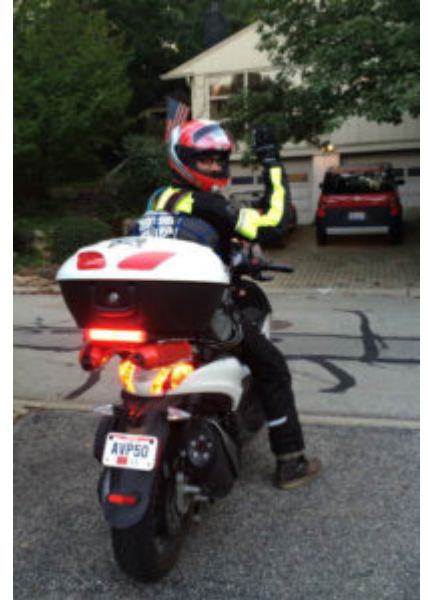


First Leg: Cincinnati to St. Joseph to Wisconsin

On Friday morning I packed up all my gear and started my journey by heading west. You can see here a photo my mother took as I was headed off. The new light bar is looking good!



The plan was to leave Cincinnati and head up towards Indianapolis and continue heading west and a bit north until I arrived at my friends Britt & Nate's house, a few towns over the border in Illinois.

Britt had the day off, and I wanted to start my trip off by being able to see the countryside and not take interstates the whole way. So I took a vacation day and rode country highways up. It was a beautiful drive; I hadn't noticed it as much in Cincinnati but out in the country fall has begun. The trees haven't turned, but one of the common crops (soybeans?) have started taking on a beautiful golden hue.

First Leg: Cincinnati to St. Joseph to Wisconsin



Whitewater Canal in Indiana



“Welcome to Hillsboro – The Home of 600 Happy People and a few old Soreheads” (Indiana)

The closer I got to Illinois the darker the sky became. I finally ducked into a gas station just in time for the skies to erupt in a massive downpour. I celebrated my genius weather sense, waited a few minutes for the rain to slow, and then drove out leaving my rain gear smartly in my luggage. It then continued to rain for the next hour until (and after) I arrived at my destination.

First Leg: Cincinnati to St. Joseph to Wisconsin



Britt and Nate live near a plethora of old barns. Even if it's raining, I'm totally a sucker for a nice, run down old building.

First Leg: Cincinnati to St. Joseph to Wisconsin



Run down rainy barn in Illinois II.

First Leg: Cincinnati to St. Joseph to Wisconsin



Ok, last barn, I swear. For now.

Staying with Britt & Nate was awesome. They're fun folks and live on several acres of beautiful field with lovely views from their house. We spent the afternoon eating cinnamon rolls (Britt is awesome), walking the dogs through fields of gold, visiting Nate and being shown nematodes illuminated by lasers through microscopes, and having a great meal out in a nearby downtown. They were amazing hosts and I'm so thankful they were the first stop on this trip.

First Leg: Cincinnati to St. Joseph to Wisconsin

I don't really have pictures of all that, instead here's a picture of one of their two dogs, the indomitable Sadie. Otto is not pictured because he was out on an excursion, but he's also a wonderful dog. In case it's not clear: I'm a fan of hanging out with other people's pets.



Sadie! She is super cute and friendly.

The next morning Britt cooked an amazing breakfast (so. good.) and then I was on my way! Headed north to Wisconsin.

First Leg: Cincinnati to St. Joseph to Wisconsin



Nate, Britt and I.

It seemed tremendously silly to only spend one evening with such fine folks, but I'd got it in my head to see House on the Rock on Sunday and then spend the next week in Madison, Wisconsin. So it was back on the road, wearing some soggy armor.

First Leg: Cincinnati to St. Joseph to Wisconsin



Illinois road in early fall. I spent a few hours with this view, it was lovely.

My hosts recommended Starving Rock State Park, which ended up being almost exactly in my way and halfway through my journey so it was a perfect place to get off the scooter and hike around for a little bit. I didn't go far and none of the photos really showed much, so instead you get a picture of what it looks like when I stop with all my stuff plus my armor being strapped to my poor little bike.

First Leg: Cincinnati to St. Joseph to Wisconsin



That's a lot of stuff for one tiny scooter!

The other way you can tell it's early fall is that halloween decorations are starting to show up. This one was my favorite:

First Leg: Cincinnati to St. Joseph to Wisconsin



Danger: falling rock.

Eventually I made it to Wisconsin and good heavens but it's beautiful. Illinois was mostly flat, very cultivated fields. To the north are rolling hills with a variety of natural and planted fields. It's impressively idyllic around here. I can see why folks choose to brave the crazy winters.

First Leg: Cincinnati to St. Joseph to Wisconsin



Scenic valleys and cemeteries? These are a few of my favorite things...

Finally I arrived at my lodging for the night.



First Leg: Cincinnati to St. Joseph to Wisconsin

The Pine Ridge Motel.

That was a fair bit of driving over a couple of days so Sunday I had planned a nice relaxing day at a tourist trap before heading over to Madison to check in to my AirBnb site for the week. Sounds nice and easy, right?