

# Scenes From Highways 1981-2009

## La Dispute

Funny what you think of after a collapse  
While lying in the dirt the first thing that comes back is never quite what you'd have guessed  
And if you could have, you probably would've said you'd check if all your limbs were intact still and  
then try to get out We played house with the neighbors in their basement  
Sister made me husband she was older so I did her bidding  
I remember once their dad came in said, "You think this is bad?  
You don't know the half." And he laughed. It's funny what things come back  
The first things you see How he sort of smiled like it's only a joke but he was lying  
There was something else inside of his eyes  
All those secrets people tell to little children  
Are warnings that they give them  
Like, "Look, I'm unhappy. Please don't make the same mistake as me." Why are those old worn out jokes on  
married life told at toasts at receptions still?  
How does it never occur how often couples get burned and end uncertain in Splitsville? Funny what you think of  
in the wreckage, lying there in the dirt and the dust and the glass  
How you're suddenly somewhere, in the desert, in the nighttime, and it's getting close to Christmas  
And then her and that movie voice she uses when she reads,  
"Welcome to the Land of Enchantment" from a highway sign  
And it's late so you take the next exit When that trip ended we came back the rent was due I was jobless  
I guess in retrospect I should've sensed decay  
Then that day, how you said, "I just don't know" and I promised  
We'd rearrange things to fix the mess I'd made here But I guess in the end we just moved furniture around  
3X But I guess in the end it sort of feels like every day it's harder to stay happy where you are  
There are all these ways to look through the fence into your neighbor's yard  
Why even risk it? It's safer to stay distant  
When it's so hard now to just be content  
Because there's always something else Now I'm proposing my own toast, composing my own joke for those  
married men  
Maybe I'm miserable, I'd rather run for mayor in Splitsville than suffer your jokes again 6. 357. Stay Happy  
There If I could play back every moment to you now  
Spent lovesick and swollen on  
Mornings mincing garlic on the counter by the sink  
If I could hit the instant replay on only every good day  
Would any of it catch you by surprise? When you say, "something is missing now"  
That's what came back to me  
Normal mornings like that set the knife down and forget where I'd left it  
Making breakfast  
Put coffee on the stove then scour every counter for the knife Don't be shy  
Don't be kind

Somewhere snow collects and bends the boughs of pines  
But doesn't it seem a bit wasteful to you  
To throw away all of the time we spent perfecting our love in close quarters and confines?

Isn't it wasteful?

And I am terrified that it doesn't feel painful to me yet  
Somewhere on top of the high rise there's a woman on the edge of a building at the ledge

And traffics backing up on 35  
It's alright

I will fix whatever is not the sweetness in your eyes

Just sit down

Please

Sit down

Here

At the table and we'll talk

Somewhere televisions light up in the night  
I know things weren't right

Maybe we were never cut out for the Midwest life

Maybe we'd have done much better on a coast

There are certain things I doubt we'll ever know  
I know you were getting tired of my drinking

I guess I was never cut out for the coke scene

You were worried I would end up like your father and

Tired of the smoke and somewhere the wind blows  
Somewhere a storm touches down north in

Hudsonville  
Somewhere the coffee starts to boil on the stove and

Somewhere the wind blows  
Somewhere the river levels finally getting low  
Somewhere I'm up past dawn till

Somewhere you live here still

Somewhere you're already gone  
Somewhere a radio is playing in a living room

Says the city lacks the funds to fix the bridge  
Somewhere the deer are overrun so they're introducing wolves

back on the ridge  
And from here in the kitchen

I can hear the neighbors in the alley hanging linens

And the men collect the trash bins in the street

You're speaking to me but I can't understand you

The coffee is burning and

All of the times that we spent

That road trip out west

Through desert for the rest stops the kitsch we both collect

That winter the whole weekend we huddled by the stove

The cabin I had rented

The unexpected snow

That visit for Christmas

On television binges

We'll see friends in Brooklyn

Drive south to Richmond

There's traffic on the bridge

A woman on the ledge

And everywhere the wind  
EVERYTHING IS HAPPENING AT ONCE

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