

THE LINE AND THE ROAD



1Earthling

Narrative Series

The Line and the Road

2026 – 2027

The Line and the Road

Chapter 1 - Walking The Line

Chapter 2 - Quiet Adjustments

Chapter 3 - Last Shift

Chapter 4 - The Line Runs Without Us

Chapter 5 - The Road Keeps Moving

WALKING THE LINE



Series ID: NS01-01

Thirty years before the sunrise.
Same gate, same hum in the air.
Steel-toe steps on the concrete floor.
Fewer boots than there were.

Punch that clock. Hear the engine turn.
Numbers moving somewhere above.
Used to know every man on this line.
Now I don't know half of them.

They say, keep your head down, don't ask too much.
Let the changes roll on through.
But something here don't sit the same,
and I can't unsee what's new.

I walk the line with a fire inside.
Boots hit hard, but something's changed.
Still standing, still holding ground,
but it don't feel quite the same.

I walk the line. I don't back down.
Still showing up on time.
Through the noise and the grind and the moving parts,
still breathing - walking the line.

Still here.
New machines where the old ones stood,
running faster than we could.
Half the crew on a different shift.
Some just gone for good.

Supervisors don't say much now.
Just numbers on a screen.
Decisions made in another place
about what this place should be.

They say, this is how it's always gone.
World keeps moving on.
But I can feel it under my hands.
Something here is shifting wrong.

I walk the line with a fire inside.
Boots hit hard, but something's changed.
Still standing, still holding ground,
but it don't feel quite the same.

I walk the line. I don't back down.
Still showing up on time.
Through the noise and the grind and the moving parts,
still breathing - walking the line.

I've seen corners cut, seen good men leave,
seen things I don't understand.
What we built with these hands over years,
now slipping out of our hands.

I walk the line with a fire inside.
Boots hit hard, but something's changed.
Still standing, still holding ground,
but it don't feel quite the same.

I walk the line. I don't back down.
Still showing up on time.
Through the noise and the grind and the moving parts,
still breathing - walking the line.

Still here.
Still here.

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QUIET ADJUSTMENTS



Series ID: NS01-02

Something changed, but no one said.
Same old floor, same overhead.
Clock still ticks the way it did,
but something's different in it.

Same machines along the line
just don't sound the same in time.
Used to hear it in my hands.
Now I'm watching more than I am.

They say it's just a small update,
nothing here to worry about.
But I've been here long enough
to feel what they don't say out loud.

Quiet adjustments, one by one.
Nothing gone, but something's gone.
Still the same on the surface line,
but it don't feel like it did before.

Quiet adjustments, hard to see.
Nothing said, but it's happening.
You can stand right where you stand
and still not know this place again.

Less talk down the breakroom hall.
Half the names don't get called.
Shift moves faster than it did,
but no one talks about it.

Screens where there were clipboards once.
Numbers running on their own.
Don't know who is setting pace.
Just know it's not us anymore.

They say it's just the way things go.
Keep it moving, don't fall behind.
But something here is slipping past,
and I can't leave it undefined.

Quiet adjustments, one by one.
Nothing gone, but something's gone.
Still the same on the surface line,
but it don't feel like it did before.

Quiet adjustments, hard to see.
Nothing said, but it's happening.
You can stand right where you stand
and still not know this place again.

No alarms, no lights go down.
No one saying, turn around.
Just a slow and steady shift
till you don't know what this is.

Quiet adjustments, one by one.
Nothing gone, but something's gone.
Still the same on the surface line,
but it don't feel like it did before.

Quiet adjustments, hard to see.
Nothing said, but it's happening.
You can stand right where you stand
and still not know this place again.

Something changed.
No one said.
Still the same,
but it isn't.

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LAST SHIFT



Series ID: NS01-03

Same alarm, same time it rings.
Coffee smell fills the room.
Keys still hanging by the door,
like they've always been before.

Drive the road I've always known.
Nothing different, nothing wrong.
Morning light across the gate.
Just another day to start.

No one said this one was last.
No one marked it on a page.
Just another name on shift.
Just another day to take.

Last shift, no one calls it that.
No line drawn, no looking back.
Just the same as any day,
till it isn't that way.

Clock still waiting on the wall.
Same machine, same metal call.
Hands still move the way they know.
Muscle memory running slow.

Fewer voices through the day.
More space where men once stayed.
Things get done without a sound,
like something's not around.

No one says it straight to you.
No one needs to make it clear.
You can feel it in the room
before it reaches here.

Last shift, nothing said out loud.
No one standing in a crowd.
Just the work, and then you leave,
like you always believed.

Take your gloves and set them down.
Nothing left to carry out.
No one stops you at the gate.
No one asks you now to wait.

Turn around, but nothing moves.
Line keeps running like it should.
Only difference that you see
is it doesn't need you here.

Last shift, no one calls it that.
No line drawn, no looking back.
Just the same as any day,
till it isn't that way.

Last shift, nothing said out loud.
No one standing in a crowd.
Just the work, and then you leave,
like you always believed.

Same road home.
Same as before.
Only now,
you don't go back anymore.

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THE LINE RUNS WITHOUT US



Series ID: NS01-04

Morning frost along the road.
Coffee cooling in my hand.
Chain still hanging on the gate
where I used to stand.

Factory windows black at dawn.
No movement I can see.
Forty years I walked inside
that place I worked for years.

Motors humming somewhere on
beyond the locked front door.
That old line still running strong,
like it did before.

Breakroom clock still on the wall.
Time still ticking slow.
The line remembers how we worked,
but no one clocks in now.

The line runs without us now,
still moving through the night.
Steel and sparks in empty halls,
running out of sight.

The line runs without us now.
Doesn't miss a thing.
All the hands that built this place
aren't part of it at all.

But I still hear the morning whistle,
though it hasn't blown in years.
Men lined up with coffee cups,
talking over all that noise.

I stand outside that same old gate,
like I did before.
Only now, there's no one there
walking through that door.

No lights on, no silence here.
Just work without a sound.
Everything we used to know
still turns, just not around.

I've stood here long enough to see
it didn't need to wait.
What we thought would slow it down
was already too late.

The line runs without us now,
still moving through the night.
Steel and sparks in empty halls,
running out of sight.

The line runs without us now.
Hear the engines hum.
Machines don't know the weight we carried
or what we had become.

Still runs on.
Still runs on.
We're just not there.

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THE ROAD KEEPS MOVING



Series ID: NS01-05

Morning comes without a plan.
No shift waiting on my hands.
Road runs past the edge of town,
same as it's always been.

Used to measure out my days
by a line and by a gate.
Now the hours come and go,
don't hold their shape the same.

No one tells you where to stand.
No one sets the pace.
Just a stretch of open road
and time you have to face.

The road keeps moving either way.
Doesn't stop or turn around.
You can stand and watch it pass
or walk it out somehow.

Pass the places I once knew.
Signs have changed or fallen through.
New things built where old things stood,
like nothing held them there.

People talk a different way
about work and time and place.
Things I used to understand
don't sit the same today.

No one hands you back your role.
No one draws the line.
Just a world that's still in motion,
leaving things behind.

The road keeps moving every day,
with or without your name.
What you were don't disappear,
but it don't stay the same.

I've seen roads like this before,
just not this close to me.
Every time it turns like this,
something else will be.

Not the same as what it was.
Not what I had known.
But the ground still underfoot,
and the road still going on.

Road goes on.
So do I.
Not the same,
but still alive.

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