Excerpt from

The Highwayman
by Jimmy Webb

I'll fly a starship across the universe divide
And when I reach the other side
I'll find a place to rest my spirit if I can
Or, perhaps
I may become a highwayman again
Or, I may simply be a single drop of rain
But I will remain
And I'll come back again
And again, and again, and again...

The Man of the Highway

He is exactly like you and me; exactly. More alone and singularly responsible than you or I would ever hope to be, his universe stretches as far as his eyes can see and his arms can reach. It is his clever imagination or a certain smile or kind word that mentally propels him, and not the fullest tank of the cheapest diesel. Physically, his upper body is strong, his legs less so, his back misaligned. For his family, for his elusive dreams and a myriad of obligations that trail behind him with greater weight than his loaded trailer, he takes on the road. He loves it. He hates it. It’s what he does for a living. The words, “truck driver” catches in his throat, because he knows this declaration alone will lower him in your eyes. That will all change once you respectfully consider a day in his boots.

I write from my perspective of four decades and more than a million miles of involvement with the trucking industry. There is no one I would rather share the road with than a professional truck driver. He has experienced and safely navigated every type of highway configuration, road and weather condition, and erratic passenger car driver imaginable. All of it while balancing the 80,000lbs of cargo that’s dangling off his backside. You and I are his worst enemies. We are nimble, and we fools expect he should be likewise. We dart, tailgate, hang out off his shoulder, slam on our brakes, drift, challenge and otherwise make folly of the serious responsibilities of highway driving. His best day doesn’t include you and me. It’s spent in the community, flow, of an end to end stream of other Drivers. In their own unique style they discuss business, as well as, their personal lives over the air, in much the same way we all do. Yes, these men and women are exactly like you and me.

The Great American Trucker of which I write is every bit as worthy of the title “professional” as is your doctor, accountant or handyman. He earns it every day. He needs it. He deserves it.

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