

30 DAYS

by Manton Reece

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INTRODUCTION

“I haven't been everywhere, but it's on my list.”

— Susan Sontag

In February 2016, after coming back from a trip to Portland where I visited a couple new coffee shops, I decided to try an experiment back in Austin: visit a new coffee shop that I had never been to before, every day for a month. It was the perfect kind of series for a blog. I had so much fun doing it and learned so much — exploring Austin and getting out of my comfort zone — that I repeated it 3 more times over the next several years: for libraries, parks, and murals.

The best libraries can be wonderful, quiet places to work. Parks reminded me of how beautiful Austin is. And murals felt like coming full circle back to art, something I used to blog about more often.

This book collects the original microblog posts and photos for all 120 days. It's both a snapshot of Austin and fragments of my daily routine, seeing the city with fresh eyes.

Doing this required no particular skill. Average writing, inexpensive blog hosting, and a phone with a camera. Individual blog posts aren't extraordinary on their own either. What makes a blog special is when it is read much later, multiple posts becoming a series that together tell a story. The ordinary becomes something *more* when looking back. Something to reflect on and cherish.

As I put this book together, I noticed that as it progressed it turned from text to photos. There were only a couple photos in the coffee shops series, several more for libraries, and photos

every day for parks and murals. In a way, that mirrored Micro.blog's own evolution from simple, 280-character text posts to richer full-length blog posts and photos. Micro.blog today resembles Instagram as much as it does Twitter.

For the book, I went back to my camera roll and found more photos that I had taken at coffee shops but never posted to my blog. They are included here to give more variety to the first chapter.

This book is a sort of interlude during the writing of my other book, *Indie Microblogging*. It is a book that was lying in plain sight on my blog. As Patrick Rhone¹ said in his talk at Micro Camp 2021², talking about how with blogging you may have already written a book, and how paper can be better than digital for collecting our writing and making it last:

If you really want to back up your blog — and make it durable, make it something that will last, make it something that maybe your grandchildren or great grandchildren might read — the best way to do that is to print it out.

All that I needed to do was assemble the posts together. The driving around town, the research, taking hundreds of photos, writing blog posts, the real work that didn't feel like work — that had all been done already by accident. I'm glad to be able to give the posts new life in a new format.

I hope you enjoy it. Happy blogging.

¹ <https://www.patrickrhone.net>

² <https://micro.camp/>

COFFEE SHOPS

“The purpose of life is to live it, to taste experience to the utmost, to reach out eagerly and without fear for newer and richer experience.”

— Eleanor Roosevelt

February 18, 2016

When traveling, it's always fun to discover new coffee shops. But what about in our own city? Starting today, I'm going to attempt to have coffee at a place I've never been to, every day for a month. Right now: Sorrento's drive-thru, sitting outside on a beautiful day.



February 19, 2016

New coffee shop, day 2: Summer Moon near the Domain. A little crowded today, but lucked out with a table opening up. Good coffee.

February 20, 2016

I was down on campus anyway with my daughter, so we're trying the BarleyBean for today's coffee stop. Nice little place, with smoothies and sandwiches too.

February 20, 2016

Walking around the UT Tower.



February 21, 2016

Weather outside isn't great, but nevertheless had a nice drive down 360 to check out Lola Savannah Coffee Lounge. They even have the Cavs/Thunder basketball game on here.

February 22, 2016

This morning, having a cappuccino and breakfast taco at Star Coffee Texas in Round Rock. Feels like more of a breakfast or lunch place, with a full menu. Hard to believe it's only day 5 of #newcoffee.

February 23, 2016

Another day, another new coffee place I've never been to. Trying the iced toddy at Pacha and catching up on the morning's email.

February 24, 2016

Went to Dazzle Coffee³ today. Reminds me a lot of Dutch Bros. Coffee⁴, which we fell in love with on a road trip to Oregon a few years ago. After picking up my drink, checked out the historical marker across the street on the founding of Pflugerville.



³ <http://www.dazzlecoffee.com/>

⁴ <http://www.dutchbros.com/>

February 24, 2016: New coffee shops, week 1

I've now wrapped up the first week of my attempt to visit a new coffee shop I've never been to, every day for a month. To track the progress, I've created a web page with all the visits so far, the coffee shops I hope to try soon, and also a bunch of places I've already been over the years (and so which are disqualified from this endeavor).

This has required a little more planning than I expected. I'll be going to all corners of the city to not repeat myself for a full 30 days. Even then, I'll have to broaden my search to include more traditional cafes and donut shops too.

I've also realized that I need to do a better job of ordering something unique when it's on the menu, or asking for a recommendation. After all, the point is to get out of the house more often — to take a break from the isolated work-from-home environment, be exposed to something new, even if it's just a simple drink or view outside, and get back to my current projects refreshed.

February 25, 2016

Having a cappuccino at Cups & Cones⁵. Very family-friendly this morning, with a music/storytime going on now for the little kids. It's a nice space with lots of books to borrow, board games, and plenty of indoor and outdoor seating.

⁵ <http://cups-and-cones.com/>

February 26, 2016

Starting to expand my coffee shop list with new recommendations, like today's stop: San Francisco Bakery⁶. Having a french press coffee, but they've got a tempting breakfast and lunch menu with fresh bread.



⁶ <http://sfbc.weebly.com/>

February 27, 2016

Back in Round Rock to check out Lamppost Coffee. While they're making my iced coffee, we chat about iPhone development (one of them is thinking about learning Swift).

February 27, 2016: Is this even possible?

When I tell people that I've started going to a new coffee shop every day for a month — and importantly, one which I've never been to before after living my whole life in Austin, with no duplicates or separate locations from a coffee chain — they usually ask: are you going to run out of places to go? At the beginning I didn't know. And that has made it a particularly fun challenge, because *doing something that you know is possible is boring*.

I've never been interested in building an iOS app that someone else has already done. I've never been excited to write a blog post that is just a rephrasing of someone else's idea. Starting a new project with a unique twist, even a minor one, is what makes our job as developers and writers fun.

And it's easy to take a simple idea and build it into a more advanced project. On the latest Core Intuition⁷, Daniel continues to suggest ways to add layers to my coffee trips, from adding photos, to publishing future locations ahead of time so that anyone can stop by and join me for a coffee. (I'm going to be doing this.)

Now at day 10, I can more easily answer the original question, though. I have 16 suggested coffee shops in the queue, so if I visit all of those, I'll only need 4 more places to hit 30 new

⁷ <http://www.coreint.org/2016/02/episode-221-in-the-zone-of-programming/>

coffee shops in 30 days. A few of these might seem like borderline cheats — a donut shop, or a food truck to pick up a Thai iced coffee — but being exposed to new places I would never otherwise go is the whole point.

February 28, 2016

It's a good morning for donuts, beignets, and kolaches with the family at Angel Donuts & Treats⁸. Great place, plenty of seating, and they've got a very nice sweetened cold brew iced coffee.



⁸ <http://angeldonuts.com/>

February 29, 2016

Sitting outside with Damon⁹ at Seventh Flag¹⁰, having an iced coffee and breakfast tacos. Also updated the coffee page with specifically which coffee shops I'll be trying this week if anyone wants to join me for a coffee or just stop by!

March 1, 2016

Just a little east of downtown this morning for a coffee at Wright Bros. Brew & Brew¹¹. If you're in a Super Tuesday state, don't forget to vote today!



⁹ <http://damonc.com/>

¹⁰ <http://seventhflagcoffee.com/>

¹¹ <http://www.thebrewandbrew.com/>

March 2, 2016

Still discovering new coffee shops that I've probably driven by many times and never noticed. This morning, working from Joel's Coffee in northwest Austin.

March 3, 2016

I've been trying a lot of new coffee drinks on this 30 days 30 new coffee shops experiment. An iced latte remains my go-to drink if nothing stands out, but I always wonder at a new place if it'll have too much milk or not enough espresso. That concern is unfounded at Figure 8 Coffee Purveyors¹², which I'm at today. Just right.

March 4, 2016

Trying Stinson's Bistro¹³ in Rosedale this morning. This area sure has some nice coffee shops. Obviously Houndstooth¹⁴ on Lamar, but also Pacha¹⁵ which I visited a couple weeks ago, and Thunderbird¹⁶ nearby too.

¹² <http://www.figure8coffeepurveyors.com/>

¹³ <http://www.stinsonsbistro.com/>

¹⁴ <http://www.houndstoothcoffee.com/>

¹⁵ <http://www.pachatax.com/>

¹⁶ <http://thunderbirdcoffee.com/>

March 5, 2016

Grabbing a quick breakfast and coffee at Cherrywood Coffeehouse¹⁷ before heading over to Staple! Expo¹⁸ to help set up. If you're in Austin and a fan of indie comics and art, check it out today or tomorrow.



¹⁷ <http://cherrywoodcoffeehouse.com/>

¹⁸ <http://www.staple-austin.org/>

March 6, 2016

This morning's coffee is from the Elixer coffee truck¹⁹. Usually at Mueller, but parked this weekend at Staple! Expo. Coffee plus indie comics in one place.

March 7, 2016

A little off my morning routine today, so working this afternoon from Kick Butt Coffee²⁰. Cool place with a stage for live music at night.

March 8, 2016

Today's stop for coffee and a little coding is Fat Cats: Organic Coffee & Desserts²¹. Their cold brew coffee comes with frozen coffee ice cubes!



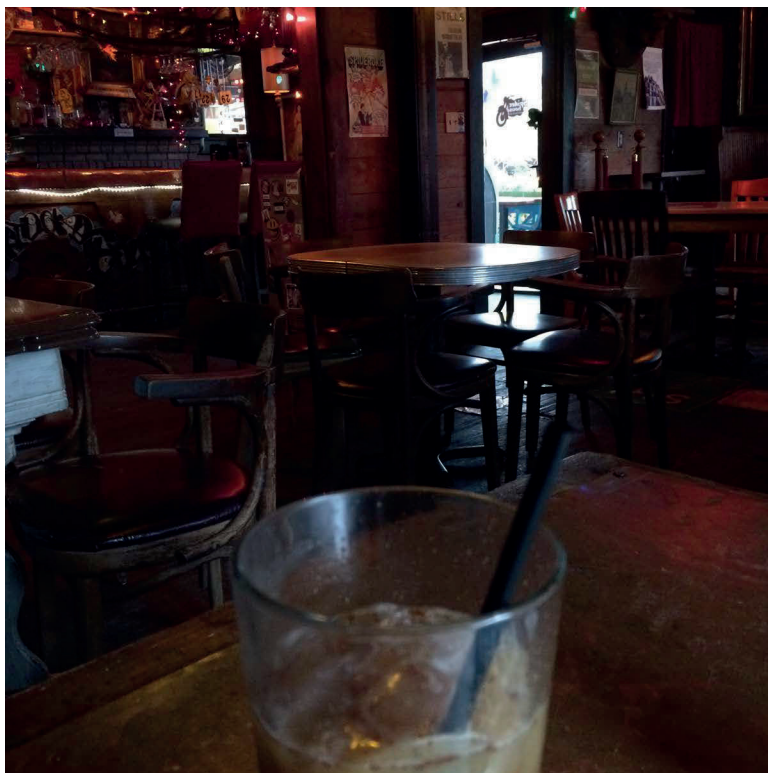
¹⁹ <http://www.elixercoffee.com/>

²⁰ <http://kickbuttcffee.com/>

²¹ <http://www.fatcatsaustin.com/>

March 9, 2016

Very rainy day for the coffee shop commute. Marking the 14th anniversary of this weblog with a visit to a cafe that's even older than that: Spider House²². Trying the dirty horchata (rice milk, cinnamon, and 2 shots of espresso, shaken with ice).



²² <https://spiderhouseaustin.com/cafe/>

March 10, 2016

Ignore that it's hidden behind a gas station. Found the cozy coffee shop Sips Coffee & More²³ in Round Rock today. Happily surprised that they make fresh crepes.



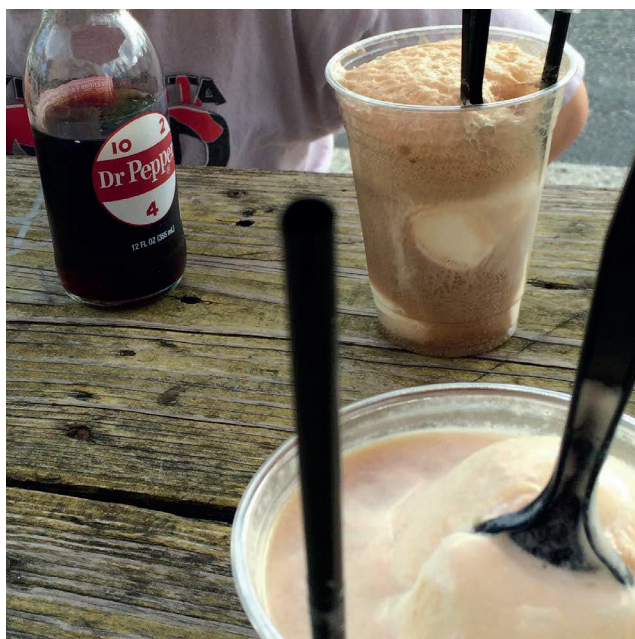
²³ <http://mysipsshop.com/>

March 11, 2016

Another rainy morning, another trip out for coffee, this time Patika²⁴ on South Lamar. Crowded since everyone's inside instead of on the wet patio. But good weather for a very nice cappuccino.

March 12, 2016

Beautiful day outside for a stop at Beware Coffee²⁵. My son is having the Dr. Pepper float, and I'm having the cold brew coffee as a float.



²⁴ <http://www.patikacoffee.com/>

²⁵ <http://www.bewarecoffee.com/>

March 13, 2016

If they have something coffee-related on the menu, it counts. Checking out Juiceland²⁶ with my daughter. I'm having the Percolator: cold brew coffee, almond milk, banana, cacao powder, coffee concentrate, and cinnamon.



²⁶ <http://www.juiceland.com/>

March 14, 2016

Braving SXSW traffic to have an iced vanilla latte at Vintage Heart Coffee²⁷. 30 days of new coffee shops is just about wrapped up. 4 more days.

March 15, 2016

After taking the train downtown for Open Coffee Club²⁸, walked along the trail to Alta's Cafe²⁹ for coffee and a quick bite to eat. Nice back deck overlooking Lady Bird Lake.



²⁷ <https://vintageheart.coffee/>

²⁸ <http://opencoffeearaustin.org/>

²⁹ <http://altascafe.com/>

March 15, 2016

Lady Bird Lake during SXSW.



March 15, 2016

Might not be downtown again this week, so hitting a bonus coffee shop while I'm nearby. Departure Lounge³⁰ is half travel agency, half coffee and wine bar.



³⁰ <http://www.departurelounge.com/>

March 16, 2016

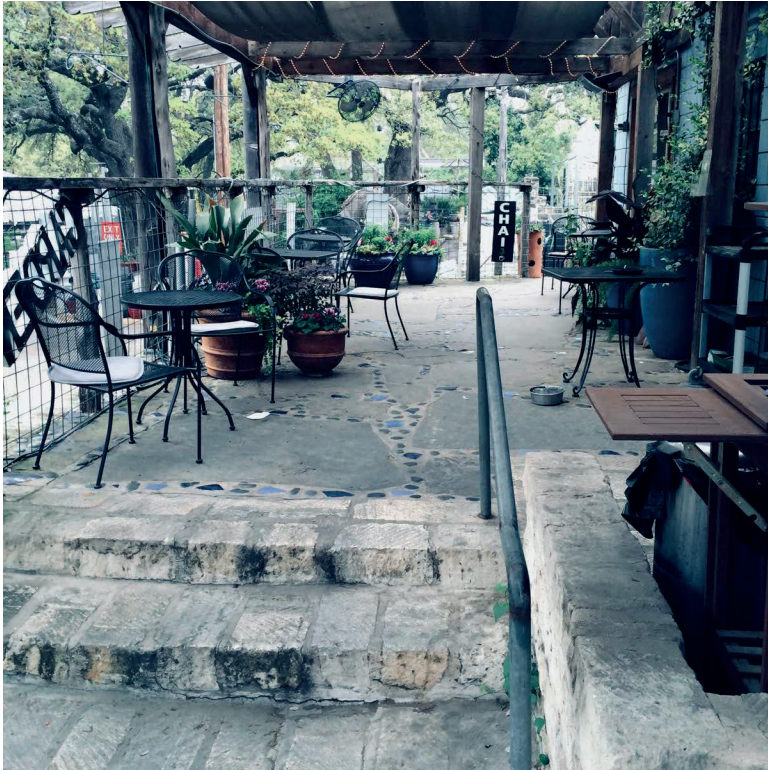
Almost forgot to blog about today's coffee. We were out at Lake Georgetown this evening and stopped at Cianfrani Coffeehouse³¹ on the way. Lots of specialty drinks with fun names, so I ordered the Sugar Daddy: an iced latte with caramel and hazelnut. Very sweet.



³¹ <http://cianfranicoffeeinc.com/>

March 17, 2016

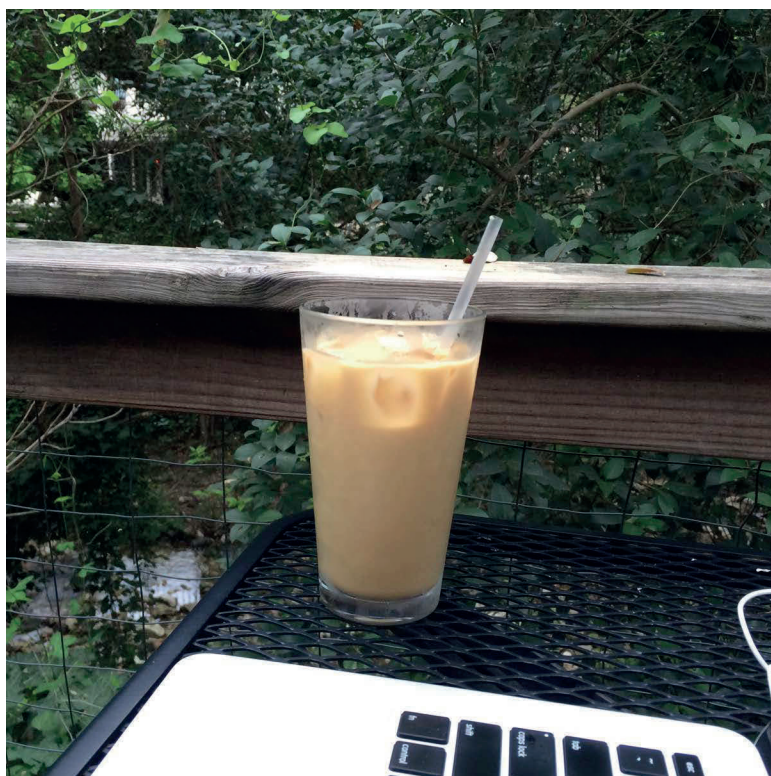
Kind of a gloomy morning in Austin, but nothing that breakfast tacos at Torchy's on South Congress can't fix. Now working from Sage Cafe³², which has a nice back patio overlooking the nursery.



³² <http://manray30.wix.com/sage-cafe/>

March 18, 2016

At Once Over Coffee Bar³³ for the final stop of 30 days of trying new coffee places. Enjoying an iced coffee and listening to Bouldin Creek from the back deck. You can find all 31 microblog posts (there was a bonus coffee shop) under the tag #newcoffee. It's been fun!



³³ <http://www.onceovercoffeebar.com/>

LIBRARIES

“We had left the alehouse, where we first met, and hired a room to hold our club in. I propos’d that we should all of us bring our books to that room, where they would not only be ready to consult in our conferences, but become a common benefit, each of us being at liberty to borrow such as he wish’d to read at home.”

— Benjamin Franklin

March 19, 2016: What’s next after 30 days of coffee

Yesterday I wrapped up my endeavor to visit a new coffee shop every day for a month, making sure it was a place that I had never been to before. Every day I published a short microblog post about my visit. As I was nearing the end of the 30 days, I felt a little bummed out that it would be coming to an end. It was a lot of fun and gave my day a good structure.

I knew right away that I wanted to fill the next 30 days with something else, but probably not with drink or food again. I had a few ideas, including one outside that will be better when the weather gets warmer. For this next month, though, I’ve decided to work from libraries.

So that’s where I am right now. Day 1 of 30, sitting in a comfy chair typing on my iPad at the Cedar Park Public Library. It’s a nice space and they even have an “internet cafe” outside the main books section. I’ll be trying to follow the same routine as before: morning out of the house for writing, afternoon usually back at my desk for coding. And as before, I’ll blog each day and tag all the blog posts. Here we go!

March 19, 2016: Reading Peter Pan

Outside the Cedar Park Public Library.



March 20, 2016

While my daughters are at a meeting, checking out Wells Branch Community Library. Again just working on my iPad to revise an upcoming blog post.

March 21, 2016

Working from the Little Walnut Creek Branch this morning. Lots of open tables. If I was designing a library next to a creek, though, I think I would have added more windows.



March 22, 2016

Working from the North Village Branch this morning. It's a very nice, new library, with tall ceilings and plenty of natural light.

March 23, 2016

At the Old Quarry Branch working for a little while with my iPad Pro and Smart Keyboard. It's an old library, built in 1976, and definitely shows from the outside.

March 24, 2016

Love that the Howson Branch has electric car charging, powered by solar panels. It's a fairly small library but nicely done, with tall chairs to work at near the front or a separate reading room.

March 24, 2016: Charging my car at the library

At the Howson Branch.



March 25, 2016

After a stop for breakfast along 360, visiting the Westbank Community Library³⁴ in Westlake with the kids, since they're out of school today. It's a beautiful building.



³⁴ <http://westbanklibrary.com/>

March 26, 2016

Today's library stop is the Yarborough Branch³⁵, a library converted from a 1960s movie theater³⁶. Great job by the city and neighborhood to preserve this place.

March 27, 2016: 30 days of libraries, week 1

After wrapping up 30 days of new coffee shops, last week I started visiting a library every day to work. Libraries and coffee shops don't have that much in common, but they do share a couple basic traits that are necessary for working on a laptop or iPad: wi-fi and tables. In fact, I've found that it's even easier to find an open table or couch in a library than in a busy coffee shop.

So far, so good. In the first week, I've visited Cedar Park Public Library, Wells Branch Community Library, Little Walnut Creek Branch, North Village Branch, Old Quarry Branch, Howson Branch, Westbank Community Library, and Yarborough Branch.

I also heard from readers who wanted to see more than the text microblog posts I did for coffee shops, so I've been trying to take more photos. These photos are tagged with #newlibraries too, so they'll show up together with the library text posts. (Photos can be browsed over the web, but they don't show up in the default RSS feed. The microblog posts also have their own feed.)

³⁵ <http://library.austintexas.gov/yarborough-branch>

³⁶ <http://midtexasmod.blogspot.com/2011/11/rebirth-of-america-theatre-local.html>

As I mention on episode 15 of *Timetable*, working out of the house in the morning helped provide some structure to the work day. I'd use the morning for writing blog posts and catching up on email, and the afternoon to focus on code. For libraries, I'm going one step further and only bringing the iPad Pro with me. This means that I'm using a small range of apps — Editorial, Mail, Safari, Slack — and reinforces the idea that I'm supposed to be writing.

March 27, 2016

Because all the public libraries were closed for Easter, we walked up to a Little Free Library³⁷ in the neighborhood to exchange a book. Beautiful day to be outside in Austin.

³⁷ <https://littlefreelibrary.org/>

March 27, 2016: Take a book, return a book



March 28, 2016

I had planned to work downtown today, but it didn't quite happen. Staying closer to home for the late morning at the Spicewood Springs Branch. I've always like the tables and chairs along the windows here.

March 29, 2016

The drive into the hill country a little was totally worth it to visit Laura Bush Community Library. Beautiful library with an incredible view. I've got my iPad Pro with me and plan to work here until lunch, just looking out the windows.



March 30, 2016

Such a gloomy morning in Austin, not feeling inspired to venture out to find a new library. Also forgot to plug my car in last night, so working a little while at Whole Foods while it charges. Free electricity in exchange for ordering an iced coffee is the best.

March 30, 2016

Checking out the Pflugerville Public Library and happily surprised at how big it is. Lots of chairs, meeting rooms, reading area... even electric car charging in the parking lot. Not particularly quiet today, but a nice place.

March 31, 2016

Working south for a little while at the Manchaca Road Branch. May or may not have picked this library location so that I could get a coffee outside at Radio³⁸ afterwards.

April 1, 2016

Found a nice corner on the 2nd floor of the Faulk Central Library to work this morning. It's like having a downtown co-working spot, but without the monthly fee and I can't bring a coffee to my desk.

³⁸ <http://radiocoffeeandbeer.com/>

April 2, 2016

Had to be south this morning, so working at the Austin Community College library on their Riverside campus. Hardly anyone here on a Saturday, so it's very quiet and plenty of desks to sit with my iPad Pro. Charging my car in the parking lot, too.

April 3, 2016

Working from a library on the weekend is a lot more difficult than a quick stop for coffee was. Because last Sunday we walked up to a Little Free Library, I'll make that a weekend tradition in these 30 days. Just got back from exchanging a book at another Little Free Library nearby.

April 4, 2016

I'm back southeast to work from Ruiz Branch for the morning. Very nice library, built in 2004, with plenty of tables that look out to the field and trees.

April 4, 2016

Sculpture outside Ruiz Branch.



April 5, 2016

Over at the University Hills Branch for a short while before lunch. This library seems heavily used, which is great, but it's loud and not particularly well-suited for working. Moving some tables to the back or sides of the library might improve the layout.

April 6, 2016

Down on campus to visit PCL³⁹ as part of 30 days of working from libraries. It's probably been over 15 years since I've been in this building. Altogether the UT library system ranks 10th among the largest libraries in the United States⁴⁰.

April 7, 2016

At the Round Rock Public Library this morning, catching up on email and chat with the iPad Pro before I need to run some errands. Realized today that I've been using the iPad Pro so much, I haven't left the house with my MacBook Pro in a week.

³⁹ <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/pcl>

⁴⁰ https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_the_largest_libraries_in_the_United_States

April 8, 2016

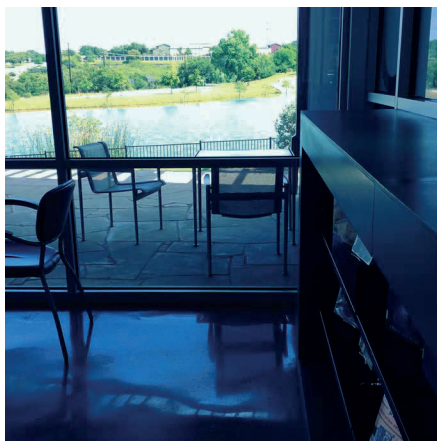
Busy day so I'm off my morning routine of getting out of the house to focus on writing. After 20 days, actually a little burned out on visiting a new library every day. Nevertheless, here I am near Oak Hill to work from Hampton Branch. Nice oak tree and gazebo out front.

April 9, 2016

Lake Travis Community Library⁴¹ is another beautiful library, with tables to work at inside that overlook the pond, as well as seating outside on the patio. First library I've been to where you can pour a cup of free coffee.

April 9, 2016

Pond view at Lake Travis Community Library.



⁴¹ <http://www.laketralislibrary.org/>

April 10, 2016: Doll house Little Free Library

For the 3rd Sunday in a row, I've taken a break from visiting a normal library and instead found a Little Free Library to exchange a book at. They're all very unique, often made by hand. This one was made from a doll house, which opens both from the bottom front and roof for two floors of books.



April 11, 2016

Starting the final week of 30 days of libraries with coffee at Seventh Flag, then working from Twin Oaks Branch. When I was growing up, Twin Oaks was my closest library, but they've recently moved and have a brand new building. Very nice space.

April 12, 2016

Doing a little writing from the Bee Cave Public Library⁴² at the Hill Country Galleria outdoor shopping mall. Love the idea of having a library integrated into a place that so many people walk around.



⁴² <http://www.beecavetexas.com/city-government/library>

April 13, 2016

It's a rainy morning in Austin and I've headed all the way out to Leander to visit the Leander Public Library. Very nice building, with plenty of desks for working, and an attached used bookstore. Only four days left of #newlibraries.



April 14, 2016

My commute to find new libraries is getting a little ridiculous. This morning I'm south at Pleasant Hill Branch. A shame these nice windows overlook a busy street and gas station.

April 15, 2016

Working from Terrazas Branch before lunch. I like that many Austin libraries are named in honor of a local Austinite. Henry Terrazas was a 20-year-old marine who died fighting a forest fire, 50 years ago this year. He was awaiting transfer to Vietnam.

April 16, 2016

Checking out Windsor Park Branch on another rainy day in Austin. Love the bronze lion sculpture out front, but otherwise it's another fairly unremarkable library. Gets the job done.

April 16, 2016

Lion outside Windsor Park Branch.



April 17, 2016

Last of 30 days of libraries, working from the Architecture & Planning Library at UT. Thinking of Robert Rasmussen, because I think it was here that years ago he said he would come some days to work, to focus away from the usual routine of coffee shops or the office. Rest in peace, Robert.

April 18, 2016: Libraries for 30 days wrap-up

After trying to work from a new coffee shop I had never been to before, every day for 30 days, I loved the routine of getting out of the house so much that I set on another challenge: visiting 30 libraries. This proved to be more difficult, mostly because of the extra driving required, but I wrapped it up yesterday.

I've put together a web page of all the libraries, with photos and links to the microblog posts for each day. The posts are also tagged with #newlibraries.

After wrapping up libraries, I thought I'd make it a trilogy of 30-day endeavors, with a final 30 days of working from city parks. This was a suggestion from Daniel Hedrick, who had worked from parks before, tethering to his iPhone since there's usually no wi-fi. I loved the idea right away because it fit so well with the goal of getting out of the house and discovering something new in my own city. I even spent a couple hours earlier in the month researching parks and planning out whether I could do it.

But now that it has come to it... I am really burned out on commuting. Finding new coffee shops and libraries has been a great experience. There are several wonderful places that I know I will return to again, and I never would have found them otherwise. I just need a little break from the forced routine of

driving somewhere new each day. Maybe I'll pick up the parks idea next year.

PARKS

“The environment is where we all meet, where we all have a mutual interest; it is the one thing all of us share. It is not only a mirror of ourselves, but a focusing lens on what we can become.”

— Lady Bird Johnson

May 2, 2019: Working from city parks

In 2016, I tried working from a new coffee shop every day for 30 days, then later followed that with 30 days working from libraries. Each day I would post a microblog post and sometimes a photo. You can find links to all these posts on my 30 days page.

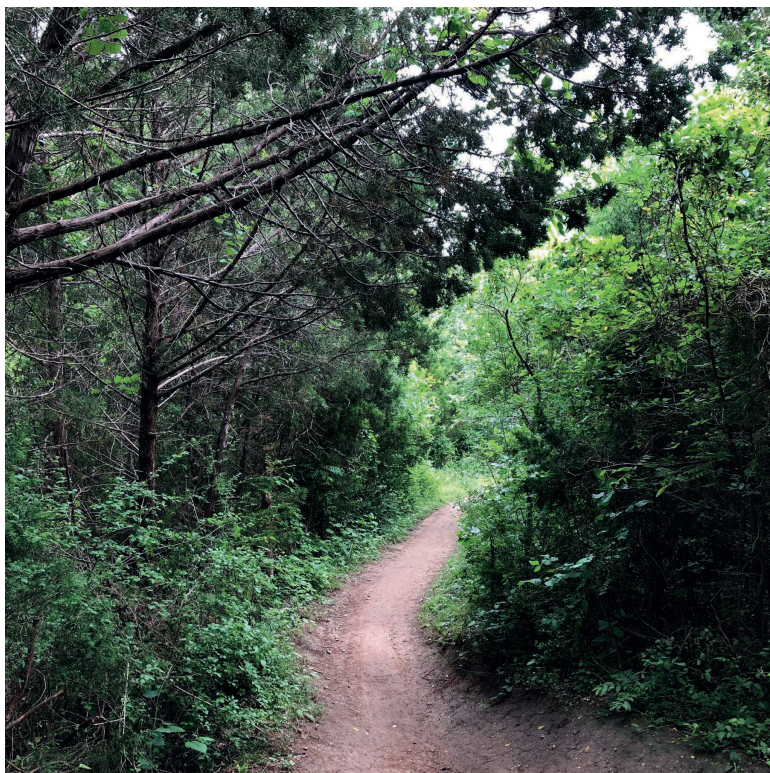
When it was all done, I wrote:

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But I quickly realized that I was burned out on commuting all over town, so I tabled the idea. Fast-forward a few years. This week, I've been struggling to stay productive as my attention is pulled in a few directions with tasks for Micro.blog.

I've also been working more on my book *Indie Microblogging*, which I can write from anywhere on my Mac or iPad. I think restarting the "30 days" idea will force me to carve out some uninterrupted time to write, and get me out of a bit of a rut from working at home. It will also be a great use of Micro.blog.

For day 1 of 30, I went to Walnut Creek Metropolitan Park in Austin. It's a large park with hiking and biking trails. I actually did more walking than writing, but it's a start. As with coffee shops and libraries, I'll collect links to all the posts on a new page [here](#).



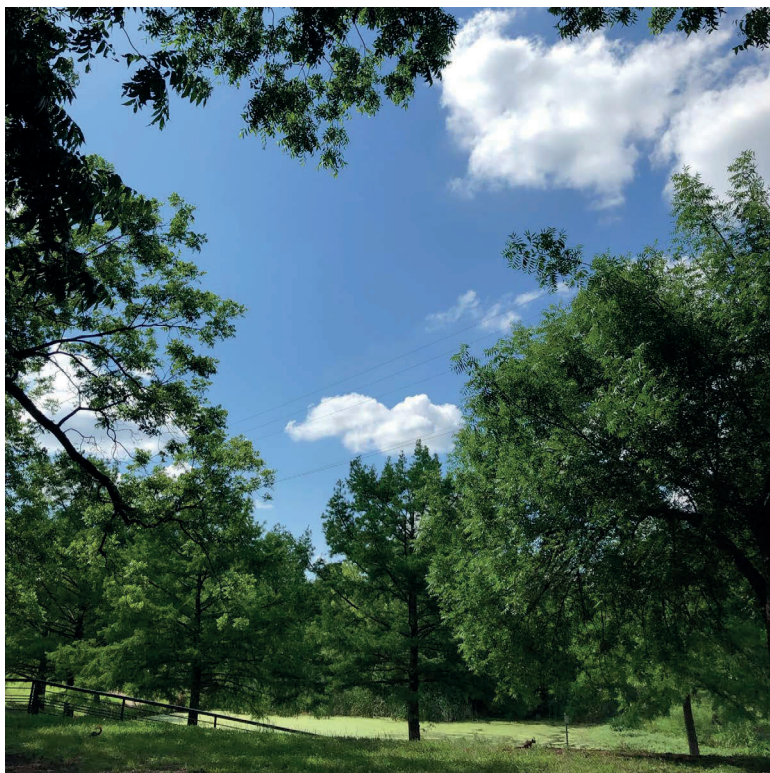
May 3, 2019

Day 2 of city parks: Rosewood Park. It has been raining most of the morning, but it let up enough for a picnic lunch.



May 4, 2019

Today I worked from Beverly Sheffield Northwest Park. Got a bunch of editing done on my iPad, for day 3 of visiting parks.



May 5, 2019

Nice day at Emma Long Park on Lake Austin.



May 6, 2019

Sculptures by Jim Thomas at Chisholm Trail Crossing.
Unfortunately no picnic tables, but I sat near the sculptures and
did some writing. Small park that stretches down to Brushy
Creek.



May 7, 2019

Mueller Lake Park for day 6 of visiting parks for 30 days in a row. Plenty of benches and tables. Bonus: Halcyon is across the street to cool down with an iced coffee.



May 8, 2019

Pouring rain today. Quick road trip, stopped for a burger at Hat Creek in Georgetown, right above Blue Hole Park. San Gabriel River rising up over part of the sidewalk.



May 9, 2019

Trailhead Park not far off 620. Plenty of space, tables, and a 3-mile hiking trail. I sat and edited chapter drafts on my iPad. Might be back one day to check out the trail.



May 10, 2019

Another road trip day. This is the suspension bridge in Waco earlier today, from Indian Spring Park. Built in 1870.



May 11, 2019

For day 10 trying to visit 30 parks in a row without missing a day, the weather did not cooperate. Rain and flash flooding this afternoon in Lafayette. Caught a late shot of the pond at Girard Park.



May 12, 2019

Driving back to Austin, we stopped for a picnic at Stude Park in Houston.



May 13, 2019

Worked at the downtown library today, then walked over to Shoal Beach at Town Lake Park.



May 14, 2019

El Salido Park.



May 15, 2019

Downtown today for lunch and errands. This is Edward Rendon Sr. Park just east of I-35.



May 16, 2019

Beautiful afternoon in the shade at Rattan Creek Park.



May 17, 2019

Bartholomew Park.



May 18, 2019

The branches of a huge oak tree over our picnic today at Harper Park, catching up on feedback about The New Yorker article.



May 19, 2019

Tanglewood Park earlier this evening, posting now after watching the final episode of *Game of Thrones*.



May 20, 2019

Field of wildflowers at Brushy Creek Lake Park.



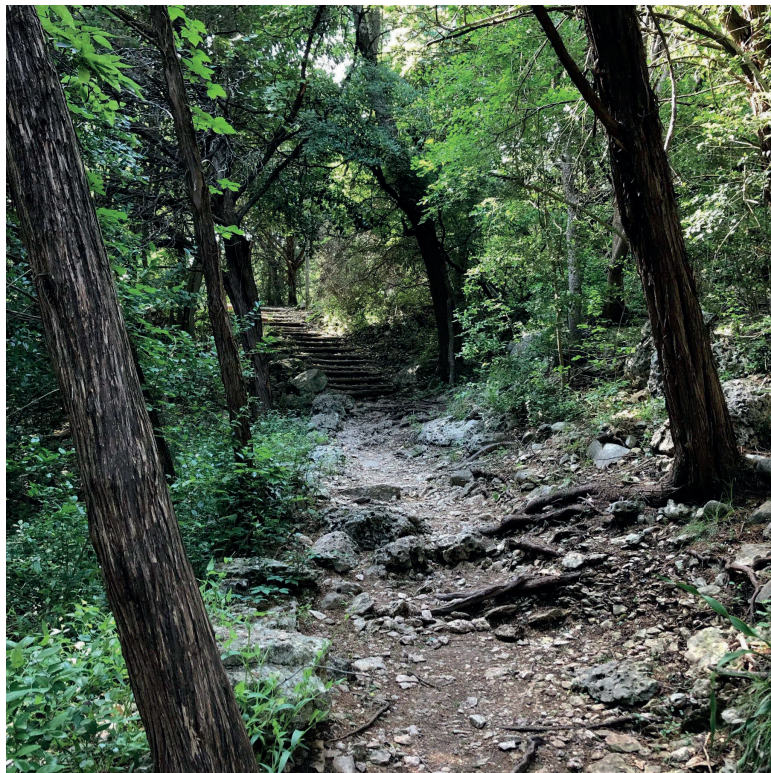
May 21, 2019

Springwoods Park. Short trail in a loop around the park. Also has a Little Free Library.



May 22, 2019

Great hiking trail through the trees along the creek at Great Hills Park.



May 23, 2019

Jessica Hollis Park at the top of Lake Austin next to Mansfield Dam. Warm day. No one here except a couple kayakers.



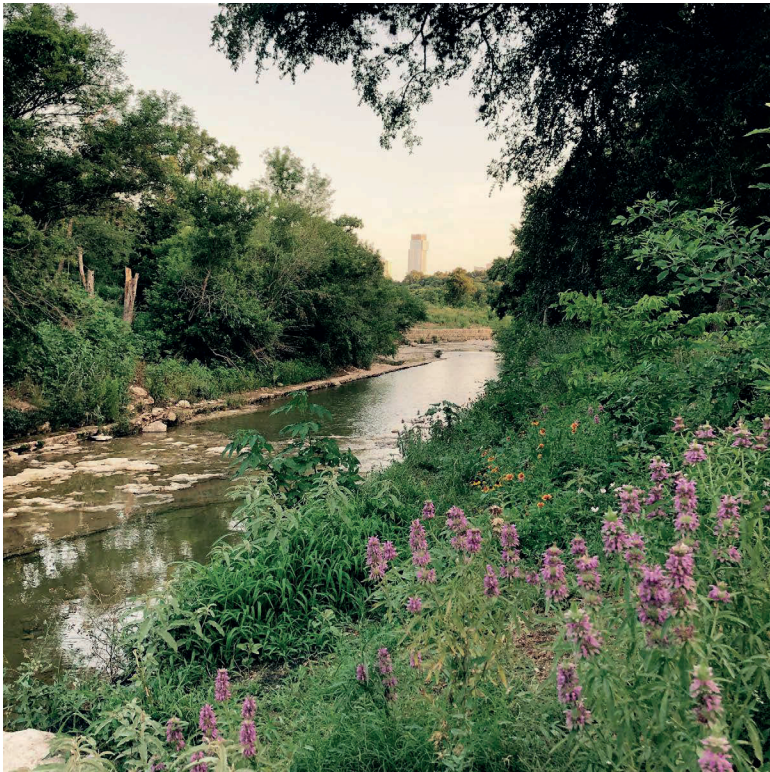
May 24, 2019

Abandoned tracks cut through the side of Metz Park.



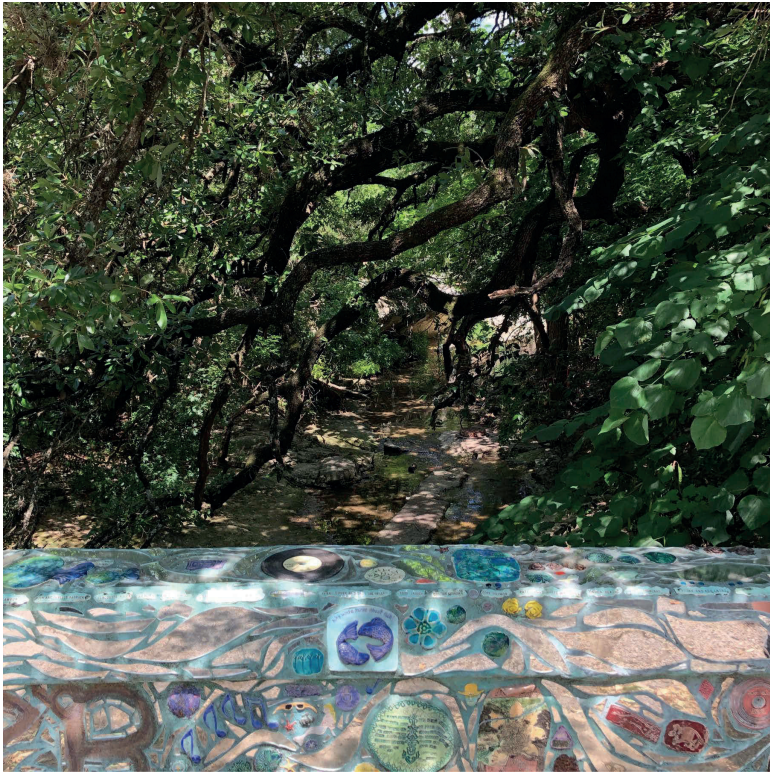
May 25, 2019

Pease Park along Shoal Creek, with an interesting new sculpture
by Patrick Dougherty.



May 26, 2019

Bridge connecting Blunn Creek Greenbelt with Little Stacy Park. I grew up near here and spent many lazy days as a kid exploring by the creek.



May 27, 2019

Saved one of my favorites for the last week of parks. The trail at St. Edward's Park off Old Spicewood Springs.



May 28, 2019

I was nearby in Round Rock, so stopped at Shirley McDonald Park. There's a pond with ducks. Some people were fishing.



May 29, 2019

Earlier this afternoon, looking over the field to Elisabet Ney Museum across the street from Shippe Park. Loved spending a little time visiting the museum as well.



May 30, 2019

For the second-to-last day of 30, I picked Mayfield Park. Known for its peacocks, and right next to Laguna Gloria and not far from Mount Bonnell, Mayfield has some trails that lead down to the lake or creek.



May 31, 2019

For the 30th and final day in a row of visiting parks: Zilker.
Brought a picnic to have above Lou Neff Point, looking out over
Barton Creek and across the lake to downtown Austin.



MURALS

“I did not know how to paint a mural. I did not know how to prepare the surface. There was nobody from the Renaissance around who could advise me, and I did the best I could.”

— Maurice Sendak

September 1, 2021

I'm starting a new project in my 30 days series. Murals! Each day, I'll visit a mural and take a photo. For the first one, this wonderful and silly and somewhat famous (in Austin) mural.



September 2, 2021

For day 2 of visiting 30 murals in 30 days, I'm in south Austin. Picked up coffee at Mañana first but it was too crowded to stay to work.



September 3, 2021

Only the 3rd day of visiting murals in Austin and I've already hit one on my list that has been painted over. Detoured to another option.

September 3, 2021

This used to be a Tower Records, and before that a theater. It must be one of the oldest remaining murals in Austin. Sadly, the mural that was across the street — painted by the extraordinary artist Doug Jaques who I used to take life drawing lessons from — is gone⁴³.



⁴³ <https://www.statesman.com/NEWS/20171031/Mural-of-Kevin-Durant-to-replace-longtime-Drag-mural>

September 4, 2021

Day 4 of murals. South Congress is too crowded. I grew up not that far from here and kind of miss when it was just a normal street and not a tourist destination.



September 5, 2021

For the 5th day, one of many small murals on the Goodwill building at Lamar and 10th.



September 6, 2021

Quiet morning on the UT campus because no classes. Working for a bit at Lucky Lab Coffee before walking around for the next mural photo.

September 6, 2021

Back on the UT campus for day 6 of mural photoblogging.



September 7, 2021

Another day, another mural. East 6th on the side of Whisler's, by Federico Archuleta⁴⁴.



⁴⁴ <https://www.austintexas.org/murals/lets-band-together/>

September 8, 2021

Kellie's on Burnet. Sweet mural for day 8.



September 9, 2021

Victory Grill on 11th, originally opened at the end of World War II with dining, blues, and jazz as African American veterans returned to a segregated Austin.



September 10, 2021

Kobe and Gianna Bryant, outside P Terry's on 183.



September 11, 2021

Carver Branch Library. When I stopped by today, an artist was updating the mural with fresh paint.



September 12, 2021

Huge mural celebrating the 19th amendment at Congress and Cesar Chavez.



September 13, 2021

Not totally sure what this mural is about but I like it. On Brazos next to The Driskill.



September 14, 2021

Nearing the halfway point for murals. Day 14, on the side of Kammok on east 7th.



September 15, 2021

A small part of a mural that stretches along the Planet K on 183.
I drive by this often and glad to see it last so long.



September 15, 2021

I'm halfway through visiting 30 murals in 30 days. This has taken a little more driving around than I first expected, because I want to include popular murals that are nowhere near my house. Turns out it's a good way to learn new bits of Austin history.

September 16, 2021

I still consider this part of Austin, but technically a little farther out at Milburn Park. Cedar Park had an open call for muralists to paint this wall a couple of years ago. Nice way to incorporate the door into the design.



September 17, 2021

Day 17, another mural on east 7th. Til Death Do Us Part, by Federico Archuleta.



September 18, 2021

Legendary mural on the drag. Walking around here takes me back to being a student. So familiar despite how much has changed.

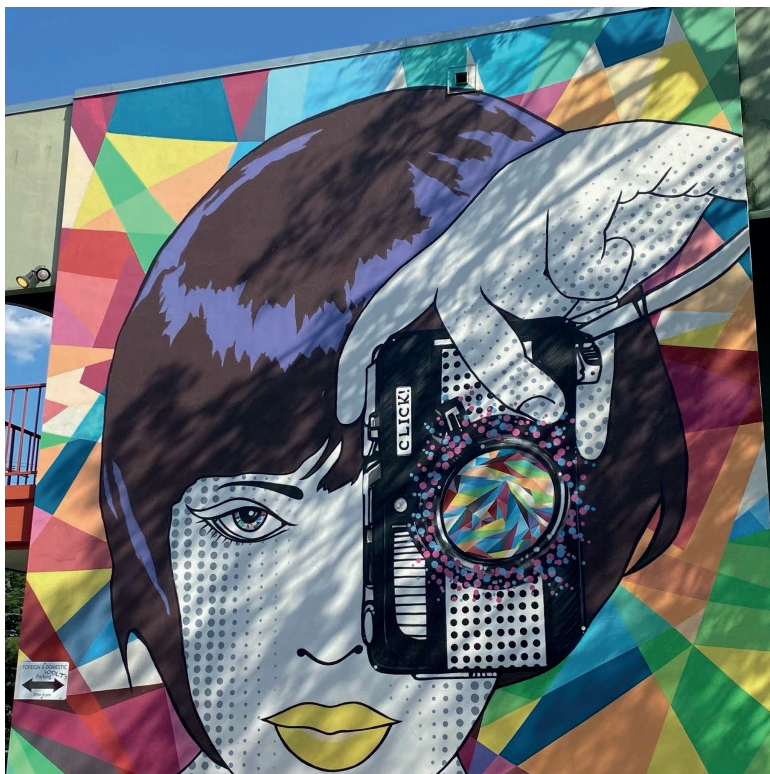


September 18, 2021

Updated my murals page with larger, left-aligned thumbnails.
Have I mentioned how much I love having a blog? Only a dozen days left in this series... Starting to finalize the last murals I want to visit.

September 19, 2021

Click. Mural on 53rd.



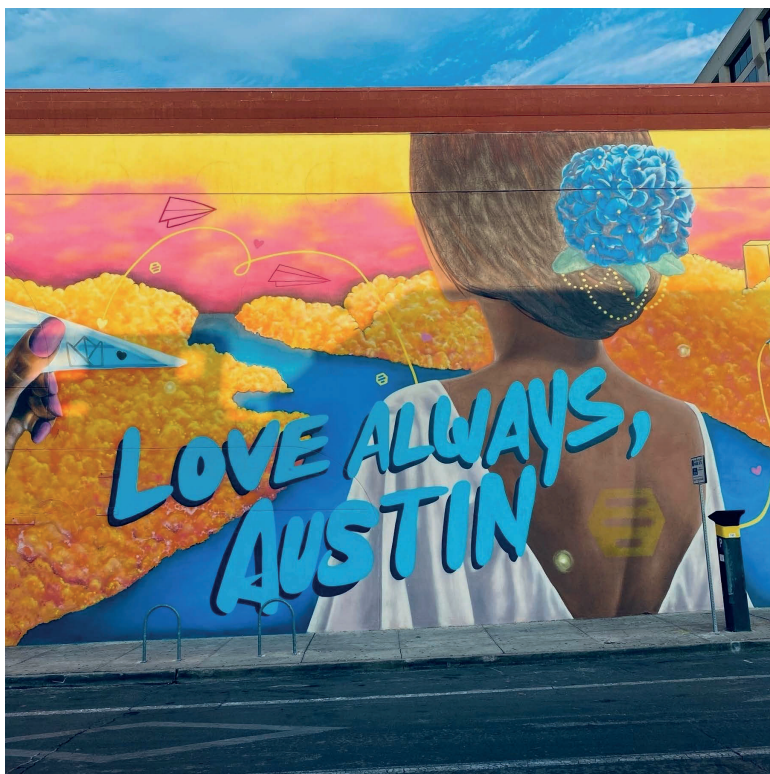
September 20, 2021

Can't resist a mural that has Scrooge McDuck in it.



September 21, 2021

Bumble mural at 6th and San Jacinto. I've found that some of the best commissioned murals are "on brand" but also just great paintings on their own, incorporating bits of Austin themes.



September 22, 2021

Part of the discovery process of finding murals is learning more about local artists like Federico Archuleta. I knew next to nothing about the mural scene in Austin before starting out. Each painting is an opportunity to get lost down a rabbit hole of web searches.



September 23, 2021

Another popular mural in Austin. As the state flower, surprised the bluebonnet doesn't make an appearance in more murals.



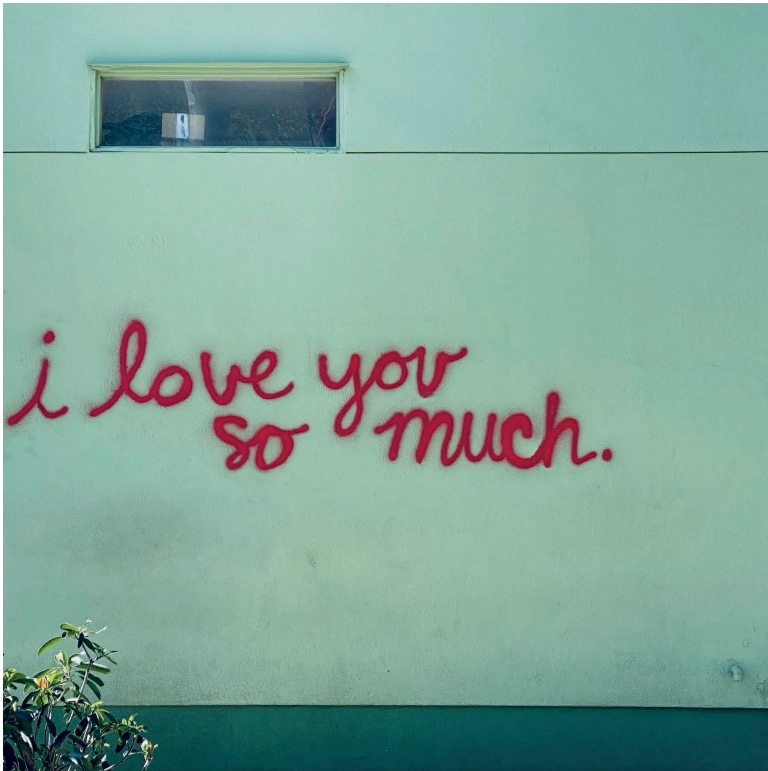
September 24, 2021

This used to be an exotic pets store on Burnet Road. Years ago when my son loved snakes we had a great time visiting. The store is gone now but the beautiful mural remains.



September 25, 2021

I debated including this because it's words, more spontaneous graffiti than mural. But it's well-loved in Austin and has a history perfect for SoCo. Musician Amy Cook wrote it for her partner and owner of Jo's Coffee. It's grown into something more, like a love letter to anyone.



September 26, 2021

There's a long stretch of great murals on both sides of North Lamar under the bridge for 3rd street and the train. I took a bunch of photos and it was hard to pick just one to feature. This segment is by Luis Angulo⁴⁵, and there's a web page here with more about the project⁴⁶.



⁴⁵ <https://uloang.com/>

⁴⁶ <https://www.raasininthesun.org/be-well>

September 27, 2021

On the side of the East Austin Hotel on 6th, by Jason Eatherly⁴⁷. Inspired by the book *Be Here Now* by Ram Dass. Winding down the mural series, only a few days left, and still discovering more murals than I could possibly include.



⁴⁷ <https://www.jasone.co/>

September 28, 2021

Threadgill's had a long history⁴⁸ in Austin, and we have good memories of eating there and seeing live music. Both Threadgill's restaurant locations are now closed, but the mural on Riverside remains.



⁴⁸ <https://www.threadgills.com/history>

September 29, 2021

In Texas today on a range of issues, change takes a step back before moving forward, but we'll get there. "So I think the side that wants to take the choice away from women and give it to the state, they're fighting a losing battle. Time is on the side of change." — Ginsburg⁴⁹



⁴⁹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/12/magazine/12ginsburg-t.html>

September 30, 2019: Last mural was the first

This is supposedly the first mural still standing in Austin, *Creation* painted on the University Baptist Church in 1950. Seems a fitting way to wrap up this series of 30 murals. The artist, Seymour Fogel⁵⁰, also studied under Diego Rivera.



A few of the murals I had hoped to visit have since been painted over. Murals are inherently fleeting. Even the best murals are always at risk of graffiti or new construction. Artists know this,

⁵⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seymour_Fogel

but they put their mark on the city anyway, a gift for us to admire and capture in photos before everything changes.