It was late October, like right around the time when the weather really starts to let you know winter is quickly approaching. I looked out my windshield, barely being able to see anything through all the mud. I quickly did a little self check, am I okay? Is my car okay? Did anything break? These were the questions I asked myself while sitting at the bottom of the interstate swale on that very day.

For me, the weather seemed surprisingly awesome though. I had spent most of my life in McCall and Moscow during the winters; the winters that never seemed to end. So being in Boise and experiencing the warmer weather was really uplifting for me. I kept having this nagging feeling that I should be taking advantage of such good weather and getting out and adventuring.

So, I decided to go out and enjoy the weather, right? Turns out the weather wasn’t just great in Boise but also in Utah where my uncle lives. So I loaded up my car and headed his way. We spent the weekend in Capitol Reef, and it was amazing! The weather was phenomenal, and we were able to go out and hike and explore for a few days! But, Sunday quickly came and it was time to start thinking about heading back. I decided to stay the night and head back in the morning as I didn’t have lab till 3 in the afternoon Monday.

Monday morning came quicker than expected, and I didn’t end up getting on the road as early as I had planned. Yet, I still wasn’t really worrying about anything, I had just had a great weekend and now all I had to do was make it back. This worry-free thinking continued for the first couple of hours into my drive home. Then the beautiful, uplifting weather quickly evaporated before my eyes. The breezy sunshine faded into a terrifying rain and windstorm, disappearing in just a matter of what felt like seconds. But still it was manageable, just not ideal by any means.

So, I kept trudging forward, determined to make it back to lab in time, seamlessly capping off a great weekend by showing up by the start of class. But the closer and closer I got to Boise the worse the storm got. Suddenly, the storm was too much. Between the gnarly gusts of wind and the insane amount of rain falling out of the sky, I had been struggling to keep my little Honda Civic on the road.

Next thing you know, I’m directly perpendicular to the interstate, watching the cars go by my windshield. Time seemed to instantly turn to slow-motion and the only thought going through my head is, this is really really bad. I somehow managed to get my hands back on the wheel, and got the car straightened out. At this point, I’m at the very bottom of the interstate swale between the two sides of the interstate.

After about a minute or so of deep breathing and trying to convince myself I was okay, I finally worked up the courage to step out of the car and see the aftermath. As steam billowed from the mud-covered hood, I walked around and saw the car was somehow in decent shape. But, it was still pouring rain and everything was covered in mud. So, I got back in the car and started trying to put together what had just happened. Was I going to fast? No I was going below the speed limit, specifically trying to be cautious. Did someone else cause this? No, it was just me. I couldn’t really seem to pinpoint what exactly had happened. After some more time, I tried to settle my jitters and see if the car was drivable and if I’d be able to make it home.

To my surprise, the car was still able to drive, but now came the challenge of trying to make it out of the interstate swale in the mud. The next few minutes were nearly as nerve racking as flying off the side of the freeway. I was able to gain some speed and started to sort of sideways drive up the steep swale. Then, as I neared the top I was greeted by cars and splashes of water flying by at 70 miles an hour. Which really freaked me out, but at this point I was determined to make it out of there. I was able to gain the nerve to get back into the traffic lane and continue on my journey home.

The remainder of the trip I spent going nearly half the speed limit, as I couldn’t work up the nerve to get close to 70 miles an hour again. I kept replaying what had happened over and over again, wondering if I was at fault. By the time I made it back for lab (which fortunately I was on-time) I had come to the simple conclusion: sometimes things just happen and it’s not really anyone’s fault. And luckily for me, I was able to hydroplane off the freeway and not only walk away but drive my car away after. So, I laughed and threw my hands in the air, while it was horribly tarrying, it was still by far the best possible outcome, I got lucky.