

*Saturday, December 10th – Sunday, December 11th*

Saturday morning found me driving east. Which, at after three months of heading west, felt pretty weird.

The Sonora desert opened itself around me and I sped through Tuscan (I'll be back!) and towards New Mexico. This speed of travel is boring and doesn't involve stopping for my photos, so I'll combine a couple of days in this post.



*Rest stop in Arizona.*

What happened on Saturday? I don't remember much except seeing the desert change, saguaros appear (those big, classic, wild west cacti) and then vanished again into bushes

and sand. Eventually I made it to New Mexico and into Las Cruces.



*Rest area overlooking Las Cruces, NM.*

I stopped long enough for the above picture and to decide whether to press on to Roswell or go a more direct route to El Paso. Roswell was my goal mainly because Christy may apply for a residency there, but it was later in the day than I'd hoped and El Paso much closer. Eventually I decided to go for it anyways, booked a motel and headed out, over the mountains you can see above, and into White Sands. That was a neat drive, the wide valley opening up as the sun set behind me. The rapidly setting sun worried me a bit, I knew I had miles to travel.

It was a long slog, eventually getting on highway 70 and following it up through another set of mountains. The road was fun, but it started to get much colder as I climbed up and up. I

turned on my electric gear, and that helped, but I hadn't dressed in enough layers to find myself in the 30's. Eventually I came through the other side and things warmed up a bit until maybe 15 miles from Roswell. It was dark but I didn't notice any incline, yet suddenly the temperature dropped 20 degrees and it was literally freezing. It was a surreal experience to have the temperature drop like that for no reason I could figure, although clearly aliens comes to mind. I couldn't see much of the landscape, but the sky was huge above me, layers of stars visible through my visor. At one point I thought I glimpsed a shooting star.

I pulled into Roswell, NM hoping to see whatever craziness they have. Except that Google Maps helpfully took me on a faster route, skipping all that for the beauty of the suburbs and ending up right at my motel, saving me approximately 2 minutes and a view of anything interesting. Disadvantages of leaving your driving choices entirely up to the computer. That be said, I was freezing at that point and happy to get in the room and crank the heater up.

The next morning it was 28 degrees outside. I loaded the scooter back up, under the aghast stare of a woman smoking next door. I had a bunch of layers on so my core was quite warm but my fingers not so much.



*Roswell Test Facility*

Once again I avoided downtown because I headed out the other direction to check out the residency. That accomplished, I considered detouring back in but knew I had a long day ahead of me. I'd booked an Airbnb for a couple of nights in Dallas, which would let me get some rest and start the work week before deciding my next move. Dallas was a long way off.





*Bottomless Lakes State Park*

Southeastern New Mexico reminded me strongly of living in Kansas. We lived for a year in Lawrence, which is actually pretty hilly, but I spent a fair bit of time exploring more western areas of Kansas. There are beautiful rolling grasslands there. The parts of New Mexico and Texas I was driving through were even more wide, and with even less vegetation.



*Driving through New Mexico.*

An hour out of Roswell I stopped at a rest area as the temperature had already risen over twenty degrees and I had to remove some layers. I ended up talking to the groundskeeper and other passers by for over an hour. I kept trying to leave and then someone else would pull up, see my scooter and strike up a conversation. I suspect there's not a lot of excitement around here, but the folks were friendly!

Eventually I was off, heading east and then turning south to drop down and join Interstate 20 as it marched across Texas. There is a lot of Texas. Possibly due to the size, the infrastructure seemed a bit dated. I-20 was four lanes most of the way, but the on-ramps are these short suicide jumps from the frontage roads. The scooter can accelerate enough that this wasn't a big deal for me, but I can see why Texans might want oversized engines in their ubiquitous pickup trucks. Eventually the trees increased and then the houses and I

was driving through Ft. Worth and into Dallas. The traffic is heavy, the highways seeming weirdly old and small and congested filled with vehicles. The sun was setting as I approached Dallas and made a really impressive sight; a wall of gold and glass reflecting against darker clouds.

I checked into my Airbnb, a lovely cabin that was attached to an art gallery near downtown. There was a great bar a few doors down, so I dragged my exhausted body over and spent a lovely few hours decompressing before heading to bed.



*Sculptures in Dallas by moonlight.*