

88 Constellations

Mary Chapin Carpenter

These days are made of leaving home
But every thought is of returning
In between is simply known for the gasoline I'm burning
Drop the bags inside the door
And out of habit pause to listen
It's the same as before
There's always something that feels missing

But not the ghosts and snakes I swept away
Though that seemed as good a place to start

I go forward or fall back
Forge ahead or veer off track
Flaming out or fade to black
Stars careening in their crosses
Someone's always just ahead
Heels dug in or being led
Nothing's perfect I once said
And I learned to cut my losses
But I could not fix the broken part and a tear stained heart

I fill my passport with the miles
Dawn is breaking out the window
Climb the steps and walk the aisles
Just another moving shadow
You know it's easier to be all alone instead of lonely
Yet I know some part of me
Feels a part of you still owns me

Way down deep where it will not be seen
But there's no doubt that you have left your mark

You go forward or fall back
Forge ahead or veer off track
Flaming out or fade to black
Stars careening in their crosses
Someone's always just ahead
Heels dug in or being led
Nothing's perfect you once said
You're the king of all lost causes
But I still wait for you because I'm not
In my tear stained heart

These wondrous days we travel fast
And the clearer I am seeing
Trade the baggage of the past
For the lightness of being
I am studying the stars, all 88 constellations
I can sense you from afar, from my earthly destinations

And in the wind and in every highway song
A match that strikes or in a random spark

We go forward or fall back
Forge ahead or veer off track
Flaming out, we fade to black
Stars careening as they beckon

It's just open road ahead
The sound of twilight, maps unread
Nothing's perfect it's been said
This is pretty close I reckon

And I've learned more than I'd have ever thought
From a tear stained heart