

Nowhere near

Like the masses of vacationers we were crazed that morning, now were heading east on 84. It's not often that I get to drive the camper van, the VW's the hubby's baby. I was enjoying the sense of freedom and the vistas of the Gorge.

The brief calm was broken by a feeling of fear. Steven Hawking speaks about parallel universes. Mystical traditions recite stories of invisible dimension and ladders to heaven but this was no angelic vision. A huge sadness flooded me. A movie was loaded into my mind - from where I don't know.

I was picturing our lives' end; it felt so close I couldn't understand why it wasn't happening. A tractor-trailer was next to us, and I could *see* just out of reach that the semi would nick us and the van would get tossed around like a sardine can, a pure accident. As it smashed we'd be throw out, our bodies broken on the next lane, to be hit by other vehicles who couldn't stop in time. Our little dog smushed like road kill.

The feeling whipped through like a cloud on the windy day temporarily blocking the sun. The movie ended. My hands were still firmly on the wheel, and the sun was out. We were safe. I didn't dare tell my mate -- that would be bringing the thought too close to earth. **Darlene Zimbardi, Portland, OR**