

Here We Are

July 28, 2022

Copenhagen – Frankfurt – Calgary

You are great traveling companions! Having all of you along for the ride to Denmark made the trip meaningful. Thank you for that. We answered the questions we set out to, and found a whole bunch of new things to see and think about.

Bear and I spent a lot of time tracing my family roots. I should have posted this sliver of the Bekker Family Tree earlier. I have trouble following the ancestry path, and I am one of the acorns (some would say *nuts*) on the tree.

Cameras weren't in general use in Bendix's time,
but I do see a family resemblance.



Bendix E Bekker
1808 – 1884
Maren Jensdatter
-
Niels Bendixon Bekker
1840 - 1921
Karen Spangengerg
-
Frederik Nielsen Bekker
1872 - 1953
Florence Mae Whistler
-
Florence Mae Bekker
1904 - 1990
William Paton
-
Adrian Keith Paton
1934 – 2021
Patricia Wells
-
Russell Adrian Paton
1955 -
Terri (Bear) Shepherd



Following an ancestry chain sheds light on just how lucky we are to have been born. One tiny change in the ripple of events of any one of many lifetimes, and we would be nothing more than stardust.



If Niels Bekker had worked late on the evening of March 8, 1872 while living at this house, or if Karen Bekker had a meeting at the church that night, my Great Grandfather Frederik Nielsen Bekker might not have been conceived.

If that hadn't happened a long line of ancestors ending in me, wouldn't be here, now or ever.

Only the rarest combination of events leads to our existence, which is why it is so important to live every day to the fullest. Even one minute lost, or spent grumbling, or fussing over spilt milk, is an abomination.

An even greater travesty would be to squander what little time we have fussing over milk that hasn't yet spilt and may never.

"A ship in harbour is safe, but that's not what ships are built for."

- John A. Shedd



Another mistake would be to forego living this life in anticipation of the next.

King Gorm the Old has been waiting for a thousand years for this ship to take him to Valhalla. It hasn't happened yet, and it probably never will.

The probability that any of us is here to take this journey together is incredibly remote.

And yet, ...

...Here We Are.

Futurism



We are going to die, and that makes us the lucky ones. Most people are never going to die because they are never going to be born. The potential people who could have been here in my place but who will in fact never see the light of day outnumber the sand grains of Arabia. Certainly those unborn ghosts include greater poets than Keats, scientists greater than Newton. We know this because the set of possible people allowed by our DNA so massively exceeds the set of actual people. In the teeth of these stupefying odds it is you and I, in our ordinariness, that are here. We privileged few, who won the lottery of birth against all odds, how dare we whine at our inevitable return to that prior state from which the vast majority have never stirred?

- *Richard Dawkins*