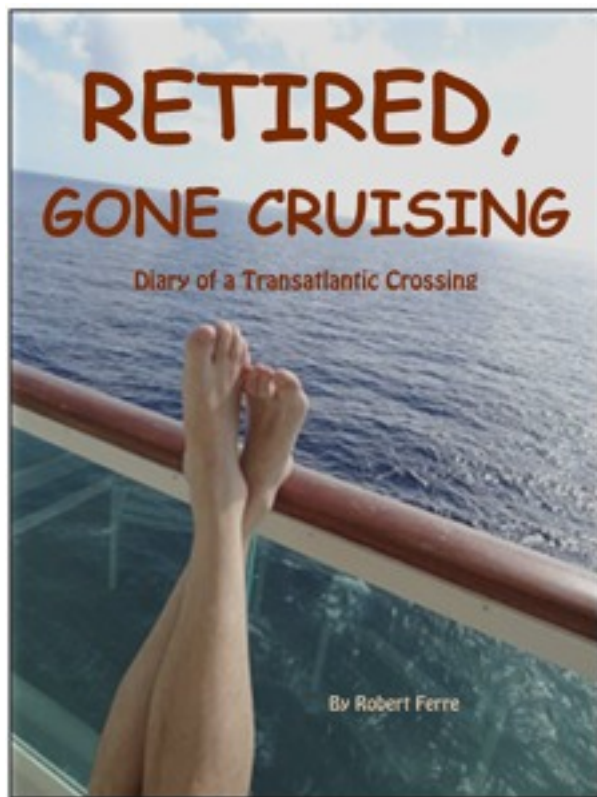


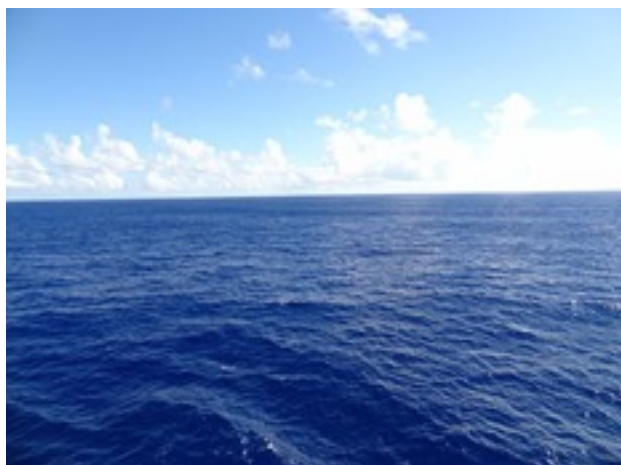
PART V: SEA DAZE

Ironically, modern day cruising is only peripherally about the sea. While small ships still have a relatively close rapport with the sea, huge ships like *Mariner of the Seas* operate almost independently of the sea, more like being inside a grand hotel or resort than a ship. That's what they want, of course. If there is movement or if the outer decks are closed due to weather, it's hard to ignore.

The sea is very internal. When I just sit on the balcony, watching the water pass by, numerous thoughts come to mind (shared in the book) which otherwise might not show up. The most striking aspect of the voyage was the relentlessness of our progress, crawling across the Atlantic Ocean for 3,000 miles at 23 miles an hour. That would be like driving across the United States in second gear, but you must drive 24 hours a day. The ship can go faster, but it isn't economical. Here are some of my images of the sea. (Yes, I took dozens of photos of my feet for the cover.)



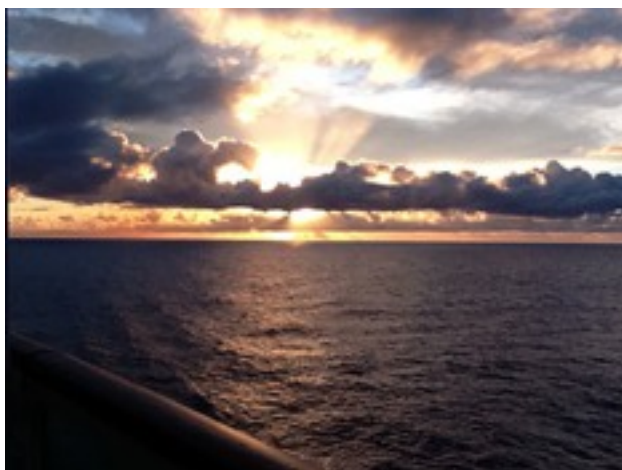
This is the primary view, from our balcony. Besides the view there is the sound and smell. We have taken cruises with an "ocean view" cabin, which has a window looking out at the sea that doesn't open. Without the sound and smell, it's not the same. I don't think I would survive taking an inside, windowless stateroom, despite the savings.



This gives meaning to the expression “deep blue sea.” Just as much of the time it was gray, and on a few days, rainy. Sunrise and sunset, the reflection of the moon in the water, white caps and swells, salt spray all the way up to our balcony -- the ocean presented a constant variety of moods.



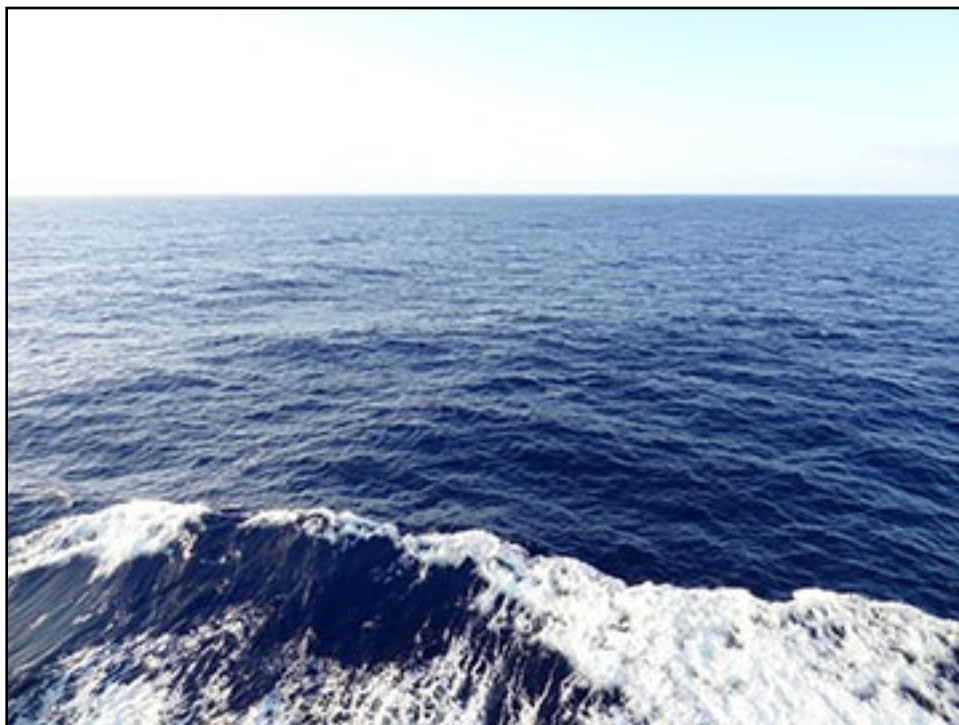
Above: The decks were closed due to the storm and wind. There were 20-foot swells and 40-knot winds. The ship showed a little “motion from the ocean” (as the Captain liked to say), but not much. We like a little rocking. Our two crossings this far south (the two others were more northerly, from New York to England), have had weather like the top photo most of the time, with calm seas and temperatures hanging around 80 degrees, even though we were traveling in November and December.



Leonardo di Caprio and Kate Winslet, where are you now? (Hint: Reference to the movie, *Titanic*) This little lookout on the bow is not open to the public, alas. Otherwise, Linda and I would have posed with our arms spread wide.

Right, a distant oil platform and tanker in the rain. In the Gulf of Mexico, we passed hundreds of oil platforms. Looking out our window at night, I could often see lights from ten different platforms, just in the slice of water within my vision.





The ship throws out its wake, but the sea swallows it up.



These last two are other people's photos of the ocean. Looks pretty much the same. That's the point. We all share the same ocean. One is from the website www.quinnstephens.com and the other from www.itsnature.org.

OK, I think you get the idea. I was going to take a video, 30 minutes of nothing but passing ocean, but I stopped after a couple of minutes. Oh, well.

This ends Part V. There are eight parts.

