

# Hitchhiking at the Timmerman Light – At the Crossroads of Idaho Highways 20 & 75

**This is it.** All roads begin here. From here, they go nearly everywhere. X marks the spot. We see – assuming a flat earth – that the road from Fairfield to Picabo and the road from Costco to Ketchum diverge at every vertex by a full and simple 90°.

That's as wide apart – at least in Idaho geometry – as they can collectively get.

The moonlit crossroads is quartered by pasture, hay, the Highway Department rest stop, and a sewer pond. The quadrants sog into a boggy divide that seems indifferent to the outcome: Spring Creek, Silver Creek, Loving Creek, east, west, Big Wood, Little Wood, whatever. But the nonjudgmental look of the place lulls passersby into figuring that all destinations must really be pretty much the same, and that you can always go back and pick again.

**No passing.** The cool moon above Timmerman approves all route selections and will smoothly silver every disaster down the road: every broken bottle blowout, black ice, tie-rod poop-out, every pothole, every redevye nightthump whacking at your palms through the wheel, gutcoils steaming hooped on the bumper in the spilllight of one lamp working after the ditch yanks you into the lick-stink of shredded rabbitbrush and acid dust. No one passes here without moving toward our shared consequence.

The rest of time begins here, at the Timmerman light: the pawl, the latch, the escapement releasing everything left unhappened in cool sequence tick by tick, everything that will ever come true. Down to final pressing downroad in the night of every body who passes below this light. Plus everyone and everything connected to these roads.

**The flashing light** tips us to a danger. Places like this, like truckstops and interchanges, turnoffs to frontage roads, yield signs, the A&W drive-in, the lobby with the elevators, the registration line, are places where men and women and children are taken down by creatures of the crossroads: the collectors, the bikers, the hitchhikers, the joyriders and all their kind: trustfunders, agri-workers, bats hunting bugs around the rest-stop lights, truckstop cuties, substance fiends, media personalities, operators of fear boutiques and hump dens and peep cathedrals, film buffs, law and order personnel, real estate professionals. Here, anything innocent is at risk. Under the Timmerman light it is no trick to lift away the souls of mammals dazzled by the brightness of the fact.



**Where is not here.** This is not it. *Where* is all the zip codes where the bills arrive, the zones where effects kick in. This is not it. Here, roads compete to be the ones selected, and histories take turns to take the chance of coming true. Left and right draw away the headlights of cars that carry mammals hot to be somewhere else. This is not it. Water is a sound at night, a talk from the bog, a plosch and suck of hoof. A glitter-cabbed Lexus arrives and turns left on 75: no stop. This is not it. Alone in the reststop bathroom, an ardent guy pencils times for lewd appointments on the damp block walls. Outside, his Buick's engine-block ticks beneath the lamps. A shooting star zippers over Picabo. Light-rips tear the night: red eyes, taillights, stars, ranchettes. Pickups, crickets, owlhoots. The stretching nightroads trill with wheels going anyway away. This is not it.