

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.

