



"Snow" (Yuki) by Utagawa Toyokuni

Happy Holidays,

What better time for doing Holiday Cards (Christmas Cards, New Year Cards, etc.) than Christmas Eve? For me that's some kind of record. It's time to fire up the Mac G5, the Epson inkjet, the HP laser, and my long obsolete Epson flatbed scanner. It's also time to fumble with software that I've forgotten how to use. Time to page through my collection of ukiyo-e books to find a suitable graphic to pirate. Next year I may be switching over to animation characters as my theme.

I hope all of you are doing well. How am I? My metabolism is slowing down (where did those ten pounds come, plus the fifteen that came from out of nowhere a little earlier?) and I'm accumulating a collection of reading glasses which I can never find when I need them. Initially they were a luxury but now they are a necessity, at least if I want to know what I'm eating. I did make it to the Chinatown Firecracker 10K, the one and only 10K that I still do. I didn't do any backpacking trips this year, but I did go cross-country skiing, as well as some token telemarking. At the Mammoth McDonalds they gave me the senior discount when I purchased a cup of decafe. I was going to explain that I really didn't qualify for the discount quite yet, but then I realized that it would result in at best some understanding smiles, or more likely a few snickers as soon as I walked away from the counter. My only other physical adventure was the Tour de Sewer metric century, the only century, metric or otherwise, with which I still keep up. This year the ride was very wet again, but not as bad as they year when I had so many flats that I had to DNF. Trying to fix flats in the rain is about as bad as it gets. I still commute to work (or more accurately, the place where I show up during the week) by motorcycle on a regular basis, but my involvement with ballroom dancing has dropped. I work as the roadie for what was once the Hughes Social Dance Club.

Unlike last year, I remembered to plan a vacation this year and made it to Greece in November. Since I'm short on initiative and motivation these days, I elected to go with an organized tour, Globus, for most of the trip. For five days I didn't have to think and someone just kept telling me what to do, where to sleep, and what to eat. That's about as good as it gets-sort of like a reversion to childhood. The only exception was a side trip I arranged to the ancient church of Hosios Loukas and the Distomo monument. The last three days I struck off on my own and took a bus to the site of ancient Sparta and the ruined Byzantine city of Mystra-one of my must-see goals. Pictures are on my website at <http://www.ikemi.info/mytravel.html>.

Anyway I wish you all of the best for the New Year.

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