

Transit

Jason Kahn

The merge from the turnpike was murder, but its never a cinch

It was Friday at five, and no one was giving an inch

They squeezed and the edged and they glared

Half them clearly impaired by rage or exhaustion

The rest were just touchy as hellSomewhere near Paterson everything slowed to a crawl

The all-news station was thanking someone for the call

Its a van from St. Agness choir

Theres a nun out there changing a tire

By the time they got by her, tempers were out of controlSo they all hit the gas in a dash for position

Bobing and weaving and flashing their highbeams

Fliping the bird and screaming obscenities

A well-insured hoard hell-bent on SaturdayAnd so they continued west-bound and into the sun

Law and decorum constraining nary a one

By then it was devil-may-care

Not one even vaguely aware

That they had come all the way to the Delaware Water GapBut how had it happened? They had all missed their
exits

How had it happened? Was it some kind of vortex?

And in they all went, bumper to bumper

Faster and faster, no sign of a trooper

In they all went, like sheep to the slaughter

Bankers and carpenters, doctors and lawyers

And in they all went, families in minivans

Ashcroft republicans, weekend militiamen

They followed the river, and rounded the bend

Between minsi and tammany and into their destiny

Lying in ambush right their before them

The angry old sun right on the horizonSister Maria tightened the bolts of the spare

She said a quick prayer and put the old van into gear

Thank God that the traffic was light

If she hurried she might not be late

For that evenings performance at the state penetentiaryShe entered the common room and their was her choir

Altos and baritones, basses and tenors

Car thieves and crack dealers, mobsters and murderers

Husbands and sons, fathers and brothers

And so it began in glorious harmony

Softly and Tenderly calling for you and me

With the interstate whining way off in the distance

And the sun going down through the bars of the prison

They poured out their souls, they poured out their memories
They poured out their hopes for what's left of eternity
To sister Maria her soul like a prism
For the light of forgiveness on all of their faces

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