

## **Blizzard!**

Betty and I had borrowed our neighbor's battered van to drive from Colorado to California to pick up some recording equipment. We were pressed for time and decided to drive through the night. This was the 1970s and I-70 was far from finished. In sections, it was only a two-lane highway. That's how it was when an unexpected blizzard hit us in the hills of Eastern Utah about two o'clock in the morning.

Working our way up a steep grade, we were about a quarter of a mile from the top. The van was empty, the tires bald and the road slick. Since there was a slight curve in the road, the engineers had also put a slant (grade?) in it for better maneuverability. We had slipped into the oncoming lane and were sitting partially sideways when the lights of a tractor-trailer shone up and over the top of the long hill. I had to get out of the semi's way – fast. It was picking up momentum.

In vain I tried to move the van without losing control. The blizzard was so bad it was hard to see any lines or shoulders. We were standing diagonally in the wrong lane, our headlights beaming into the blowing blizzard.

The truck driver would have hardly any time to react if he finally did see us. In reality, he would have only two choices: (1) do nothing and take us down the hill with him or – if he had time and presence of mind – (2) try to stay upright by taking his chances on whatever shoulder that was, or wasn't, there. (Trying to pass us on our right would have had the same results as the first option.)

Betty and I stared at the looming lights which, by now, seemed to be right on top of us. Both of us "froze," but Betty will always remember my groaning, "Oh, God! No!"

Instantly, the rig moved to our left and off the highway. The speed and the closeness of the semi shook our van like a baby rattle. Shoulder reflector markers were mowed down. Betty looked back and marveled at how the rig was able to stay upright.

Stillness, blessed stillness.

For a full minute we sat stunned. We were alive. In one piece. Not even a scratch.

"Thank you, Lord; you still must have a purpose for us on earth."

There were no more vehicles of any kind for hours. Eventually, we not only made it to the top of the hill but to California and back. ◇◇◇