

My kingdom for a shopping cart

Donna Schaper | Sep. 17, 2013 Eco Catholic

In the final act of Shakespeare's "Richard III," right before he dies, King Richard cries out: "A horse! A horse! My kingdom for a horse!" His enemy has killed his horse and he knows he is in more than a little bit of trouble. His technology has become inappropriate for his situation.

I often cry with King Richard. Some days I cry for want of a pocket. I need a place to put my transit card if I am to ride the subway. I need a place to put my keys if I am to get into my office. I need a place for my credit card if I am to buy lunch. At these prices, I am often over the \$10 cash limit.

If my credit card is in my pocket, with my keys and my transit card, I am a whirlwind in town. If they are in that strange thing called a "pocketbook," I become fumbly as well as psychologically winded by the searches for my essentials.

Other days, out of town and in the country, I cry for want of a wheelbarrow. I can't carry all the weeds or leaves by hand, but if I had a wheelbarrow nearby I could make the heavy light; the dispersed, unified; the scattered, controlled.

I have also cried looking for a broom, just to clean up the hallway. Some days I even cry that I don't have "time" to sweep the porch or the deck. It would be so lovely if I could. But I can't, because I can't find the broom or the time.

Those of us who live deep in the time famine understand. On my recent vacation, staying at a friend's house, I swept her front porch with vigor every morning. It was my feast and vacation. At home, my porch is a mess.

Not to mention the dustpan. I don't know why it keeps changing its residence but it does.

Or the fingernail clippers. They never seem to be in my suitcase at the right time or when I am home, they usually seem to be in my suitcase, the one I just put down in the cellar.

I reserve my deepest praise for the last item. The shopping cart allows me to go shopping for groceries in New York and to buy the five-pound bag of flour instead of the two-pounder. I usually save about \$2 a pound on this exchange, and also save my back from the strain of my backpack, often heavy from carrying the too much of my days.

Each of these technologies allow me freedom from the car. And yes, I just bought a new Prius -- my sixth, actually. I love my Prius. It allows me to get out of town, but even more I love my pockets and my shopping carts.

They allow me to stay in town.

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