of those who lead ~ we can say we follow but the path we follow is one blazed solely on our own.

A labyrinth (the medina) cannot trap you but each time you are returned to a place you recognize there is something you had not noticed before.

As travelers we become children. Willing to run in full sun because we can, because we wish and because we may not know the reason not to do so.

~ ~

Due to Ramadan Morocco has Ramadan time (like daylight 'savings') spring forward 1 hour. This is so people can fast and work more easily with less time in the heat of the day.

The day 'light' began grey as though overcast but warm. I wondered, as the canvas retracted, if it would be cooler but that was not to be.

I almost immediately saw a plane and its trail as though below the grey yet high and looking small. It is the hour of burning off to a dull whiteness. Perhaps to turn blue as in all the other days.

I did wonder, even though Aladin had mentioned the time change last night (but without a watch or clock in the room it meant nothing to me), why morning call was in the dark – now I know.

At any moment I think there is no more to say and I am sure I have said it before.

Carmen & I had a conversation about how without silence you cannot work, and that there are different kinds of silence. She would find a place, sometimes the library but just as

often a cafe or student room where all the conversation had nothing to do with her, and she could sit and read/write/study as though it was quiet all around.

I was able to refrain from giving my own examples, I have them, so perhaps this is a common experience.

Arendt's Life of the mind ~ if you have that kind of life you must find a kind of silence to do that work.

There was a sort of 'status' assumed by many festival goers. So many visited Fes during the festival without knowing about it as if we were special/better/ and elite. Tourist clog the alleys led by guides in our way as though we were not tourists clogging the way too.

Then there are the few(?) who go to everything possible (site &/or music events) and evidence surprise that another did not see, visit, hear what they did. A "how could you miss that?" something must be lacking in you.

There were not that many who attended the whole festival, Heather and Victor (both one day companions) bought tickets as they pleased, the full pass would have done nothing for them. Just as I do not go or buy full subscriptions to OTB, ACT, NWB, or SIFF anymore, it is true – not everything will be of interest or fit into your personal schedule.

But the herd instinct to assemble into something special to give oneself identity by association or activity, is strong. The pleasure of connection as transitory as it is, casts a comfortable shadow over us. We willingly give ourselves up to it.

~ ~

Talked to Jayne and Kirsten about the extras on their bills which are a mystery.

I think if I were to return to a former "French Colony" a French/English dictionary would be much more helpful, though what I brought did help, just not as much as hoped.

Partially the problem is that though literacy has grown from 30% to 70% (at best) I cannot point at a word in my phrasebook and get guaranteed an answer.

Why? Because looking at their bills there are items that I thought were included but are not (I didn't understand the French listing in my room). Their extras (which are/will be less than mine) seem to be under 1000d (\$100) so I'm hoping/guessing mine will be under 2000d (I was very close it was barely over that).

~ ~

It is going to be HOT!

~ ~

It is hot. No idea what temp is but hot enough.

I managed to get all the way through from Bab Jdid to Bab Boujloud, past the tile shop (which I didn't think I would find a tile at and was looking at small trays). A mother & daughter (4-6 yrs old) are deciding on bowls. The shopkeeper has gone to get them more for them to choose from. As I turn to ask them where the shopkeeper is I see, nearly hidden, what S has asked for. Success! I chose 2, he wants X for each, but I don't have small enough change so he

says “begin the day simple day remains smooth” (something close to that) takes my 20d bill and wraps the tiles up and I am on my way.

I find the weaving shop but no keeper, a woman standing across from the shop asks me if I am Jewish. At first I think she want to show or take me to the synagogue. No, she is day 1 in medina standing outside her Riad already lost. Asks me if I live here, then what she should see. I pull out the larger map of Fes and say she is already in the general area of tourist sights, recommend the garden and give her my map. About 15 minutes later I go back to see if the weaver has returned – the woman is gone but a sort of 'doorman' (sits on a chair with cellphone in hand and is connected to her Riad) tells me that she went in to get her companion.

The weaver returns, I ask how big = 1.5mX2.5m (approx). We go in and unfold one it is 'handmade' [probably]. I touch the loom and say I have used one. He asks “In Morocco?” “No.” “I give you discount 180d” (instead of the original 200d).

I tell him which one I want, we fold it together and I am done spending money on things⁷⁵.

I did give Jayne a Mongol cd as she found them sold out and my scissors as I do not want the airport hassle. She and Kirsten are taking a 2 day drive(!) to Marrakesh today in evening on the way across the desert they will stay in a tent.

I continue to plan to get to the garden via Bab Boujloud. Jnin Sbile is something like Huntington Gardens in California, as it has different sections and seems that many of the plants are not indigenous to Morocco .

The garden is now open completely to the public. The pond with the island and storks is being fished! Rod & reels, chairs circling the pond.

Earlier I found myself in the fish market section of the Medina. One man in a stall was talking to a couple while he ripped the head off sardines, split them with a thumb and tore the spine out. Spine & head one direction the body into a bowl. His actions and the conversation never paused, he barely looked for or at the spine.

Meat & fish stall after stall, hard to tell if any had refrigeration, often the fish parts/fillets were just displayed on a platter (no ice).

I find myself at Bab Boujloud, walking past where I ate skewers yesterday. It was full and I was not yet hungry, a waiter called to me, after I said I'd been there yesterday, he claimed to remember and 'inshallah' I might return. I might (don't) haven't decided.

Jnin Sbile is actually outside the Medina walls, if (as the Israeli woman asked) someone asks me for recommendations or of my favorite place I would answer here in the garden.

Especially today, when students are studying (one man was checking his papers, then walking away reciting something) families with small children running and playing with the water in the fountains.

The man sitting across from the weaver asked about the music festival as if it only was the movies that he went to and liked, and Bab al Makina more expensive and he didn't go. When I

⁷⁵ Not quite.

said the best concerts were in the garden he was surprised and piecing together what he said in French it seems that either the garden was closed to the public until recently or that it is now restored and so he wished he had known about concerts there as that would be a good place to go for music.

I am sitting around a fountain that is not flowing. Children run, dip their hands in the water that has yellow flowers drifting on it. A couple just now speaking some form of German sit near me, like a few days ago – sit in one place and the world will pass by.

I return to the Riad via the wall road (last night I asked a Policeman which way at a fork, he confirmed what I thought and said “but be careful”, I laughed and said “I know”). There are very narrow sidewalks then then none, the cars, taxis, & small trucks bomb around the twists and turns.

Instead of going directly back I go to an ATM and then back into the souk looking for a basket or bag for clothing I can afford to lose on the trip home. The ATM emits only 100s and 200s which in the souk is worthless just too big, like handing a vegetable stall a \$100 bill at a farmer's market for 1 bunch of carrots, you can do that but they won't be happy, here often you just can't do it.

I return to the Riad and do a preliminary packing and yes I need something for I don't have enough room in my shoulder bag.

I am again melting and take a shower rinse out what I was wearing and lay down to rest.

Later I get up and with only my wallet (no id, no passport) head back to the souk. I get some mint tea and water, breaking a 100d so I can buy something.

There are baskets near the entrance, I walk further in but I don't see anything else and I don't want to search further.

~ ~

The basket man wants 50d, it's big enough, probably won't survive the trip (*it does*) but will do the job.

Back at the Riad I pack the basket, it'll do. It has handles but I strap my belt around it (now I will look like a peasant traveling) it's full but I'm ready....

I go back downstairs into the fountain courtyard (I have time) pick up a coffee table tome/heavy big “Fes Cite de l'art et du Savoir” by Mohammed Sijelmassi.

Yes in French, yes I can make out most of what I read (I don't read the essays I read the captions).

As I page through it I see photos of places I have been able to see. What struck me was just how much I couldn't see. Non-Muslims aren't allowed in the mosques I think there is one that you can⁷⁶ go in because it's no longer in use (don't remember why, could just be due to Touristic need) . You can't go into medrasas (schools) you can't go into the Royal Palace (maybe there is a time/day but my impression is **no**) and what glories might be in private homes....you

⁷⁶ See page 11 it was a medrasa and school must have been out.

would need to be invited.

This takes nothing away from the beautiful things you do have access to which is a lot and varied. It's that any picture book of Fes will show you things that you can't actually see with your own eyes.

My Riad had marked a few pages with post it notes, one indicated that this photo inspired some part of the decoration here. In fact I'd say the various beauties inside this Riad compare well with anything in that book.

~ ~

Lastly what you seek and see is what you bring to it. If you are buying things, that's what you'll see, if eating – the variety that's possible, you can – easily. There are structures and sites – for those I'd recommend guides or a driver. Be specific, **before** hiring, about what you are interested in and what languages you comprehend. English will only get you so far. Most often it will be so mixed in with French words that it will be difficult to stay on top of the conversation.

Some Moroccans have worked in Spain or Germany but the reality is the amount they speak well enough to give complicated (and everything you will want to know includes some complication) is less than what is required. Pronunciations are mostly the issue. The words spoken maybe English but grammar and pronunciation will or can confuse your ears.

Even all the international people I have mentioned, all of us spoke with different accents in English or French and my experience is that it can be exhausting. **And** totally worth the effort.

Sa Va.

~ ~

I truly thought the above would be the end of Fes material but just after writing that and some music, the owner tell Adil that I should be moved to a better room. WHOA

I am now on the 1st floor, double bed with royal canopy (red curtains, large divan, a shower bath with glass enclosure, wooden and glass openings (iron work if the 'windows' are open) it all opens to the fountain courtyard. The owner says he apologizes for giving me that room (the monk's retreat) but that it was the only one free for my entire stay. This is also somehow connected to me giving Adil the Eric Bibb cd and a tip of 400d but all that is unspoken/implicit, sort of. I am also leaving my English/Arabic phrasebook and the owner asks me to make sure to write my name in it and to write something in the guest book (a large leather bound folio of the only read desk in the place) which I do.

“21/22 May 17

I have stayed here since the 9th for a Musique Festival. The Riad is beautiful more than I deserve. It is interesting to be humbled & honored by the staff. Ask them anything and if they can they will provide. If this is your 1st time (as it is mine) here and you are able I recommend trying to walk everywhere. It is confusing but that is the pleasure and the adventure.

May your adventures please you as much as mine have me.

And much of that is due to staying here”

~ ~ ~

I hope that was helpful and diplomatic.

My chicken & olive tagine is totally different again, no matter, I end up with the wish end of the wishbone and ask Adil if he knows of this and the only wish thing he knew was about losing a tooth and tossing it away with a wish.

2nd glass of wine was probably 1 too many but no matter. I begin to retire and he says there's fruit, I don't want it so it will come for breakfast and I will take some on the train.

I did ask about the classes on the train but it still isn't clear about cost It is clear that you get a specific seat and that the compartments are air conditioned. Whether you sit alone or with others is not clear. Another adventure beckons....

Now I might be done? Bon soir.

~ ~ ~

22nd May 2017

The time change for Ramadan, morning prayer call so early. Before the birds rise or roosters call birds chirp. Dark and as sun rises slowly it looks for a while like it will be overcast. No, though now clouds drift, they are not solid and not wisps (too often there were wisps that made me think there might be a change in weather only for it to get hotter). There is a morning coolish breeze.

There were only 3 rooms taken, one an unpleasant Chinese man who didn't want breakfast and left early. The staff has little to do so there is chatter and the birds and chores.

Of all things – I find Train Dreams by Denis Johnson in ENGLISH. This is the 1st thing (and last) I read in English other than what I've written. I'll guess that R has read it (he hasn't) but it is a story somewhat like my Grandmother's and some of the feeling is like my life and yet not at all like my life.

It is a novella, and I sat read it all in a sitting drinking too much coffee eventually eating fruit 1st then as more kitchen staff arrived breakfast food. After fruit I was too full but Adil had the kitchen make those semolina cookies/biscotti especially for me and are so good dipped in coffee that I ate them all. A few olives left most of what was served, felt wasteful but it was just too much.

It is only a bit after 9am I asked to leave around noon for the train to Rabat, still have time to sit twiddling. Clothes in the basket, gifts, meds, and notebooks in my shoulder bag ~ that odd feeling of no need to go waiting to go wanting to go and willing to just sit as really there's nothing left to do except mentally prepare to go and do nothing while going.

~ ~

Black car/limo to train station in the 'new city' (created by the French I think) all modern except for traffic and clothing. Seems as though in this part there is a tendency to spell Fes with a z. 1st class ticket is only 127d⁷⁷, compartment is air conditioned and you are assigned a seat. I was assigned a window seat facing forward and the additional cost may reduce how many people can afford and therefore be in this compartment.

This is similar to trains I've ridden in Europe. I was able with no additional information to find my place. The ticket made sense. There is a 'soundtrack' and it may get annoying. Out of many cars there is only one that is first class. We will go through a number of cities so my compartment could fill up. This will be a very different experience from the ride to Fes.

Rabat – bigger bustling city. I'm in the medina but not in the right mood for this. The staff at this Riad doesn't really know much English (or French really). As a Riad it really is or was a family home, it's got a big cat. It's warm & humid (weather not inside) I'm not sure but it feels like we are surrounded by children/family sounds, or at first I feared a disco but that was just a radio.

Outside crowds of people, selling things, anything.

⁷⁷ So the difference between 1st and 2nd class is \$4.25. That makes a huge difference in who can afford it. This should put the economics in some perspective.

Spoiled by Fes and it's crowdedness this is more ... just exhausting. I'm tired, have to get up early (3am?) not really hungry but also not willing to take a chance on street food (*Like I did the 1st time in Turkey the night before flying home I ate some 'bad' fish, spent all night praying in the bathroom.*) There were tacos, pizza but no restaurants nearby or cafe's like in Fes. Instead of some roasted corn on the cob over charcoal, there is some dipped in hot water. Selfie sticks of many different colors & lengths. Phones with Samsung on them and many clearly used and questionable.

The train took nearly 4 hours and wasn't that interesting mostly because there was no one to ask about the trees, crops, industry to be seen through the windows.

OK → I'm not in the right mood for this part of the adventure. The Riad is fine my room enormous, the bed double, pillows so soft I'm frightened of them. The 2 young women as staff, one completely head scarved and long trad dress, the other (with a bit more French but not enough English to help) not trad and in jeans, both young and pretty.

~ ~

Found someone to try to explain that I need to be woken at 3 to go to the airport, anxious about it but suspect my anxiety is unfounded and also suspect I will not sleep very well this evening anyway.

This part to stay in Rabat didn't work out very well. Mostly I think because my travel agent⁷⁸ and I originally thought it would be 2 days and I would have Semih along so we could explore whatever there was to explore.

Also it's inexpensive and after Fes I could have stayed near the airport to just get up and go. This is not close to the airport, all of this is learning learning learning.

~ ~ ~

Fell into a doze twice, too noisy until, probably, midnight though without a clock/watch how would I know? Roused when I heard morning prayer call, freaked out as what I feared about no one coming to wake me was true....but as I dressed there was a loud knock on the outside door – there's a driver!

No one else is around I drop the key and 400d which is more than I should but if they complain that I didn't pay whatever for 'extras' I'll know that I've covered everything.

Airport is bigger in the dark, chauffeur speaks a bit and more or at least understands a bit more English so we almost have a conversation.

The Airport is way outside the Medina, in fact it seemed like we were going far far away. I'm so tired my eyes won't focus, but I'm on my way – home. I feel dirty already so when I get checked in I'll wash my face and feel more human, which I do not at the moment.

~ ~

I corralled an Air France person about how my dietary needs weren't met coming here and how I didn't expect it to be put right (not enough time) Rabat to Paris but needed food Paris

⁷⁸ I'm willing to give him rave reviews please contact me and I'll give you his info.

to Minneapolis. He took pictures of my reservations and seating check-in ticket to send so I will be able to have something to eat.

~ ~

Paris CDG found a shop called Naked. They had paper containers (like ½ gallon Ice cream carton) of shrimp Pho – and – it wasn't bad (though I was starving). The Paris to Minneapolis flight didn't get my info either. Probably more upset than I was but they did find something a fish thing slightly suspicious (sauce?) but I'm not shaking or burping yet.

~ ~

Watched Dr. Strange, figured that sometime on a plane I would finally see it. I don't really know why fans had problems with Swinton, she dies in the end, so she's not in the sequels. and Bale is just as bad as he seems. The visuals at times were boring and on a little bitty seat screen and my seat off center so half the time I couldn't tell what was going on. But given it's on a plane and there was only international NYTimes & Economist in English (no thank you wish to remain in the dark until I'm no longer in the dark). I still have nothing to read.

There was a moment laying in that bed in Rabat where I thought “I am so tired of being in my own head”. Possibly you'd never know it from all these words (I promise there could be so many more). But the relief of having someone else to talk to during the festival was greater than I knew.

On Sunday on my own about to be on my own even with the briefest visit with Damien brought that on strongly.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

That is the end. It took nearly 48 hours to get home with layovers in Rabat, Paris, and Minneapolis. Then light rail and bus...I ate a light dinner nearby and walked with my basket of clothes and shoulder bag of gifts....later some people asked when I was going not even having realized that I had gone, been gone. Now I'm back. Took a week to recover.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Last thoughts for now; I'm really glad I did this, having done it I doubt that I would do it again. I feel like I'm full no more can get in, yes other parts of Morocco would be different but I feel like I have a pretty clear sense of the people in this part of Morocco and my curiosity has been sated.

The Music Festival was a very hit and miss experience. I learned and perhaps will be able to remember, that international festivals are opportunities for commercial projects to promote themselves. There was a great deal of that, many of the performances were product sales tools. I learned that mash-ups generally don't work and that when they do it's pretty cool. And that a festival, despite whatever title it uses, must pander to a denominator that is appealing to 'the masses'. I was looking for more 'religious music' as that was in the title. The theme of Sacred and water was stretched so thin as to be meaningless, I wish it hadn't been. And organizationally this was not well done.

I have favorites and strong dislikes in music and if you're interested I could make a list of the best of this festival but I think I've mentioned them in the text.

Thanks for reading. → Jay