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## Road Trip 4 Hope Report No. 2 February 4, 2018

While on a two-lane state highway in rural Georgia this morning, I realized that as much as I'm exploring the South, I'm also on a journey of self-discovery.

I'm learning more about me—about what it means to navigate this world alone and about facing some of my own fears of being “other” and of meeting “other.”

Thus, I drove away from a convenience store where I stopped for a bathroom break and Diet Pepsi asking myself why I didn't engage any of the customers. I was the only white (and blonde) woman among a mostly black clientele. All that I could think of was, “Don't talk. You might attract attention and then who knows what.”

Yet, had I engaged a stranger, I might have been able to ask what it's like to live in a place where “other” is hidden. Maybe I would have been surprised by the answers.

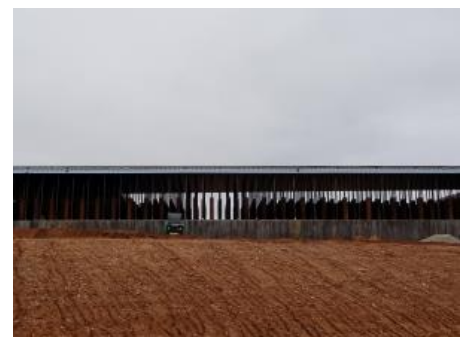
Or maybe not.

Today consisted of driving from Tallahassee to Montgomery, Alabama. I deliberately chose two-lane blacktops to see the countryside. I found a marker outside Abbeville, Alabama which noted that Rosa Parks had once lived in that town. By coincidence, today is actually Rosa Parks Day—to commemorate her birthday.

Once in Montgomery, I found the Rosa Parks Museum only to learn that it is closed on Sundays. (Drat!) I then looked for the Memorial to Peace and Justice dedicated to honoring the 4000+ victims of lynching; I've written about this memorial in my newsletter, *The Ripple*, and then spoken of it on Hidden Edges Radio.

The memorial, perched on a hill overlooking downtown (and in the past, a location of many lynchings) is still under construction with an intended opening in May. Here is a picture that gives an idea of what it will look like (workers were busy even today, Sunday).

I then drove through downtown Montgomery and found several historical placards, including one at Court Square that documented the City's slave market—in 1859 the City had “seven auctioneers and four slave depots.”



However, it was on the other side of Court Square, on December 1, 1955 that Rosa Parks boarded a bus and took a seat, just like any passenger should be entitled. When she refused to give up that seat for a white passenger, the world shook.

Horror on one side of Court Square, and nearly 100 years later, bravery on the other side of the square.

I am learning.

Tomorrow will be meeting with members of the Diversity and Inclusion committee of the Birmingham Bar Association where I will talk about human inclusivity.

ellie

