

Right, so forget all the recent posts and let's set the way-back machine to last Friday. After work I snuggled all the Airbnb bonus pets one last time and loaded up the bike. Packing the bike is not a quick process, I don't feel like I even have all that much stuff but it takes me a solid 20 minutes even after the luggage is all packed. So much for traveling light!

Soon enough I was on the road, heading northwest and intentionally meandering through parts of Madison I hadn't before. Less than an hour later I was away from the suburbs, driving along a cloudy evening heading towards my next Airbnb host a bit over the border in Winona, MN. I crossed the magnificent Black River, missed my exit and ended up following the river up north for a ways. It was lovely; twilight slowly swallowing us up as the swollen river revealed islands and tree covered banks. At one point I thought it was raining, but after a moment realized I was just passing through a swarm of bugs. This is why we keep our face shields down, people.

Tonight's lodging turned out to be a tiny apartment, I think owned by a bachelor and his cat. This particular Airbnb pet followed me warily around and watched from a distance. The entrance was up a narrow staircase (why is my luggage so big?) and up to a small flat. Two bedrooms, I had one, a cramped kitchen and strange storage / bathroom were shared. For one night it worked out beautifully.

My host recommended The Boathouse which served some impressive fish tacos and was starting to wind down as I arrived. I sat at the bar and hung out with the wait staff as they finished their shifts. It was a nice, low key time. We kept up a running commentary about the the local area and various drink orders, and I ended up finishing a forgetful local beer and ordered a negroni (this amazes exactly no one who has ever hung out with me in a bar). I got the usual, "of course!" followed by furtively looking up how to make it on their phone. So I taught yet another bar how to make The Manliest of Pink Drinks. Truly, I'm doing good in the world. Campari should totally sponsor this ride.

The next morning I trusted Google Maps more than I usually would, set it to “Avoid Highways” and headed through Minnesota. Minnesota felt familiar, a return to large fields of crops and lower hills compared to the stark beauty of Wisconsin.



You didn't think you'd get another post without a picture of a run down barn did you?

The skies kept going from overcast to a bit sunny, and back again.



In what would have been nice to be the most exciting moment of the ride, my little scooter cracked 10,000 miles!



10,000 Miles!

An hour after this celebratory moment, I turned south to visit Iowa. As I did the clouds started to increase. Having been soaked once in this trip, I eventually decided to stop and don my fabulous smurf blue rain pants

https://www.goodmorninggoodevening.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/20160924_StormApproaches.mp4

I took a video of the incoming storm. It was quite a thing.

So into the storm I went, and I can assure you: Iowa knows how to pitch a tempest. The wind was crazy and then the skies erupted and I was drenched. Rain liner in this jacket now tested: it cannot handle an Iowa downpour.

To be honest, driving in a crazy storm like this is kind of fun. Yes you're soaking wet and trying not to think of the tiny contact patches that are all that hold you to the road, and I was worried that the recent rain would combine with this torrent and cause deep water I wouldn't be able to see until I was in it. But you are wrestling the wind, watching the world around you transform. You're part of the spectacle out there and it's fun.

What I wasn't looking forward to was arriving at another host's house absolutely soaking wet. I arrived at Sioux Falls, South Dakota as the storm calmed to a steady rain and found a gas station near my destination. Whereupon I discovered that the waterproof pocket I had my cellphone in was currently a swimming pool. The phone came right up, processed a screen or two, and then shut right down.

That's not good.

I wonder if that will come back? I'll have to dry it out when I get to my destination. In that subdivision over there. Somewhere. Dangit.

Iowa Sends Its Love

...continued in next post