



FUNNY MEN AND WOMEN WRITE FROM THE ROAD

Atrocious Lies) and We Thought You'd Be Prettier: True Tales of the Dorkiest Girl Alive, from which this story was excerpted.

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When packing for a trip, we have to sneak around at our house—otherwise, our suitcases will get peed in by our cat, Athena, who editorializes when we threaten to change the status quo. Likewise, travelers visit us at their peril. We admonish them to keep their things out of her way, for after they've worn out their welcome in Athena's estimation, their luggage is subject to the same treatment as ours.

When our Canadian friends once visited, we warned them, "Close your bags, stand them up so she can't get purchase on them, don't leave anything out for her to defile!" After about ten days, Athena, a cat of spooky intelligence, had had enough of those interlopers from the north. I walked into the office, where their things were stashed and blanched at what I saw: she had taken a whiz on the small Canadian flag that lay on the desk.

I cupped the dripping standard and timidly approached them with it. "Does this constitute an international incident?" I asked.

Relations between the United States and Canada appear stable, but we agree: It's better to be pissed off than pissed on.

—Carol Penn-Romine, "A Visit from the Canadians"