



I do not know where I came from . . . For I do not remember. - Augustine of Hippo, Confessions

It is raining in Nova Scotia. I am in Havre Boucher, a small fishing village in Antigonish County, camping at Hyclass Campground, site B13. There is a bathhouse and laundry, a playground, a couple of outhouses and a rocky point of land jutting into St. Georges Bay. I am warm, dry, writing. Hyclass. High class. It is all about perspective.

In April on Holy Saturday at Dick Gore's RV World in Savannah, Mac and I bought a Winnebago Fuse, a twenty-four foot Class C motorhome. Her name is *Hushpuppy* after Mac's efforts to train Toby and Trooper to be quiet and avoid being thrown out of campgrounds for disturbing the peace. "Hush puppy" sounds better than "No bark" (his unheeded command) and the moniker seems to fit the brown and tan camper. A southerner on a trek north in a quest for new life adventures.

We retired. In April, I left a sales career. In May, Mac left his responsibilities of counseling and team management with the Behavioral Health group on Parris Island. Some think we are too young to retire. I am old enough to know I cannot predict the future. At the end of the day, and on so many levels, it is about today's blessing of good health . . . and affordable medical insurance . . . and savings, security, quality of life. It was time.

Six years ago, we abandoned a trip to Canada because of Hurricane Irene. Instead, we spent our twenty-fifth wedding anniversary in the North Carolina mountains. This morning, I quietly marvel at time's passing in foggy disbelief of waking on Cape Breton Isle.

We did not sell our home and possessions for this new RV life. I love Beaufort and I am a bit

risk adverse. Owning a single-level, mortgage-free home when we are eighty-somethings seems sound but until we reach that decade, we are learning to live in a metal box, a bit like the tiny houses in vogue these days. Pro-RVer's tell us it will take about one year to break in a new motorhome. Another way to phrase: It may take about one year for a motorhome to break her owners because many things are apt to break.

In May, we made a two-night trial run to a KOA campground in Mt. Pleasant before this two-month trip. The campground was nice enough. We hooked up to water and electricity. I did not brave sewer service but have since learned about black and grey water. Black = wastewater. Grey = kitchen sink and shower water. Dump black water first and flush with grey. Wear gloves.

We had great TV service via a rooftop antenna because we were in range of Charleston networks. Stovetop worked. AC cooled off hot and humid South Carolina afternoons. Fridge worked. We had Wi-Fi. And then, it rained. Record rainfall. Insta-pond forming rain. The two front corners of the RV leaked. Indoor mini-waterfalls. We saturated dish towels in an effort to sop up water. It was disheartening but manageable. As the weekend drew to a close and the rain subsided, I turned on the ignition and released the parking brake to begin our trip home. A non-stop pinging alarm sounded. Turn off the RV. Survey the outside of the camper to make certain plugs, hoses, and storage cubbies are secure. Start ignition. Ping, ping, ping. Long story short, we took the Fuse to Palmetto Ford in West Ashley and five hours and a hotel stay later, we learned that there is a sensor underneath the passenger seat attached to the parking brake. Winnebago wants to be sure the swivel seat is facing the windshield and not the living area when the vehicle is in transit. It wasn't aligned. A mini-vacation in a new RV before heading to Canada is a good idea. So is heading back to Dick Gore for warranty repairs.

It is raining in the Cape Breton Highlands in Nova Scotia. We are waking up from our third night in the national park. Activities include hikes to the crest of the Canadian Appalachian mountains, biking to salmon pools, and short scooter jaunts on the Cabot Trail to the Grand Falaise (big cliff). Five nights in one camping site gives us time to rest, enjoy campfires, attend local music programs at the visitor center, read, write, walk the dogs and eat. Mac made me my first S'more. Never had one before. He baked potatoes in the hot coals for an evening meal. The dogs have been coping well, howling and barking at other canine campers. We haven't been evicted yet.

Between rains, we've had sunshine with intense blue skies and giant clouds of marshmallow white. Fresh lobster, jolting views of mountain meeting ocean, Celtic music and Canadian single malt whiskey accessorize the journey.

Northbound Ease

Written by Vivian Bikulege

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We return to the Lowcountry in August. My brother keeps asking me, "What's next?" He advises that turning into a "stinky old woman living in a trailer" is not an option. There is a lot of country to see, tales to tell and more RV problems to solve. What's next? *Whatever.*