

‘Twenty Years Later...’

by Derry Murphy

When I stepped out of the office, I had two things on my mind; Paul Holden and where I'd parked my car. I never really wanted to get a driving licence, but since my office was an hour walk from the house, it was a necessity. Paul Holden was the boss at the publishing company where I worked. He called me into his office earlier that day and laid it on the line for me.

“Look Curtis, the company is gonna go under soon,” he told me. “We’re gonna start laying off people. If you can’t come up with a decent book within a month, we’re gonna have to fire you.”

I found my car after a while and travelled back home. I lived alone these days. Soda, true to his word, had married Sandy and moved to Texas. He had set up a small auto-repair shop. I took out some chocolate cake from the ice box. I always kept some in case Soda came home. I tried to think of what I could do. I started wondering what life would have been like if Mom, Dad and Darry were still alive...I wondered if Soda would still be here and not in Texas.

Suddenly, it came to me. I scrambled around for a pen and piece of paper. After a minute or so, I was ready. I was going to spend all night writing if it I had to...

I wrote the whole book before sunrise and it started like this:

*“When I stepped out into the bright sunlight from the darkness of the movie house,
I had only two things on my mind: Paul Newman and a ride home.”*