

## First time riding home felt good in a long time! (Putting mortality back in its place)

There's usually not that much to say about the ride home from work, especially lately, when it's just kinda been going through the motions, not much effort and certainly no real speed. But tonight (ok, past midnight, so last night) felt different. It was like things used to be. I wasn't just riding home, putting in a few miles and doing the commute-by-bike thing because it's what I believe in. It was... fun. Instead of dreading the climb up Highland & Jefferson, I was looking forward to it, and when I got there, I felt lighter and faster and just kind of alive. Something I haven't felt like in at least two months; Strava says November 11th was the last time I had any speed up Highland.

It's hard to say what changed. Did it just take a while, getting in some miles again after that month of basically being off the bike in December? Maybe. But I think it was also a bit of a relief going in for a blood test, first time in a couple of months, and seeing that things were OK. OK other than a declining hematocrit, which is definitely NOT ok, except that it helped having a reason for being a bit less strong. But the rest of the numbers, dealing with my essential thrombocythemia (mild bone marrow cancer), all looked pretty good and stable.

Sometimes you just have to keep plugging away, because if you keep at it, despite the discouragement that comes from the memory of how things used to be, you eventually reach some critical point where voila, you've arrived, you're where you used to be, where you needed to be again. And thank goodness because how long can you go before those thoughts of "Is it over? Will I ever be able to ride well again?" are allowed to take over, so you slack off and never do get back to where you were?

Long way of saying I've pushed mortality off into the distance again. --Mike--