

Valentine for a Homely Couple

by Con Chapman

Carl's wife sits shotgun in his truck
Her doughy face baked whitish red.
He gets out and climbs the semi—
Smiling, he asks "How's it going?"
We just grunt and nod our heads
at the auger hole, and how it's stuck.

"Better you than me, boys," he says.
"I'm enjoying Sunday off.
Got a beer and my old lady.
It ain't much, but it's enough."
Bill and me look at each other;
He's the type to make a crack.
Me—I just want to get this load done.
We've got 18 miles to drive back.

“Your wife, she sure is lookin' sweet,”
Bill says—I don't pay him no mind.
Carl's wife smiles, then she says thank you.
“You ever seen her walk the streets?”
Carl asks, all innocent. “From behind
Looks like two hogs fightin' under a sheet.”
Carl's wife laughs, she likes attention.
Backhanded flattered, and it shows.
Her flabby arm hangs out the window
What attracts him, God only knows.
“Have you lost weight since I last saw you?”
Bill asks, and then he calls her “Dear.”
“Naw,” Carl says, “she's like the State Fair—
Bigger and better every year.”

We see her laugh, she's missing one tooth.
It's clear she's heard this joke before.
Old Sam arrives to check our progress—
It's his dough that we're wasting now.

He kicks a dead mouse out the barn door
As we prepare to tell untruths.

"Howdy, Carl," Sam says
surprised to see his foreman in the bay.
"I give you the day off and what do you do?
You just can't tear yourself away."

"You know my wife, Earlene—right Sam?"
Carl says with somewhat misplaced pride.
"I don't believe I've had the pleasure."
Can he be pleased by one so wide?

They talk of things, while in the trailer
Bill and I unclog the jam.
The fescue seed begins to flow
As if from out a hydro dam.



Carl takes his leave, with mock regret.
"Sorry to see you break a sweat,
I'll keep a cold beer waiting," he says,
"In case I haven't drunk it yet."

Carl starts his truck, Sam farts around,
He sticks his hand into the seed.
"This stuff's too wet, it's got to dry out,
A day in windrows is what it needs."

Sam stands up straight to watch them go.
"That little peckerwood's a card.
Before too long they'll have them six kids
And a beat-up truck in their front yard.

“I know that it ain't none of my business,
where ole Carl puts his prick.
But for me, I know one thing;
Them Bohunk women sure go to pot quick.”



We're silent, Bill and I, for once,
as we attempt to take this in.
It's true, of course, there's no denying,
and yet to say it seems a sin.

Happy the man, and happy the mate
Who care not what the world may say.
Here's to the two whose matches are few—
May they find love on Valentine's Day.

