

Bonneville.

You know how sometimes you'll be drivin' and you're spacin' out so much you kinda wake up and realize that you haven't been payin' any attention at all? Like you didn't even know you was drivin' a car, and you can't remember anything – what roads you been on, what you passed, nothin'. Happens to me all the time. It freaks me out somethin' fierce. Sometimes it takes me a minute or two to even figure out where I am or where I'm goin'.

Well, that happened to me this one time. It was back when I had that old Pontiac Bonneville, the blue one with a green passenger side door, and all it had in it was an old AM radio. I always just kept it tuned to this old timey station that played gospel and bluegrass. You know, real back-porchy kinda stuff. I didn't really like the music much, but I couldn't get very many stations so it wasn't really worth the hassle a' trying to switch it. Plus, I didn't pay it no mind most of the time anyway.

So I was drivin' out on Old Fort Pass which is kind of out in the country. I wasn't payin' much attention to my drivin', I guess, because I saw somethin' in the road all of a sudden and it near scared the life outta me. I couldn't tell it if was a kitten or a turtle or what it was. I could see it was makin' its way cross the road, but it was gettin' nowhere fast. But I

was bout to run the sunvabich over and I was scared that it might be some little kid's kitty or somethin'. So I slammed hard on my brakes and the car screeched to a stop. Now that I think of it, I'm sure I didn't even check my mirrors. Somebody coulda been comin' behind me and knocked me into the middle of next week. But lucky for me it was safe. I didn't even pull off on the side of the road, I just stopped right there in the lane. Don't know why.

When I got outta the car, I could see what it was. It was an ugly little baby 'possum. Ugly in sorta a cute way. The little booger was all disoriented, confused, wanderin' one way, then the other, right in the middle of the damn road, like he was blind. I reached down to pick 'im up and move 'im off to the grass on the side of the road. But I didn't know if them things had rabies or whatever. Then I remembered that I had some work gloves in my trunk from when I'd been weed-eatin' at Mrs. Brady's, so I got those out and put 'em on. I picked that little squirmin' 'possum up, tried to be gentle.

I cupped it in my hands. He was hardly bigger'n a hamster. I didn't know which way he'd come from or which side a' the road he was tryin'a find. I thought about it for a minute, then I crossed the on-comin' lane and took 'im over to the ditch at the other side a' the road and let 'im go. He started moving

through the grass away from the road. *Atta boy*, I thought.
Don't wanna get hit, do ya?

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So I made my way on to wherever I was goin'. It's funny that I don't even remember now. I got there and I suppose I did whatever it was I went there to do. Maybe I got my oil changed, or maybe I was goin' to meet some girl. Coulda been anything, I guess. None a' that really sticks in my mind. Alls I remember is comin' back a little later when it was just startin' to get dark. I came round a little bend in the road and realized I was right back near that spot where I'd seen that 'possum earlier. It was getting' dusky out and I couldn't see real good, but I saw somethin' in the road again, bout the same size as that little 'possum was.

It wasn't movin' or anything, just sittin' there. This time it was in the other lane, not mine. I slowed down to see what it was. As I passed by, I seen that it was a little dead baby 'possum, half his body all smashed and bloody. As I went by, my car seemed to go an inch at a time, everything in slow motion. *Aw shit*, I thought. *Aw shit, what happened?*

My eyes got all blurry and wet. I wasn't really cryin'. Why would I over a stupid ugly 'possum? I don't know why they

got all watery. I couldn't even tell for sure if it was the same one or not. How would I know the difference? But the more I think about it, I'm sure it was the same one. The one that was trying to make it to the other side of the road. Which side? I didn't know then, but now I figure it musta been the other side. The side I didn't pick.

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I still think about it now and again. Sometimes when I'm drivin' on that road. Or when I get those gloves out to mow or weed-eat. Or even when I listen to that old-timey radio station and I hear a song that sounds like it might get sung at somebody's funeral. I still don't know what happened. I think, *stupid lil' bastard. Shoulda known I was savin' your life. Shoulda stayed put, safe, there where I put you.*

Other times I think it must have been bound to happen. Like no matter what I did, that 'possum was gonna die. Like it was its day to die, God had planned it or somethin'. And I just interfered with fate, with destiny. Like that dumb run-over 'possum is what I get for tryin' to play God.

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