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Nature hiking always puts me in a peaceful, spiritual state of mind. The best thing about nature hiking is observing the wild animals in their natural habitats where they, too, I assume, are also feeling peaceful and spiritual. The other day, while driving up to the Grand Meza where I like to hike, I saw an ewe (female bighorn sheep) grazing on the side of the road. I wanted to get a better look, so I pulled the car off the road about 30 feet away and got out. The ewe was not fearful of me, but when another, larger truck passed by, she seemed a little startled. Then I noticed a ram (male bighorn sheep) and three other ewes were grazing on a hill on the other side of the road. Then another big truck passed by, and the ram and two of the ewes scampered up a slope and disappeared down the other side of a hill. The other ewe started to follow them but stopped at the top of the hill, turned around, and stared at me.

It is amazing how those bighorn sheep can grab the rocks with their hoofs. Nature knows best! It is sad to me that humankind fails to see the value of nature. Unlike the bighorn sheep who are a part of nature, humans seem to strive to exist apart from nature.

Animal sightings are common around my area where I live. During a recent hike in the National Monument, I was startled by a small herd of mule deer consisting of one buck and three does. Both the buck and the does saw me before I saw them. I accidently startled them, causing them to run away, which startled me. Then they stopped, turned around, and looked at me, wondering who I was, and why I was staring at them. Once they realized that I posed no threat, they continued grazing on the sage.

I often wonder what other animals are thinking when they stare at me or somebody else. I know animals do not think like humans, but they do think, and this makes me wonder what is on their little animal minds. I wonder whether they are wondering the same thing about me. I may never know, but I will always wonder.