

Although I don't have much time to weave right now--the garden and other work cannot wait--I do have warp on both of my looms. In late winter I warped the little cherrywood loom in the cabin with 35 meters of fine cotton/linen thread. I have woven about 14 meters of that. It will eventually provide material for new white curtains for the east window. I don't like curtains covering any of the view from any of our windows, but when the sun shines in the morning, we need to have some protection from the light and the heat. The rest of the time, the curtains are held back at the sides of the windows.

The big oak loom that Runo built is in the farm house. I don't weave there at all in the winter, as the house is closed up, and even with a warm jacket and stocking cap, it is too cold for my fingers to work well enough to efficiently weave. But, that loom is wound with rug warp. I have three or four finished rugs on the cloth beam now, and I can weave a few more before I run out of warp.

One thing leads to another, both in what we do and what goes through our minds. When I had the little loom warped, I happened to run across a black and white picture of Runo's grandmother weaving a rug. She was sitting at her loom in the *bua*, the dialect word for the *visthusbod* in Swedish or the *stabbur* in Norwegian. This little building held winter supplies of grain, salt pork, or anything else that needed a pest free environment. Other items had a place in the *bua*, too, including Frida's loom.

In the photograph, Frida sat at the loom in a dark wool jacket and a white head covering. Her left hand was preparing to bring the beater forward to pack the rug weft. Her right hand held the shuttle with the wound-up rug rags ready for the next pass through the loom's shed.

I always liked this picture, and I decided to enlarge it on our printer and tack it up on the short rough cedar wall next to the little loom in our cabin. When I pinned the picture up on the wall, we began to notice details that hadn't been as evident in the smaller original. In particular, we could now read the words on the box behind Frida. She had her extra balls of rags on the box. Clearly visible--though upside down, we read "Explosiv vara." This was a dynamite box.

Runo's father had worked at a couple of jobs that involved explosives. They used dynamite to blow ditches through the peat bogs where they would harvest peat that they dried and ground up for livestock bedding. He also worked on a crew that blasted the bedrock in the cuts that were made when they built E18, a main highway that goes across Norway and Sweden. So, I suppose there were many of these dynamite boxes emptied during those years. And, I can believe that they were in demand. A good wooden box with a solid cover--I wouldn't turn my nose up at one of those now, either. Think what good storage containers they make.

I'm not sure a picture is worth a thousand words. I have quite a lot of fondness for the written word. And the digital possibilities have made photography trivial, in many ways. The time has passed when small children hid behind their mothers or were in any way shy about having their pictures taken. Every event, no matter how small, is now recorded in pictures, but seldom in words. In most cases, a little child now, seeing an adult with a camera, automatically "assumes the position." A manufactured smile on the child's face, he or she looks toward the camera instead of toward whatever interesting animal, flower, or activity it was that prompted the adult to whip out the camera in the first place.

That's part of the reason I found the cover photo on a recent issue of *Sheep!* magazine so appealing. A little girl is holding a small lamb. The sheep flock can be seen in the distance, pasturing. It is obvious that the child is not concerned with the photo op. The small girl, with dirty cheeks and flying hair, has a very worried look on her face. She is looking back, and the caption reads, "I'm going to find the mom, momma!" What a contrast to the usual "documenting" of every activity of both children and adults that today's digital possibilities allow and encourage.

Perhaps, it goes back to a basic question. Should we do certain things just because we can? Or should we consider whether we will become so sated with certain kinds of information that they lose all value? I don't know. I do know that the stories that have been handed down in our family are as vivid and enthralling as any photograph. And,

perhaps, they are alive in a way that posed pictures seldom are.

Frida might have "posed" for the photo while she wove her rug. Maybe. Maybe not. The intent look on her face indicates to me that her mind was on her weaving, not on the fact that someone with a camera was hovering in the corner of the *bua*.

But, you see how one thing leads to another? My thoughts on weaving curtain material and rugs led to a bit of a philosophical dilemma. If a picture really is worth a thousand words, will it retain its value when we gather pictures in the thousands of every possible aspect of our lives? I haven't a clue.