

JACKDAW 08

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Dear Reader (2023-07-15)

This afternoon (July 5), my objective is to pretend to write. This is where words drift in and out. Semi-articulated phrases are occasionally scrawled onto paper, and then slowly refined. A dry breeze carries a butterfly across my view. I am sitting at a pine shaded picnic table by a creek. Rainbow trout, some going red with exhaustion, are swimming upstream to a spawning pool known only to them. A couple of fat ground squirrels scamper by on an afternoon tour of the campsites. The sound of the creek is an acoustic time exposure photograph. At a long exposure, only white silk is audible. At a slightly shorter exposure I hear long silk threads. At a still shorter exposure, there is an ever-changing flow of plips, plops, and gurgles.

Some say photography is hard. I think a better word is slow. My hurried photos are usually soulless dreck. When I take my time in each step of the photographic process, I, on occasion create an image of which I am proud. My writing process is even slower.

It has been over six weeks since we were in Vidin (population 40,500 [1]), Bulgaria on the banks of the Danube. In Vidin, the skies are grey. It would be easy to discount the town as an impoverished one with a damaged spirit from 2 to 3 generations of Soviet vampires. Recovering from that blood loss will take a while longer. Both Bulgaria and Romania are now having to find their way in the competitive social democracies of the EU where the elder siblings are richer, more powerful, and more adept at the socio-economic dance called European capitalism.

Sadness is easy to find. Hope is harder to find, but it too is there. On the patio of what turns out to be the Vidin Art Gallery, there is a collection of sculptures and statues. I try a door or three. A non-descript side door is open, exposing two exhibition rooms. To the left, half a dozen young children are playing with paper, paints, and pencils. I turn to the room on my right. A woman in her thirties appears from the curator's office, stands beside me, and walks me through the history and significance of the oil paintings. Interestingly there is nothing more recent than 1947. One of the joys of traveling is inadvertently personalizing a place. When I was running, a jog on unknown streets would connect me physically with the environment. Now, I walk and wander. I thank the woman for the spontaneous unprompted private tour, and give her a donation. She didn't ask for it, but I felt there was unspoken hope or expectation.

There is only one background section in today's post.

Site Maintenance

An occasional reader commented that he found the font a little faint. It took me an afternoon to figure out how to subtly alter the font weight without affecting the character of the site. Do you notice a difference?

Notes on Photos

- ~ all photos Vidin, Bulgaria
- ~ 3 – on the other side of the street from the gallery
- ~ 4 – there is always hope in children being introduced to art
- ~ 5 – Zlatyu Boyadjiev, 1903-1976, In the Fields, oil on canvas, 145 x 200 cm, 1942 (before communism)
- ~ 6 through 8 – outside the gallery
- ~ 13 through 16 – along the boardwalk



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References

~ [1] – <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/vidin>

You are welcome to share a link to this page with others.

As always, all comments are welcome and sought.

Cheers, Sean

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