

A Day In The Life

by John Olson

One winter morning I was sitting in the car waiting for the heater to melt the frost from the windows. It was bitter cold. I turned on the radio. Out came "A Day In The Life," a song from the Beatle's *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*.

A light went on in my head. It's been 43 years, but I never tire of that song. Angst mixed with awe and amazement. A man's mind blown out. A crowd of onlookers standing around, wondering if he was from the House of Lords.

The song was inspired by the story of a Guinness heir who had killed himself in his car.

And four thousand potholes in Blackburn, Lancashire, that needed filling.

The first time I heard that song was on a summer morning in 1967. I was riding a bus to work at Boeing. I worked in Plant 2, an immense building full of gargantuan machines, hazardous chemicals, and glum machinists. I stood at a workbench for eight hours a day, scraping various shapes and bits of metal fresh from the machinist's press, plotting my escape.

The song was coming from a transistor radio. It resonated deeply with a spirit in me that resisted the deadening routine of the job. Tom Waits calls it a "diamond in the mind." That part of us that glitters inside like a piece of eternity.

I remember the exact location when I first heard that song. The bus had paused on the bridge for about five minutes. It was a warm bright day in June. The song filled the bus. No one objected. The driver scratched his nose. I shifted in my seat. Gazed down at the

river. The chuckle of water, and a harlequin gleam.

And someone spoke and I went into a dream.

And 43 years later remember that moment. That morning. That river. That unruly gleam.

