

Haunted Road (Dark Heart of America)

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Em7

1. Driving into these Virginia hills,

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dead of winter approaching night.

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Climbing up this snow-plowed road,

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struggling to quiet my mind.

2. January, brand new year,

starts with heartache and pain.

My mother begins her chemo.

and decisions must be made.

3. In my rear view mirror two specks of light.

A car far behind.

At first it doesn't even register.

Then it tugs at my mind.

4. I'm carrying a big city darkness

up through these mountain curves,

past these columns of winter trees.

My own cynical universe.

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5. Suddenly I begin to sweat.

I feel a strange unease.

Nervous thoughts fidget in my mind.

The car is slowly catching up to me.

6. This is the land of my mother's roots.

Why are my thoughts so unkind?

I'm sure these people are good people,

But I'm afraid to speak my mind.

7. I swear I see the devil in my rear view mirror,
getting closer every mile.

I see the green of his camouflage cap,

a broad face without a smile.

8. At the gas station, I felt so strange.

The cashier's smile filled me with dread.

I re-checked to see if the pump worked the same.

Who put these thoughts in my head?

9. I feel the devil breathing on my neck.

I see the sun going down.

I see a deserted churchyard.

I pull off to turn around.

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10. My grandfather was a minister.

The last night I saw him alive

it felt like hell's gates had opened.

Southern lightning split the sky.

11. Through hard rain I drove across town

to the shadows of his rest home room.

He sat his bed with the radio on

chuckling to a broadcast sermon.

12. We chatted but suddenly he criticized

my father for his agnostic hold

that led his daughter's children away from the church.

He prayed for my return to the fold.

13. I'm thinking all this as I stop the car.

My emotions raw and confused.

Staring out from a frozen overlook.

Thinking his prayer did no good.

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14. Driving with a dark, dark heart,
beating underneath my skin,
back down these cold, cold hills
through the land of my kin.

15. These east coast houses should feel like home
and the harsh sweet days of youth.
But I imagine fistfights, drugs, and booze
Under these snow covered roofs.

16. These tough historic clapboard homes,
where they fought our civil war,
where my mother's body is being poisoned,
I don't know them anymore.