

# The Road

*by* Darryl Price

we were traveling on wasn't necessarily going to go careening  
over any hill as fast as it was smashing into  
the blunt end of another cloudless hole like a cartoon  
cat chasing a cartoon mouse. It was huge like a  
stone wall that had its own cliff to tell at  
the end of its own craggy story. It was like  
a little raggedy butterfly suddenly eaten by the yellow shadow  
of a big tooth. Nothing you can do about it.  
You can't really blame the bird, unless you're an idiot.  
I suppose most of us are, in some way, because

we never learn to accept things as they are. We  
think that just because we happen to like our blown-about  
butterflies so much  
all the black hairy bulldozers of the mocking machine world  
should just back way off  
and give them some more room to grow and expand their  
horizons . Well, maybe not,  
but, hey. They've invented a neat little trick, sister-sister, as  
nature  
will, shrink themselves down to fit their shrinking world.  
Sometimes we  
don't realize they are even there because we don't expect  
them to be that small. Whether this is a conscious  
decision or not is up for serious debate, like everything  
else in this crazy world. I'll tell you I've seen  
  
them as big as ants hopping the merry beds of  
pebble after pebble and clover with not a care in the world,

except to suck nectar I suppose and maybe meet someone special.

Wow, that's some beautiful antenna you've got going on there, girl,

mind if I take a closer look? Anyway the onward road smashed well into itself a bright wall of a sunlit nothing and we went right along with it all also hoping to get to the other side of not knowing nothing. What actually happened was after a bit of a dip in the road we came up to a streak of

blue ocean slapped across the middle of everything, as if some giant hand had dipped a giant paint brush into a bucket of deep blue wonder and wiped it across the reality of the day with true artistic meaning and a little pixie dust for flash. It was that beautiful. It made you ponder. It made you question all your learning up to that point, as if what you had been told, what you had been taught, was only kind of true, that it represented something much more mysterious and true and actually

simple. We couldn't wait to get out of there and become a

living, laughing part of it all, to go into it like another new brightening, mixing color ourselves, another crashing wave, another swooping, hollering bird noise looking for its own bite of butterflies, of the wet sea variety or the regular zigzagging flung into the air like soft thin

tissue paper type. We hit the sand running. I can tell you this-- it felt like we had arrived at a huge portal, like some kind of a magic door had opened. We wanted nothing more than

to open that familiar looking well and take our chances on the buckets

from the inside, but first we had to settle down,  
and that meant dragging out the chairs, spreading out the

blankets, putting on the sun screen, trying on the hats,  
digging out the books, and icing up the tubs. After  
that it was pure, unadulterated freedom to do nothing about  
nothing and

to be everything. I felt very simply like I was  
feeling everything for the first time ever, the wind, the  
sun, my own feet pressed into the sand like baking  
potatoes. All I could do was stare at the colors  
everywhere. Some part of me was trying to memorize this  
feeling of all that unbelievable texture, while another part was  
whispering back to all the noises a wordless thank you for this, for  
all of this.

Bonus:

old author's note

We don't need excuses. We certainly don't need to explain  
ourselves. We are all the things we have seen and done and thought  
and wished. Writing is a kind of game played with bones. It can be  
fun or it can turn spooky, but it's still just a game. We aren't naming  
the universe here--we are giving voice to a feeling or a bunch of  
feelings so that they can be free. We are letting the lightning bugs  
out of the jars. It's our way of saying yes to certain things and no to  
certain other things.

## Never Found You

by Darryl Price

lingering like a feather in the world's speakers for too long  
after you drank up all the bullets, although it seemed like  
forever to me at the time. I looked even when everyone  
else had given up seeing you again and gone home to  
false fear projectors of their own private pain. They brought their  
worn

and finger stuffed tears of sad dreams to the crazy mad bonfires  
in shuffling lines of real sad sorrows, but I kept your favorites  
hidden in the secret

basement on dear friendship shelves. They brought their beautiful  
crayon-drawn angel winged

horses to the unfeeling jaws of the local school shredder, but  
I finally let yours run wild and free into the unknowable  
nighttime without feeling any remorse. Goodbye, I said, if we  
survive may we  
meet again. If not, well, I'm not saying this bit correctly,  
but whatever real feelings you left me I've tried in my  
way to keep unpolluted. I've a lovely soft garden for those  
fading too fast things. It's pretty small or pretty big depending  
on your religious upbringing I suppose. Ask me. I don't care either  
way.

Yours wasn't the only mind so ready to let go of  
all the saluting miles of stamped out ugly trees. It gives  
the poor roads a military haircut look that makes them seem  
dumber than they actually are. Must everything be a rough &  
tumble

practice towards more war? Once upon a time you shared a  
world with me. It was pretty nice. At least it had

open arms that were always ready and willing to hold others  
instead of wanting to blow them farther and farther away. Now

we are what we carry with us into heated battle. Here  
we go. Here we've always gone. God. You don't owe me  
anything; only wanted to tell you about the ponies. I did  
what I could. Round them up again, and I know you  
will, if you feel like you still want to feed them  
at your own farm in the sky of your heart. That's your choice. As  
for me I'm just about on the edge of my own  
falling star. It looks to be a pretty long way out.

Bonus poem:

I don't want to know

the answer because it wouldn't  
make any real difference  
to the various essential parts of the plant. The shadows

of roses belong here as  
much as the rest of  
us. It's always going  
to be another butter battlefield because the

only thing that feels right  
is young love and love  
doesn't stick around to  
get any older. Sooner or later you're

locked out of the window  
with The Boy. After that  
you'll walk a lonely  
road and have to endure the hell

like laughter of young couples  
still walking in a dream  
forest you can never enter.  
You can see why people go mad

and lose it all. They  
can't stand to look at  
the fields of forever  
any more. It hurts too much. There's

got to be a way  
to let them share in  
all that good feeling  
without giving over to their greed for

always wanting; no one's seemed  
to come up with it  
yet. They always end  
up with mystery blood on their hands

and a bemused look on  
their scraggly faces as they're  
being roughly hauled off  
to an even more hollow emptiness for

the rest of their miserable  
lives. The only prize is  
a sense of thankfulness,  
if you are lucky, that you have

been spared, somehow, to continue  
to belong to the way  
you are going. But  
something has been put up for final sale.

