Week 28, A Progress Report on Surfing

Learning to surf has been quite a journey. Alex and I have been out nearing 60 times now, and I'm only just feeling like we've moved out of the beginner ranks. Mind you, we're not yet experts, but it seems reasonable to say that we're now intermediate.

I compare surfing with skiing - a sport I'm very familiar with - because both are hard to master. To take the skiing analogy further, it feels like we are now venturing onto (single) black diamond terrain with blue square skills and a dose of boldness. We're flailing a bit, but are otherwise doing alright.

One thing that's different about surfing is that you've really got to pay attention to the conditions. Unlike with skiing (at a resort anyway), if the conditions aren't right - swell direction, wave size, and less so, wind - it's likely not worth going. This is a lesson that I learned the hard way, by going out and getting humbled day after day during a long stretch of poor conditions. I was ready to quit, but thankfully the conditions came around.

During the last couple of weeks, conditions have been good, and I've been reading the swell right. We've had some great outings, culminating in a trip to Murdering Beach last night, which as on, as they say. I was only able to catch one wave, but it's my best ride yet. Even more, Murdering is a real spot, not
suitable for beginners, and I felt up to the task, even if not quite skilled enough to take full advantage of the great conditions.

Best of all with this surfing thing has been the time with Alex. He's picking up the sport faster than I am; it's the rare day that he doesn't catch several more waves than me. But it's also bittersweet, as I know that when we return to Montana, we won't have that common interest to get us out together several times a week. I wish I could ride this time much longer than just the next several weeks of summer and early fall.