

# Inertia

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**A story by Russ Sherwin, Copyright 2005**

Newtonian physics: A boat at rest tends to remain at rest. Especially if the marina in which it is moored is 2 blocks away from a bakery. It takes a great act of will to embark upon the next adventure, even though it has been planned for months. There is always one more thing to be done, something that must be procured, something that should be repaired that whispers, silently, we don't need to go just yet. And yet, the longer you postpone it, the worse it gets. There's always the fear of the unknown. An endless stream of what-if's like, what if the boat hits a rock; what if one of us gets sick; what if we have a major mechanical problem; what if....

And so on. Life in the marina has become "normal". Friends. The daily trip to the bakery, the convenience of the post office, the ability to read today's paper. Television. Unlimited water and power. It's very comfortable. It would be easy to just stay here indefinitely, and you feel guilty for even thinking that. The departure date looms, and you're not ready! Eventually, though, you run out of excuses and you say your goodbyes, untie the lines and with internal misgivings that you know should be eagerness, you motor out of the marina, down the channel and turn left into the next chapter of your life.

It takes a day or two, or maybe three, or maybe a week. But finally life on the road starts to become normal. Every night is a different place. Every day is a different routine, a different set of problems to solve. Will the anchor hold? Will the wind blow? How close are we to the rocks over there? Do we have enough water? Enough wine?

It gets easier every day, but Newtonian physics again: a boat in motion tends to keep going the same direction and visit the same (safe) places. It seems like it would be a good idea to explore that particular area that the guidebooks tout as "one of the most magnificent places on earth", but to do so requires you to transit "Really Awful Rapids" or "Shipwreck Narrows" to get there. You have laid out the trip to include this, but...it would be easier to not go. Sometimes inertia wins, sometimes it doesn't.

When it doesn't, we find we treat ourselves to something special. The foreshadowing disasters and misadventures don't happen after all. It truly is a magical place, just like the guidebooks promised. After all, it doesn't take much to make a place magical; the cry of a wolf, the sudden appearance of orcas, a bear on the beach, an eagle diving for a fish, towering granite cliffs that are somehow different than the last set of towering granite cliffs in the last "most magnificent place" you visited. A waterfall should be pretty much like any other waterfall, but somehow it isn't. It falls just – a little different, that's all. Not quantifiable, but definitely worth seeing.

That's what we do this for, you know. Oh, it's all right to let inertia win sometimes. You can attribute it to Common Sense, or Better Judgment, or Staying on Schedule or whatever you want. You'll miss some things, but maybe there is a sixth sense about doing or not doing something that protects fools like us. Or maybe it's just physics.

**The End**