

Janice! Stop your God-damned crying
For a single minute! Give me the broom!
Davie! I'll drag you out, you hear? You hear?
We have to get to church!

Albert Jensen, Sc. & H. Sr.



Destination Nowhere

THE CAR and I merge into one. I can feel my nerves extending into the metal, feeling the road. The road rushes directly at my eyes, plunging under the car at the last moment. I watch the crack in the center of the road as it slips past. Black white — black white — black white — black white —

The wind sweeps over the windshield and down the back of my neck, cooling my sun-warmed skin. We approach another car. Settle to a slower speed. Truck coming now. Can't pass. The wind roar fades to a sound like the inside of a seashell. My ears seem super-sensitive without the pressure of the wind. I'm aware of the motor. It has an impressive sound, smooth and powerful. The truck passes, creating a small explosion in the air by my left ear. Now the road is straight and clear.

My muscles respond quickly and automatically. Left hand snaps the signal arm down. Left foot pushes the clutch halfway in. Right foot depresses the accelerator slightly. Right hand snaps the gearshift lever from fourth to third. Left foot slips off the clutch. Right foot presses down. Arms pull the wheel to the left. Small movements become one flow of motion, one thought. The seat seems to grab me and push, I brace my neck. We start to pass. Above the increasing wind roar, I hear the motor's purr change to a low-throated growl. I watch the red tachometer needle approach the red line on the dial. They close on each other like scissors. My muscles again respond automatically, and we shift back into fourth gear. The growl subsides to a purr again.

We skim along the road, changing distance to time. A straight road ahead provides a chance to relax. Everything I am aware of feels like speed. The road rushes toward me, the things at the side of the road are a long blur. The wind sweeps past my head. The road vibrations feel like a high musical tone. My mind takes on the smoothness of the motor. The center of the road blinks at me. Black white — black white — black white — black white —

Sharp curve. My mind snaps to attention. Head to the outside. Follow around, coming closer to the blinking center. The back wheels start to slide out. My muscles interpret the message from the wheel and act of their own will. My mind examines the process for flaws. Straighten the wheel slightly. A slight movement of my right foot brings a surge of extra power. The car responds. The rear wheels stay out, biting firmly into the road. We boom out of the curve.

Perfect.

Black white — black white — black white — black white —

Richard Covert, Sc. & H. Jr.



Anxiety

I HAVE THE FEELING of being dragged back from an only partially completed dream. I lie still for a long moment, then open my eyes to see who it is that I feel is in my room. Even in the dark, I can make out the person of my mother bending over me.

She leans closer as if to be certain that my eyes are now open. She speaks: “Are you awake? . . . Are you awake, Janie?”

I withdraw my hand from its cozy fold under the covers and place it on her shoulder. “Sure, mom.” And then, though this has happened before, I ask: “What’s the matter?”

She pours out the reason for her restlessness: “It’s twenty minutes after four . . . and Joey’s not home yet!”