



### Rivers of Asphalt

Humans built their first great civilizations around the rivers. The Tigris, the Euphrates, the Nile, the Indus, the Yellow River. They brought nourishing soils through their floods, transmitted people, goods, and ideas through boats, and sated the thirst of humans and animals alike.

As we spread ever forward, the ancestral memories of the great rivers never really left our bones. How could they?

We were not the first humans to travel to this desert from other places. Others had encroached on this land before and decided it needed to be altered to their preferences.

They laid the great rivers of asphalt. Names were given to them, in a decidedly unromantic manner. NV SR 375, I-15, US 6.

These rivers were not intended to be viewed as the beating heart of a civilization. No gods live on the shoulder of the interstate, no rituals are conducted in the bathrooms of a gas station.



375-6

38.19°N 116.37°W

Check Gas, No Fuel Ahead

By the time we arrived, our predecessors were fading away. The world they built was soon laid to waste by nuclear bombs. They left behind us, they left behind records, and they left behind the rivers they built. They never did leave anyone to tell us they were the least sacred places they could have possibly imagined.

In their absence, all we had to go off was what we saw in front of us. When we gazed South at the road, we saw the thrumming heartbeat of the Great Basin. We saw the free movement of people and what they carried.

The mundanity of modern life can't strip away the emotions we feel when we see the road stretch out in front of us, vanishing only at the horizon. Traffic jams can't erase the sense of connection we felt this summer when we drove out to US 6, stood in the parking lot of a Dollar General, and felt an unbroken line connecting us and the places that feel like our home. Our gods followed us to this world. We find them beautiful. We hope you do too!

We saw a great map laid out before us, recorded in the numbers and words that our ancestors had found so mundane. The consistency of their designations guided us home when the stars failed us.

There was nothing more vital to our continued survival than the highway. Nothing more central to our way of life than walking the roads. What is God, if not that? What is God, if not that which cares for you in a way nothing else can?

Living in this world hasn't changed how we feel about the highways. Not even when we get stuck under an overpass for 17 consecutive minutes because nobody in this city knows what a turn signal is. Not even when we have a 45-minute commute through rush-hour traffic to and from class every day. Our commute became a time of prayer and communion. Time spent stuck under the overpass became time spent with an old friend.