

Matt Deline

EWRT1A

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## Ride the Wind

Have you ever wanted to fly? To soar over the land as it rushes past below and embrace the wind as it rushes past me has always been a dream of mine. Of course, it isn't a dream that I can call my own.

I sat down on the seat of my crimson red 1986 Honda VF 700 Magna. It's not a large motorcycle by any means, but it has some weight to it and a decent amount of power for a smaller cruiser. It's got a very classic look to it with its straight handlebars and the large gauges on the instrument panel. The vinyl on the seat was enough to scream 80's, but then again 1986 was 20 years ago now. The scattered corpses of grasshoppers littered the front end and the shoulders of my jean riding jacket. The seat rides low by comparison, and is extremely comfortable. Comfort is a good thing when you decide to go for a ride that's going to take you well over 400 miles. I had never gone this far before, and at this point I was only at the beginning.

Looking past the rusted chain link fence at the top of the hill I had chosen to rest at I could make out the freeway below. It was past midnight and the freeway looked like a shadow in the distance. Very few cars made their way past at slow intervals; flitting by like lanterns being carried across the valley. It was time to go, or I would never reach LA before the Sunrise.

In one swift motion I knocked back the kickstand and hit the ignition. The motor

started with a familiar rumble. I opened the choke to let the engine warm to an acceptable level. I checked the instrument panel to see if the red fuel light was on and smiled; because it was off I could go for another 75 miles without stopping again. Looking slightly to the right I checked the RPM on the motor. At two and a half thousand it was a little high so I pushed forward slightly on the choke lever to bring it down to about a thousand. I grabbed my helmet from the ground and put it on. While closing the face shield I made sure to keep a small gap for a vent. Planting my feet to the ground I began to push myself backward through the loose gravel of the lot. I kicked down on the shift pedal, hit the throttle and let go of the clutch.

The bike lurched forward hesitantly and I gave it a little gas. I turned to the right and began to lean into the entrance to Highway 5. Gripping the handle tightly with my right hand I pulled back and took off like a jet plane leaving the runway.

It's an interesting thing watching the road at night. It's almost as if it was a river of obsidian flowing against you.

I took a deep breath; the air was carrying through the vents in my helmet well so I pushed the face shield closed on my helmet. The volume of the road was surprising; it sounded as if I was riding through a tornado. I reached down to my hip and hit the play button on my mp3 player. I could still hear the sound of the wind above the music. It meant I could still hear the cars if I needed to.

It was about 85 degrees outside which was a little surprising considering how late it was. Keeping my hand firmly on the throttle I reached up with my left hand and pulled down on the zipper. The rush of air felt cool against the heat that had built up inside. It

smelled earthy, like pastures in the distance.

Looking around I saw the hillside slowly receding. Vast empty grasslands stretched out in the distance appearing dark blue in the night hues. No other vehicles were anywhere to be seen. I checked the speedometer and I was coasting at a cool 75 MPH. Leaning forward I held the throttle with my fingertips and proceeded to twist the handle until it was wide open. The bike screamed forward at the touch. The wind picked up and started pulling at the collar of my jacket and pushing at my chest as if it were trying to knock me over. The folds in my jeans flapped wildly and the bugs that hit me periodically stung like needles. The engine roared and the handlebars shook fervently. This was what being alive was supposed to feel like.

I eased off the gas and leaned back a little to look up at the sky. The stars covered the night sky in a way they only could in the countryside. I scanned the road ahead, felt the warm air pass me by, knew the road as I glided over it, and smiled when I hit the gas.

That night, I flew.