

1950

**In the summers
of 1948 and 19
49, I had hitch
hiked over 8
thousand miles
from New Jersey
to California
and back. Aside
from observing
all kinds of drivers
from a Hollywood
cameraman and his
crew with the white
of tums caked all over
whiskey sloshed gums returning from
some serious crap shooting in Reno driving
carefree up the high Sierra into Yosemite
National Park in one lane Tioga Pass with
the big trees right up alongside the dirt road
and **running into a bear and a Chevy and hav** ing
to **back up a mile, to a Seventh Day Advent** ist
Cro **w trembling and siezing up with really bad**
DT' **s in a red satin shirt and a big black Stet** son
hat **with an eagle feather in it in Idaho, to a Min**
iste **r who hated goddamn Harry Truman ca** use
hek **new he was a goddamn secret Jew ca** use
his **goddamn Jew daughter had a Jew nos** e on
the **Gulf Coast of Mississippi, to an Army ma** jor
wh **o looked like the Frankenstein monster who**
dro **ve 110 miles an hour grabbing a big bottl** e of
gin **from between his legs to his mouth repeate** dly
on the sharp right angle turns around the sheep
ranches in Montana, to cowboys with one boot
out the car window and whiskey drizzling out of
their red eyes hooting, "There's one! There's one!"
all night at pink kangaroos in Wyoming, to steel
beam haulers playing night tag with each other's
truck search lights out the window of their truck
cabs on the curved hill roads of Indiana and the
most common greeting when hitchiking at night
was "Drivemetoberdoo, kid while I getsomes shuteye
inthebackseat." I must have driven drunks over
eight hundred miles going over 90 while I was
hitchhiking. I was as sick of driving and alcohol as
a long tail cat is of a room full of rocking chairs
but I **loved to smoke like a chimney** as they
used to say **on the real road in the real time**
America that'd die and get up and roll and go
undertheordersof the nam the uawandthe cio
fromhighwatertohell tohightimesandback
if you know what i mean takesaswigkid
shoot forthemoon takeiteasy but takeit**

One summer day in 1950 I got into my father's car. He said, "No get in the driver's seat, I got a learner's permit for you. You're too old to not have a driver's license. I'm going to teach you how to drive." I got into the driver's seat. "Drive into New York," my father said. "Holland or Lincoln tunnel?" I asked. "Holland," he said. I drove down to Springfield Avenue to Newark and under Penn Station through the Ironbound section over the pulaski Skyway and the Jersey meadows and the legendary smell of the Governor ordered perfumed pigs of the pig farms that smelled an even deeper richer Pig Shit #5 than ever before and through the Holland tunnel flawlessly. I did not even come close to another car. I never exceeded the speed limit. Right out of the Holland tunnel my father said, "Get out of the driver's seat. You're the worst driver I've ever seen in my life. I'm driving home." I got out of the driver's seat. He drove home in silence. I said nothing. I saw him a few times in the next 30 years. Whenever I saw him he acted as if he didn't know who I was. I took an oath there and then to die like a dog in a gutter before I would

**And this was
the last time
I would ever
be alone with
my father.**

*[stop trying to
be my Self]*

**I finally had
it figured out.
Whatev er it
was, it wasn't
my father.**

