

Wagon On The Motorway

Ralph McTell

Driving on the motorway
I saw a truck ahead of me
And in it was a young girl and her fellow
They were coming from the west
And she had a baby on her breast
And the truck was painted bright in mauve and yellow

That steering wheel held in a grip
As tight as the roll-up on his lip
They never even gave me a single look
As she dreamed out at the fields
Whilst the baby took its meal
And I surveyed the scene as I overtook

The road was a ball of string they were unravelling
Looping words to the story they were travelling

Well, I saw him clench his jaw
As his left foot hit the floor
And the road was steep and he changed down a gear
And he glanced at his girl and child
And she turned from the window and smiled
And she fingered a lock of hair behind her ear

And all they owned was in that truck
And I thought about us and wished them luck
Continuing the journey they'd begun
It was just like yours and mine
A little further back in time
The pots and pans in a van with a baby son

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Now, even wild birds sometimes need
Garden crumbs with their hedgerow seed
Watching out for foxes, stoats and weasels
One thing a fuel gauge cannot show
How far your new-age dream will go
Freedom's more than just the price of diesel

And I could not help but wonder
When the sky is black with thunder
Incessant rain and wind and freezing fog
Is freedom's scent as sweet as those
Wood smoke saturated clothes
Slack skinned bongo drums and a smelly dog

Spring comes with the celandine
And baby's teeth and she stops crying
And life's a neutral rolling downhill ride
As if a fortune you'd been paid
When first you sell something you've made
There's the first warm night that you sleep outside

In my rear view mirror their truck grew small
Until no sign of them remained at all

And my route was a clear direction home

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