Our new home is plenty big -- four rooms, a large kitchen with a great view, and a living room -- and is in a great location, but it's also a throwback to our student rental houses at Montana State University, when I was working on my PhD: industrial carpet, linoleum, white walls and old wall paper, 60's era appliances, etc. We all like the place; a funky, outdated home for a long stretch will do us good.

Although Dunedin is about as far south as Missoula is north, it is on the ocean and so its climate is mild. A typical winter day reaches about 50 degrees Fahrenheit and the temps at night typically hover above freezing. As a result, most houses don't have central heating, just a wood stove and wall heaters. This means that by Montana standards, the houses are cold in winter; when our place is heated up, I still need a sweatshirt and cap to be cozy. And due to the cold nights, electric blankets are standard.

Every morning I wake up in the cold dark and start a fire in the stove in the kitchen, make coffee, and sit and read or write. After the first couple of days of this, I set the rule of no technology during this early morning time; email, or even a proximity to it, seems to raise my blood pressure. With this plain ritual, I have felt a sense of peace return that has too long been elusive.
A quirky fact about our home is that we live on Baldwin Street, which locals claim is "the steepest street in the world". (There's even a Wikipedia sight if you want verification.) What's strange about this is the large number of tourists that come to see it; why it's a must see sight for so many is beyond me. The steady tourist traffic through the day is a bit annoying, but it also means some good people watching.

Getting settled in a new place is a challenge. Here's a list of some of the necessary things we've accomplished in our first days and in order of appearance: find a grocery store, find the skate park (Alex's first bike spot), find a bike shop (we like Bike Otago, owned by pro downhiller Justin Leov and his parents), visit the kids' schools, find a department store, get a bank account, get library cards, find a car, get a cell phone, go for a ride ... you get the idea. Fortunately, the list is shrinking.
Alex at the bottom of Baldwin Street
We finally made it to the beach.