

July 2014

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Recommended Citation

LaFountain, Cal (2014) "The Driver Speaks to the Vehicle & It Shouts Back," *The Laureate*: Vol. 13 , Article 20.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/laureate/vol13/iss1/20>

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THE DRIVER SPEAKS TO THE VEHICLE & IT SHOUTS BACK

Cal LaFountain

The Driver begins by saying:
When I was seven years old,
I realized it would take
four years
to become an adult, but
I didn't know what eleven meant.

Delve into the waning interest,
assumed by a shift from park to drive.
I am becoming the view of a mimic,
retiring the ruffled leg patch
caused by years of
scheduled maintenance.
And in the middle of the race,
my party begins to ponder my upkeep.

One of the pit crew gives off an aura of
"I'd like the sensation of being punched in the nose without actually being punched in the nose."
He has the austere look that tells us he would be the one to go to if advice was needed on
how to reserve an entire theater using only the stupefied toxins emitted from the tuning forks of a
dead man's pulse.

Taking the time to claim this as weaponized filament and polish it off with an animist panache.

Tokens that could save your life are only available in scenarios where their conversion is not
required.

You are in the ocean. You are being pummeled by what feels like an endless onslaught of salty
waves. You're not sure when they will stop and the gargled dry throat compound that is bubbling
through your being, into the body of unforgiving force and back, is beginning to taste dull. The
humorous side of you, the one that can make jokes when uninhibited by the forces of taxed
adrenal glands, might suggest that you flavor it with pepper. You are not laughing. You are
drowning.

You are falling from the top of a skyscraper. You are not sure that it is a skyscraper you are
falling from. You begin to wonder if you are falling from a skyscraper or some other tall
building. You decide this is probably not the best way to spend your final moments. Instead, you

retreat to those memories of your childhood that brought you the most feeling. You are not feeling. You are falling.

You are being chased by wolves. You are cold but this becomes the opposite of a priority. You have the sensation that wolves probably have more of a hunger for meat than you do. You wonder if this is actually true. You play around with the idea that the wolves are chasing you merely for the thrill of the hunt. You discard the nutritional element that is at work here. You try to calculate the possible caloric intake that the wolves stand to absorb if their venture is successful. You are not a calculator. You are running.

You are literally starving to death in the desert. You are fully hydrated. You are certain that it is not the lack of water that is taking the life from you. You remember hearing that a human being such as yourself can survive for much longer without food than they can without water. You realize that this makes the process last longer. You are not lasting much longer. You are starving.

The Vehicle responds by saying:

We are all just archetypes,
and there is not an abundance of these.
I tried to keep you alive past crystal pills, Medicaid and bedpan.
We are all led to uncertain futures,
attached to the leash pulled taught
by some obscure wave.
No matter what type of fight you put up,
or what kind of focal point you arrange,
they will climb you like a naive dragon
and mince your scales into a clinging formula.
A withered tooth stain,
invites nostalgia bent on hope flow.
The denier becomes denied,
waltzing through halls smeared red
by a gut-wrenching jester.
And again you shift like galvanized bone form
thick with rickets.