

The Drive

by Trevor Roberson

The alarm rang. I was already up though, I had barely slept at all that night. It was only 5am, but it was finally time to go. My Dad and I packed the last few things in to my car, I said my final good-byes to him, put some driving music on, and now I was finally leaving. For years I had set a goal that I would leave my hometown and go away to university right after the summer I graduated, and here I was, leaving to go out on my own, but I would have to make the drive to Prince George first.

I allotted ten hours to make it to Prince, but I was only going on word of mouth and logic. I knew I had to make it there before the housing office at UNBC closed, hence the need to wake up by 5am.

The drive started well, it was a beautiful Okanagan morning, and I love dawn. It is such an incredible time, the beginning of something new, where everything comes back to life again. Now, my parents being quite concerned loaded me with enough food for someone to survive for a least a week. After several hours, I decided that I should try to make a dent in the food supply and I had to make a quick bathroom break anyway. Consequently I pulled in to a gas station at the next town, which was Cache Creek, for what was supposed to be a short break.

Having finished eating, I quickly went in to the gas station, but I knew that I had very little time. I would have never predicted what was to happen next. As I headed for the bathroom, I noticed a short line up of three people. Well this shouldn't be a problem I thought, maybe a wait of a few minutes, but I could make that up.

The first guy went in to the bathroom, no problem right? After several minutes he appeared from the toilet, and I was quite happy to see the line move up. I figured I should be out of here in a few minutes, but that was not to be the case. After a couple of minutes I realized this would be another long wait. Of course the thought crossed my mind that I could just go somewhere else, but how could the next two people take so long, I might as well wait it out for a minute or so. Unfortunately, it wasn't until five minutes later, that the second man appeared from the toilet. All right, only one more person left, and I'll be back on the road, on to my future. Of course, this couldn't be a short bathroom trip for the final guy either, but at this point I was almost expecting it.

Finally, the last man appeared from the bathroom, and it was my turn. Oh the excitement. Then suddenly the thought crossed my mind, that maybe I don't really want to go in there, as the smell may be a bit off. Well after all this waiting I was determined to use this toilet. I'm not sure if this was the correct decision as the smell was, well nothing you really want to experience again, but it was in some sick sense it was all part of the "experience".

So upon leaving that gas station where I feared I would die of old age, I was prepared to continue my journey. I suppose nothing earth shattering happened after this episode. I did

almost fall asleep at the wheel, whereupon I thought opening the window, putting the on music excessively loud, and banging my head would help keep me awake. It didn't. When my forehead started to swell up from continual beatings from my hand, I was forced to pull over and walk around for a few minutes.

I was only an hour away from my destination at this point though, so I knew the journey was almost over, and I'd be able to make it the rest of the way without any more sleep troubles. When I pulled up to the stop light at the bottom of 15th Avenue in Prince George, I didn't want to go up the hill to the university, but I knew I had to, this was the completion of the biggest goal I had ever set for myself. After a moment of hesitation I started up the hill.

I arrived safely at the university and got the keys for my apartment, all with over a half-hour to spare; yet all this wasn't important anymore. The drive had become something more than simply a drive. To this day, I remember almost every aspect of the drive, but not so much because of the things that happened, but because every corner I went around, hill I went over, and bridge that I crossed, had a deeper meaning. It was like they were all symbols of my past, and hopes for my future.