

Chapter 8: Back to San Diego

The drive back to San Diego seemed a lot longer than the drive from San Diego to Hampton. The boys became more restless the closer they got to California.

“How much further?” Bobby asked after waking up with a kink in his neck.

“Another three or so hours,” mom replied.

“Can we stop and get something to eat?” Chris asked.

“Yeah,” dad jumped in, “I’m getting hungry too.” He looked at the boys in the rearview mirror. “What do you boys feel like eating?”

“Hamburger and fries!” Bobby shouted.

“Yeah!” Chris agreed, but he could tell mom didn’t want that.

“Hey there’s another Big Boy’s restaurant billboard,” mom said “wanna stop there?”

“Sounds like a plan,” dad said, and the boys agreed.

“It feels good to stretch my legs,” mom said as she got out of the car to go into the restaurant.

Dad looked at the boys as he opened the door for them, “you need to use the restroom? Better go now.”

“I do,” Chris said, and they walked into the men’s room.

“I’ll be happy to get back to San Diego,” Bobby said as he and Chris washed their hands.

“Yeah,” Chris agreed, “but don’t get used to calling it home since we’re just gonna turn around and go back to Virginia next month.”

“I know,” Bobby said with a little disappointment. “Still,” Bobby continued, “I’m looking forward to skating as much as I can with Charles and Josh before we leave.”

“Yeah, and I’m gonna catch as many waves as I can in the *Pacific Ocean*,” Chris said as they walked out the door.

Back on the road, “It didn’t take long for them go back to sleep,” mom said. “I think they’re still not crazy about us moving back there.”

“Yeah,” dad said, “well, I’m gonna miss San Diego too, I grew up there, but this is the right thing to do.”

“I know,” mom agreed, “and I’m thrilled we’re moving back there, but I still feel sorry for them.” Bob agreed.

After a few hours, dad woke everyone up, “Look at that beautiful blue Pacific Ocean!”

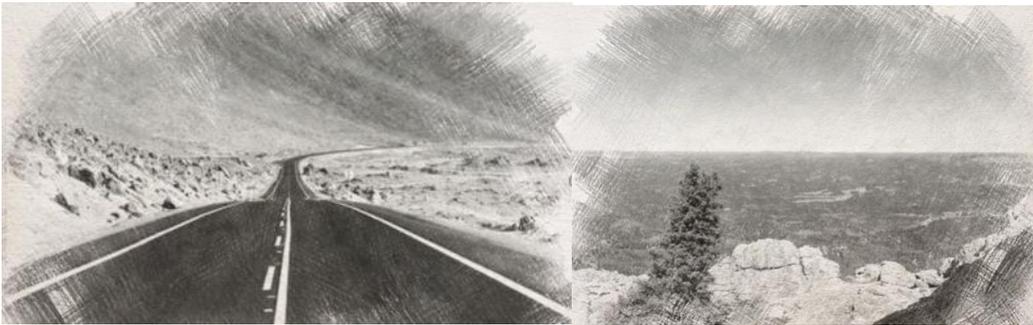
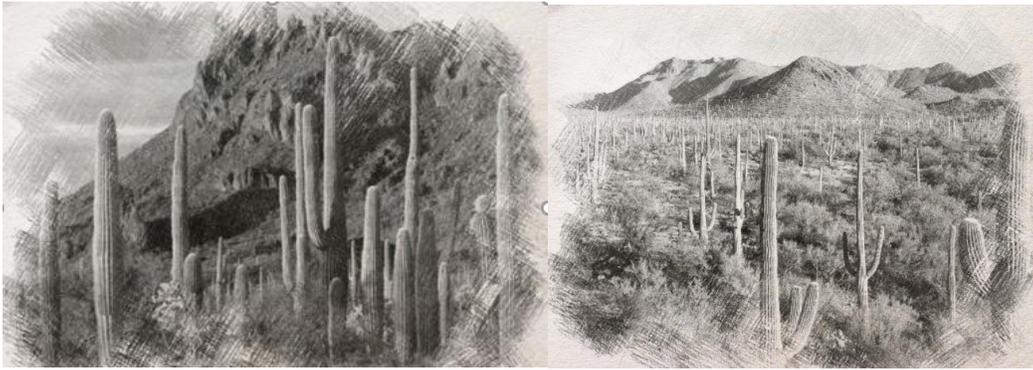
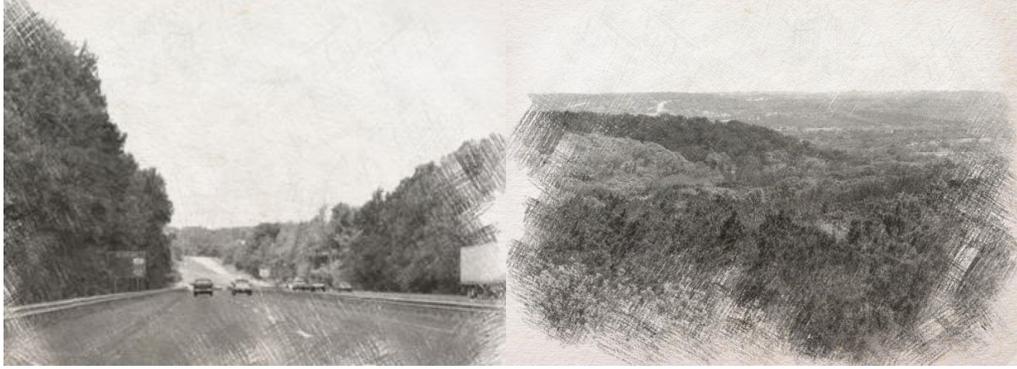
The boys woke up and excited to see it because that meant they were almost home. “We’re almost home!” Bobby said as he woke up and looked out his window.

“We’re still in the mountains,” dad replied, “but it won’t be long, about forty-five minutes.”

After driving all across the country, the terrain changed from flat green forests from Virginia to Texas, to dry hilly semi-desert through most of Texas, then hot dry desert with just cactus through Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona, with hardly any trees, then finally to the mountains that led down into San Diego county with the beautiful blue Pacific Ocean off in the distance, and into San Diego county with a mild semi-arid climate down to the ocean with palm trees everywhere.

“This sure is a *big* country isn’t it dad?” Chris said as he took in all in a second time.

“Sure is,” he said, “and beautiful too.”



Although they lived eight blocks from the ocean, Bob drove straight to Crystal pier in Pacific Beach to check out the waves.



“Look at that!” Bob said as he pulled up to the pier.

The waves were about three to four feet, glassy, and not too crowded.

“Sure am gonna miss the waves and fewer crowds,” Bob said.

“Me too,” Chris agreed a little sad.

“Hey Chris,” someone said as they walked past them with their boards. “Goin’ out?”

“Nah,” Chris said, “just got back from Virginia. Maybe later.”

They waved and continued on. They sat there for a few minutes in the car watching them sand their boards then paddled out.



“Let’s get home,” mom said, “I’m tired.”

“We’re gonna pick up Freedom first,” dad said. “I know one dog who’s gonna be glad to see us.”

Bobby was the first one in the yard to get her and put on her leash.



When she saw everyone, she went nuts. She couldn't stop wagging her body and howling with excitement. Dad pulled down the tailgate, and she jumped right in, body still wagging with excitement to see them again.

"Bobby," dad instructed, "make sure we have her bowls and dog food."

"I already got 'em," he said, lifting them up to show him.

"Thanks again Scott for watching her," Bob said as he got in the truck.

"She was no problem," Scott said and waved goodbye from the porch.

Early the next morning Christian, Ryan, and Bryan were knocking on the door to see Chris and Bobby. Chris still in his pajamas, opened the door and let them in, and Bobby came running down the hall to greet them.

"Welcome back you guys," Christian said as he plopped down on the couch. "How was it?"

"Shhhhh!" Chris said, "mom and dad are still asleep. They've were driving non-stop across country for the last three days.

They looked out the front window to see that Ryan and Bobby wasted no time putting out the skate ramp on the sidewalk. Wasn't long before Josh, Joey, Boone, and Charles showed up with their skateboards.

"My mom and dad decided that we're all going to move back there and buy my grandma and grandpa's house."

"No way!" Christian said surprised.

"Yeah," Chris said, "not sure how that's gonna work out."

"When are you leaving?" Bryan asked.

"We gave our landlord a thirty-day notice, so we'll be leaving at the end of the month."

"That doesn't leave much time to hang out," Christian said.

"We're gonna have a going away party, so let your mom know," Chris said. Chris got dressed, and they both went out front with their skateboards.

Christian walked up to Ryan, "Did Bobby tell you they're moving to Virginia?"

"Yeah," he replied, "that stinks."

"Yeah," Christian said then butted in line to skate the ramp.

“It was my turn!” Boone said, but Christian ignored him and skated it, anyway. He then walked over to Chris, who was sitting on the grass watching everyone skate the ramp.

“Did you have time to go surf?” Christian asked.

“Yeah,” Chris said, “the waves were super small, but the water was warm. I love that warm water.”

Bryan came over and sat on the grass with them. They were all quiet about the news.

“We have a huge backyard,” Chris said to lift everyone’s spirits, “dad promised to build us a twelve-foot half pipe!”

“Cool,” Christian said, but no one wanted to say too much. They just sat there together watching Bobby and his friends ride the ramp.

The next several weeks were filled with preparing for their final trip back to Virginia. Chris and Bobby didn’t get to hang out with their friends as much as they wanted to because there were lots of chores they had to do. Christian came over almost every day to help out.

“This weekend, we’re gonna tear down the half pipe,” dad announced to the boys. “So, if your friends don’t want it, it’s going to the dump.”

“I have a lot of friends who want it,” Chris said, “but their parents won’t let them put it up in their yard.”

“Yeah,” mom said, “I can understand that.”

“How about we donate it to the OB Skate Park?” mom suggested.

Dad nodded in agreement, “good idea.”

“I’ll go over there later and talk to them,” mom said.

“Can I go?” Bobby asked.

“Sure,” mom said, “ask Chris if he wants to come too.”

“Can I ask Charles too?” Bobby added.

“He can,” mom said, “but will not be there long.”

“OK,” Bobby was excited and took off on his board to Charles’ house.

Chris was in the yard helping his dad trim the bushes. “Wanna go with us to the skate park?”

“No way,” dad said, “he’s helping me clean up this place before the landlord comes over for the inspection. “When you get back,” dad said while raking up the cuttings and putting them in the bag Chris was holding open, “we have more chores we need your help with.”

“OK,” Bobby said as he road off on his board.

Bobby skated over to Charles' house which was only a few blocks away. Charles was sitting on the front porch drinking a Slurpy and looked up and nodded as he saw Bobby approaching.

"What's up Bobo?" Charles said as he slurped up the last few sips.

"We're going to Robb Field to the skate park, wanna go?" he asked.

"Yep," Charles said as he got up to go inside and Bobby followed him.

"We can't stay long," Bobby said, "mom is just going over there to see if they want our ramp."

"Oh maaan," Charles said, "I'm gonna miss that ramp." Charles threw away his cup and grabbed his skateboard.

"Going with Bobby mom to the skate park," he yelled out to his mom as he and Bobby walked out the front door.

"You be back soon," mom yelled back, "you still gotta clean that room."

Charles just made a look and didn't respond. In a few minutes they were back at Bobby's house with his mom was waiting in the car for them.

“Hi Julie,” mom said as she approached the skate park office,
“what are you doing here today?”

“Hey guys,” Julie said as she put away some files. “I’m helping out until Todd gets back from the shop.”

Bobby and Charles put on their pads and helmet and took off skating.

“We won’t be here long boys,” mom yelled to them as they skated off, then turned back to talk to Julie.

“I wanted to know if we could donate our ramp to the park?” she asked, “we sure can’t take it with us.”

“Oh, wow!” Julie said with surprise, “I’m sure Todd will be thrilled. Let me call him.”

“Bob can bring it over and help him set it up tomorrow morning if that works for him,” Lorene said.

Todd picked up on the second ring, “Pride Surf and Skate,” Todd answered.

“Hey this is Julie, Bob and Lorene want to donate their half pipe to us,” she said.

Lorene waited for a reply and Julie nodded her head. "Bob said he could bring it tomorrow morning," Julie explained then looked at Lorene, "what time?"

"What's a good time for Todd?" she told her.

"How about seven a.m.?" she asked and waited for Todd to answer. "Ok," she said and hung up, "seven a.m. it is! The kids will be stoked, and Todd wanted me to thank you so, so much."

"It's not going to be the same around here without you guys," she said.

"I know," Lorene replied, "we're gonna miss all of you and San Diego too. But, we'll be back for visits.

"You know you can stay with us any time Julie said, Craig and I would I will miss all," she said as Lorene thanked her and said goodbye, then walked out to the park to signal the boys to come in.

Saturday, August 31, 2014. Christian and Bryan showed up early on their skateboards to help tear down the ramp, "could we ride it one last time?" Bryan asked.

"Sure," Chris said as he ran in the house to grab his board.

They enjoyed hanging out together riding the ramp like the old days.

Chris went first and Bryan stood on top the ramp waiting his turn.



Didn't take long, and dad came out with his tools ready to get started. He watched them for a few minutes to allow them their last time together enjoying the ramp, then announced, "ok guys I'm sorry, but we need to get started."

Dad used his hammer to pull the boards apart, "make sure you don't break or splinter the wood taking out the nails in case we're donating this," dad instructed Chris, then looked over and saw Lorene, Bobby, and Charles come into the back gate.

"Todd is stoked to take it!" Lorene told them.

"Great!" Bob said as he pulled out another nail.

“This was easier to build than to take apart!” Chris said as he struggled to get a nail out.

“Bobby you can pile up the boards over there so we can put them in the truck,” dad said and him and Charles put their boards down and started to work.



Bobby and Charles looked at the pile of wood with sadness.

“Todd said you could come around seven a.m.,” Lorene said and started to walk up the back porch.

“Chris and Bobby,” dad instructed, “you come with me in the morning, so don’t make any plans tomorrow.”

They all looked at each other a little sadder as time was getting closer for them to leave.

Bob dropped off Charles at his house on the way and Bobby and Chris and waved goodbye.

“See ya at the going away party next Saturday around four o’clock,” Bobby yelled back before mom left, and Charles waved back and walked into his house.

Bob and the boys woke up early, ate breakfast, then began loading the truck with the pieces from the ramp. Just as they were about to leave, Charles and Josh showed up with their boards to help.

“Do you want these nails?” Chris asked as he collected them off the ground.

“No,” dad answered and pointed to the bucket, “throw those into the bucket, I have new ones.”

Didn’t take long, and they were at the Skate Park and saw Todd waiting for them. He walked over to help them unload the truck.

“We are so excited about getting this ramp,” Todd said as he continued unloading the wood pieces.

“We got a lot of enjoyment out of it,” Bob replied, “we are glad you wanted it.”

“Are you kidding?” Todd said with much excitement, “the kids are going to be seriously stoked when they see this.”

Todd showed them where to put it, then Bob instructed everyone on which pieces went together and within an hour, the ramp was back together.

“Looking good!” Todd said as he stepped back to get a better view. “The park opens in 30 minutes and I can already see them hanging out in front waiting to get in,” he continued, “you boys must have put out the word,” Todd said as he sized up the crowd. “Haven’t seen this many here this early in a long time.”

Chris and Bobby looked at their dad and he nodded that it was ok for them to try it out. They climbed up and Chris dropped in first and flew up the other side and back down. The crowd out front watched them and hooted. Bobby, Charles, and Josh waited their turn.

“Gotta let ‘em all in now,” Todd said as he went to open the gate.

What fun they had riding it for the last time. As they said their goodbyes to everyone, Bob tried to cheer them up, “don’t worry guys, I’ll build you a twelve-footer in Virginia.”

The boys smiled then walked slowly back to the truck a little sad as they waved goodbye to their friends. They were lined waiting to take their turn on the ramp.

“At least you’ve left your friends a nice gift,” dad said trying to cheer them up.

“I’ll say,” Bobby said in agreement.