More Time

Grandpa pulled aside his apartment curtains. Gold and pink ribbons of fading sunset lined puffy gray clouds.

Why hasn't he called? He should be there by now. This is day three. If he made it without the truck breaking down, he'd have rolled into San Diego mid-afternoon today.

The scene floated up of His grandson leaving for California in a U Haul pulling his Toyota Highlander behind on a trailer.

"I'll call you when I get there," the young man promised.

Grandpa's eyelids fluttered heavily with fatigue. *Maybe he's already forgotten me. Won't call. Why shouldn't he forget me? He's young. Has life ahead of him. Me—I'm at the end. My wife's gone. Best friend died five years ago. I've even outlived my son.*

The memory of his sister's call to report Grandpa's 65-year-old son's fatal heart attack struck fresh pain in his chest.

God, why am I even here? You can take me any time. It's OK with me.

Grandpa shuffled to the kitchen. Poured the morning's dregs of coffee into a pottery mug. *A few sips might help keep me awake. I don't want to fall asleep in case he does call. I might not hear the ring.*

Upon emptying the cup, Grandpa felt the rhythm of his heart quicken. Nervous, his hands shook as he unscrewed the cap on a small, brown medication container. He swallowed a pill with water. *That's all I need now is to be face down on the floor with a heart attack not able to answer a ringing phone. Drat! I shouldn't have downed that stale cup of coffee—it was probably twice as strong as usual*.

A ring interrupted his thoughts.

"Hello?"

"Grandpa, I made it! I'm seeing the lights of San Diego right now!"

"Hallelujah! Any trouble with the truck or trailer?" Grandpa inquired.

"No, I took my time like you said. Everything worked like a dream!" the exhausted young man exclaimed.

"What about that steep descent into Albuquerque?" Grandpa asked hesitatingly.

*"*Piece of cake!" bragged the grandson. "No problem at all! I was counting on that extra tie down you gave me for my Toyota, and it didn't disappoint. Plus, the truck's brakes must have been new. They didn't even screech."

"Well, thanks for calling and letting me know. I can rest easy now." Grandpa sighed with relief.

"Me too! Hey, Grandpa, keep my cot up in the office. I'll fly back for Christmas, OK?"

"Sure, I'll look forward to that."

"Good night, Grandpa. Thanks for everything."

Grandpa hobbled into his bedroom and lay across the bed, too tired for pj's. A satisfied smile spread across his lips. He felt sweet sleep creeping over his frame.

Wait! He jerked himself awake. *Hey God, you know what I said about taking me anytime?*

Um, I'd like to change that prayer…

Give me more time, OK?