

Endless Steel Conga Line

Written by Administrator

the car inches painfully down the yet new freeway
in the Atlanta morning traffic
the already out-dated new highways swollen with vehicles
driving to work
this daily pilgrimage inviting not so much frustration
as moments to reflect.

young, climbing executives in dull, dark suits
played bumper cars with construction workers in hard hats
each shifting for position as if there was a prize
at the end.

mounds of smoke rose from the thousands of exhaust systems
pouring waste into the belly of the city
industrial towers exploding into the morning sky
in concert.

blue cars, green cars, black and green cars, cars with dents, new cars, old cars, small cars and
huge cars shimmying their blue-blooded vinyl-topped price tags
passed the poverty of the projects.

I never drove
even when we went on long trips he did it all
blind in one eye, bald and less than healthy from living years with daily insulin
he was the driver
whether on a thousand mile trip to college
or daily wagon-train-like caravans to work
it was his position as head of the household to drive.
he held the wheel firmly just the stone-steel way I imagined him
never privy to the insecurities that must have been within.

the little green car with its dash-mounted fan instead of air conditioning
spoke of frugality and restraint
the fan spinning waves of hot air into the fall morning.
padded dashes were new and this was his single surrender to decadence.
With the sensitivity of an artist and the mind of Einstein
captured in the life of a commoner
struggling to feed his family
he had the intellect, instincts, introspection and uniqueness
reserved for a species bred to be the prime cut of man
the specific filet of soul that put him outside the usual.

out of his medium in the business world,
he trucked his body down this noisy highway

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to fulfill mundane tasks reserved for others less gifted.

down passed the narrow lanes passed Georgia Tech
and its hive of buzzing students
passed the Varsity
(you must be from Atlanta to appreciate this rite of passage to manhood)
and into the downtown only barely recognizable today
with the tedium of work at the other end.
it was the way one never wanted the registration into a hospital to end
because then one had to face admission.

at the other end of this snail's parade was lifting
one hundred pound potato sacks
with an hundred and twenty pound body
and feeding endless cartons of cigarettes to be stamped.

I had visions of my future
none of which I believed
filled with glamour, passions
and adventure.
no where in these dreams was sweat
fatigue
and long, dreary muscle aches.

I always rode with my knees against the padded dash
and my head uncomfortably tucked into my chest.
Occasionally he spoke
"homosexuality was a disease."
why was he telling me this? I knew even then that I was not gay
but I listened to him
not for what he said
but for the sweet music of his voice.

If only he had lived long enough to see that I had worth
yet I really know that I don't
even if I posture to the world otherwise.

Now if only I had just a moment from these boring rides
to help me deal with old age.