

mileage (journey)

travis ryan



OVERAMBITIOUS CAR REPAIRMAN

December 1, 2022

.....

A car won't work
if you hit a working engine with a wrench
for the tenth time.

And if I told you,
"That's not going to work,"
you'd laugh right at my face.

'Cause I'm no fixer,
yet I know for certain
filling it with more gas—
to fix a flat tire—
won't work.

So, why do I come back to the auto shop?

9TH LIFE

July 17, 2023

.....

I just can't get over
the simplest of things:
A mountain, out of a molehill.
A flower shriveled after the first snowflake.
This careless cat crosses a street for an eighth time,
and, well?

It takes a single car—
a single mistake—
to break that string
I played with so many glistening moons ago.

They call that cat "overflowing apathy,"
"Overblown superiority"
and they bat an eye—
no care for how many pains
the cat has suffered through.

THE WEIGHTLESS ROAD HOME

August 18, 2023

.....

It's my celestial question:
where the time went.

How that little hand can revolve
around a planetary being
like a weightless little guy.

I can feel that, certainly.
A similar feeling
through a car window
as I awkwardly stare
at the polluted skyscape.

Lost in market aisles,
merging to a lane of common confusion.

The world keeps on living,
and it drags me with.

LEARNING HOW TO DRIVE

October 7, 2023

.....

I think it's New Year's Day.

May I propose this resolution
that I learn how to drive,
'cause who needs a test
when I have the boastful confidence
of a thousand lions.

Pacing the highway
without a care in the world
ignoring all road signs
until:
I'm drained and on my deathbed,
and you're deep beneath yours.

With a heavy heart, I try yet again.
Let's go for a ride, a joyful one
until I'm drained on my deathbed
and you're deep beneath yours.

You wouldn't believe the sobs of regret it took
to finally say I'm sorry.

WORRYMAN ON WORLD TOUR

October 12, 2023

.....

At a glance (unfortunately)
the stoplight was green—
a radiant emerald hue,
so beautiful!

Every sign and brochure
pointed this way to glory
Reaping in this once-in-a-lifetime
opportunity.

But one can't help but ponder,
“Was that a wrong turn?”
Is this the road
to the hellish Nether's chasms?

Those road signs turn to devilish faces.
I'm supposed to love this, and cherish it.

A “once-in-a-lifetime trip?”
More like a satanic sacrifice.

All I can feel
is the doubt pooling on my back
as the roads lie
and the cars usher me further—
so many signs to turn back now

Relish in this doubt,
this bitter, monotonous doubt.

This isn't what people said it was.

It's not worth it,
so I drive off a bridge instead.

HYPNOS BUS STOP

November 10, 2023

.....

Inbound, fraud street.

Hypnos,
please tell me where you are.

My dignity—
by the waypoint—
or was it my whole personality?
Life moves on
miles at a time.

The world turns
to rain and small puddles—
not my tears this time.
Drown that pleasant life.

Hypnos, please tell me what you are,
how you've cursed me,
left for dead—
stranded—a million miles behind.

RECLAIMING THE WEIGHTLESS NIGHT

August 1, 2024

.....

Late night driving
into the city of lights
is what we call our life.

Feeling weightless
as the car drags us along
is a liberating feeling
of childhood mundanity
that gradients with self-chivalry.

Feeling weightless
under the night's stars
is how we remember
what we live for.

The city of lights
is a city of childhood self-chivalry;
A neon sign
of our weightless selves.

APPROACHING ZERO

August 5, 2023



The neighboring city
is twenty miles away,
embedded with the cruelties and casualties
I forget from everyday life.

The neighboring city
is fifteen miles away,
and I just want to faint,
thinking of the formalities,
adultery of life,
and the everyday human
endowed with resilience.
Oh, if only it were me.

The neighboring city
is ten miles away,
and I cry, standing here in place,
wishing it were me,
wishing it weren't me,
wishing for life
to change at an instantaneous velocity,
and change to where I want to be.

Anywhere but here,
anywhere but in the moment,
floating with all-wheel drive.

The neighboring city
is five miles away,
and the world feels like it's escaping my fingertips,
as I lose my time,
and instantaneously spiral into clockwork:

The thin strings of being,
the world light and highway,
the road I traveled
and thought I had grown up to conquer.

Anywhere but here,
I cry, two miles away,
as the future takes its place in the present.

“You Know Yourself Best” [...]

“Who Knows?”

February 6, 2025

.....

"You Know Yourself Best"

I dismiss, strapped to the backseat
of my accelerating car.

I struggle in the life I'm entranced by
while the future I see from the windshield
passes before I can register it
and I worry of what I'm becoming,
where we're going,
as an invisible hand recklessly endangers me.

Long after the carjacking,
I again worry of where we're going,
why I'm going,
who's going.

"Who Knows?"

We Can't Shoot Our Flares

December 1, 2024

.....

With a breeze like no other on my shoulders like sandbags,
and the ringing reality of the ground I stand on,
I watch a car of my passions, my humanitarian desires,
leave without me, stranded in the brightest place on Earth.

As I lay inversely conditioned
to what a world's climate would subdue,
I can't hear the reigning voices from those up above,
nor the murmur of dissenters,
or even the tunes of corporation
lulling the pretense that we're in good hands.

As I lay inversely conditioned,
in this cone of silence,
I succumb the lives we live
in a darkness like no other.