

I'd originally just planned it as a quick trip to west Texas. It was going to be just a few days to get away, to breath, to simply find some peace and quiet in a what had become a rather emotionally challenging world over the past couple of months. Little did I know it would become something far greater. Serendipity. Please allow me to introduce what I am now calling Write Now! 2014. Here's the story - and the results from the adventure that it proved to be. I'd never been out to west Texas before, but many of my friends have continued to rave about it. Traveling by train has always been fun for me - it was how I originally moved to Texas (another story deserving of its own post). So I jumped on a train and headed to Alpine, Texas. Yes, an 8 hour train trip from San Antonio to Alpine. Yes, the sprawling community of Alpine, Texas, population 5,900 or so nestled in amongst three mountain ranges and just north of Big Bend National Park. Some of you might be wondering right now about my choice of vacation hot-spots and travel adventures. I wouldn't blame you! But as the story line evolved, it became more than just a respite in a quiet place. It became an opportunity to reflect. It became an opportunity to step away from the distractions and - write. Take some photos. Write some more. Lather. Rinse. Repeat. It worked. Exquisitely, I might add. Alpine is a pretty cool little town, perhaps not as "hip" as a place like Marfa, but a good place to relax and unwind. It was quiet; well, except for what seemed like the never-ending wind buffeting in my ears. ♦ I stayed at the Maverick Inn, a wonderful little hotel tagged as "A Roadhouse For Wanderers". Could there be a more appropriately named place for a creative retreat? It was a bit of a whirlwind trip. Here are the raw details: Total trip time: 77 hours (58 of those in Alpine) Total miles: 929 (772 by train, 144 by car, and, yes, 13 by foot) Writing: around 12,000 words total over a total of 22 hours (approx.) Photos: 139 Along the way, I found the world's best hot dog at Cow Dog. What a surprise. Serendipity, indeed. What did I learn along the way? Lets face it: the only way you get better at anything is to reflect, learn from your experiences, refine how you approach it, and do it! In order to improve any skill, you have to practice and practice and practice some more. Writing is no different. Life is the same. But in order to create (or live), you somehow have to remove the distractions and just get down to it. Don't hold back. Focus. Put 100% into it. You have to be in a mind space to create. Alpine presented just that. Mission accomplished. Thanks to all the great folks at the Maverick for making my stay a fantastic one. We all have a story to tell ♦ in words, in song, in pictures. Write your story now! I look forward to Write Now! 2015. Anyone up for the adventure? Photo credits: abesselink on Flickr

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