

Karma by J. L. Schneider

I'm on a hill as dawn breaks stuck
behind a Chrysler K car and I have to shift down
into the one gear out of five that doesn't work,
and as I grind it in, knowing for sure *this* time
I'm gonna drop it on the road, my wife says,
Doesn't that just blow bubbles.

We're all going
to the Ukrainian Folk Festival
in a caravan of a thousand station wagons
filled with Hassidim and me. In the basement
of the church CYO toughs have snuck in
by God's grace and outside a waif
in traditional folk garb is singing with
a Spanish accent directly at me:

You are a bad man

You are a mad man

You ain't got no juice

You ain't no Hey-soos

And my wife says, smiling beatifically at the boy,
Couldn't you just eat beets.

I'm hauling ninety pounds
of rainbow and juggling sixteen drops of dew.
The mice talk back, all the old lies need exercise,
and the Starry Night Motel with every room that beautiful
hue won't let you look at the horizon for anything
less than 20 mil. And my pom-pomed wife says,
Go Van Gogh! Go Van Gogh!

I'm home
and the day is dead but nobody seems
to notice. It's time to make love and her head
gets square like a man's and she's got a spare tire
made of breast and bar codes on the inside
of her thighs. There isn't much time.
I have to go up that hill again.
It's almost dawn, and my wife says,
Isn't life just round as a button.