"Thoughts on Thebes #RTW"  BLOG POST BY ANDREW EVANS, OCTOBER 31, 2012

1. I am relieved to discover that King Tut’s tomb is smaller than my apartment back home. Now, when I return from this transcendent circumnavigation, I am less likely to suffer from any serious bouts of post-travel claustrophobia. After freely roaming around the gargantuan sphere of Earth, I expect my home in the city will seem small, but not as small and confining as the eternal home of poor undignified King Tut, laid to rest in a windowless underground studio apartment with the unromantic address KV62, dishonored daily by the noisy parade of uninvited sunburned guests.

2. As mummified humans go, King Tutenkhamen is quite small. Archeologists estimate that in life, Tut was 5’11” and standing next to him, my ballpark guess is that over the millennia, he’s shrunken at least a foot. I stare at his black raisin of a body, shriveled up and cloaked in a shroud, as if lying on a table, waiting for a massage.

3. The boy king could use a spot of moisturizer—as could I. The air is so dry, here, in the Valley of the Kings, at the edge of the great and sandy Sahara—my throat has turned to cotton. Back at the hotel, they’ve got industrial-strength humidifiers humming in the hallways, filling the air with scented, barely-moist air, so that our nostrils won’t chap.

4. Once or twice a day, the electricity cuts out for a few seconds, sending us all into silent blackness, then recovering with the buzz of appliances switching back on again. I wonder what would happen if the power stayed off and all the humidifiers died—would the super-dry air simply mummify me in my sleep so that come morning, I would look just like King Tut, with his twisted beef jerky limbs under the sheets?

5. Cameras have been disallowed inside the Valley of the Kings, on the grounds that the bright lights of flash photography will fade the splendiferous and colored paintings. And so I carry no camera—only my phone that happens to takes decent (if not grainy) pictures of the tomb’s stone-carved walls, every inch alive with important hieroglyphs—a billboard and instruction manual for the afterlife.

6. I accept that I am tempting fate by sneaking an iPhone into King Tut’s tomb. I know all about the curse of the pharaohs and the uncanny misfortunes that befall nosy explorers and Egyptologists past—any and all who disrupt the graves of Egypt’s dynastic kings.

7. Even so, I am compelled by the force of the internet to Instagram King Tut’s blurry body to the world. Howard Carter would have done the same thing, accompanied by a rapid tweet of the famous first words he spoke after discovering the tomb in 1922: “I see wonderful things.”

From http://blog.nationalgeographicexpeditions.com/2012/10/thoughts-on-thebes-rtw/ 10/16/13