

*It wouldn't be inappropriate to say that Mr. Olson's writing technique reflects that of a postmodernist, in the sense that he is constantly in a state of trying to make meaning in a society that has been trying to clearly identify itself for more than half a century. It is through the slick use of disjointed syntax, and a rhetoric that relies on the visual implications of its chosen fonts, that Mr. Olson seems to be channeling both T.S. Eliot—by way of examining a wasteland—and Mark Z. Danielewski—by way of the unconventional layout of his text—to come to his own grips, and more importantly, his own artistic voice. To only read his work would be unjust; to listen, is what Jon would consider to be divine.*

*~Nelson Carrajal, Master Tutor*

## **The Driver**

By: Noj Noslo

Loud and deep is the **92 350** as it bellars down the road. The extended cab of the truck is big, big enough for 5-6 humans. The tires, new models; the tread is worn to the sidewalls. The road rubber left behind, traced long paths of undeniable origins. The body is black and almost disguised by the desert darkness, the head lights, shot; the bulbs so dim only the engine gives off presence. A spiny fissure in the windshield conceals a fiery glare as the western sun gives way to new night.

**Inside** the seats are the old bench kind, all torn up and stain faded. Imbedded in the cloth of the seat are stains of uncertain identity. The stick shift is pretty normal, but at the top where the knob used to be, there's a bone of some kind. The smell bloodmeal filled the interior of the cab. Why the scent of bloodmeal? Such a horrible scent, and extremely eerie, it was at this point where It occurred to me,

### **I picked the wrong driver.**

In a state of tunnel vision the **Driver** broke in mid-dream, aware that I was still sitting there he glanced at me in such an unnatural way. I couldn't see his eyes; the sun glasses he wore relayed my own reflection. The **Driver** wore them all day and night. Not looking someone in the eye is one thing, but preventing another from looking you in the eyes, that's enough to make me paranoid. In the time driving he never spoke once or made a movement.

I was really on edge, and skeptical of my own safety. Suddenly, out of nowhere, rumble strips shook the truck and pennies bounced across the dash. We were somewhere, but it was night and I was unfamiliar with the territory. Approaching a stop sign the driver reached for a match, then lit the candle mounted on the dash. In the distance the neon lights of the villa marquee, illuminate a strange welcome.

As we were stopped the driver turned slowly, uncommon to the normal seizural spastic glances he had given before. He turned smoothly and stared at me. For a few moments I was

ready to bolt, flee the scene, but would he chase me, I didn't know. Now here I am sitting in the cab and he's still staring at me with those chemical specs. I looked away and when I did, he tapped me on the shoulder with a note:

The city you see the distance is not be taken lightly,  
But for some reason it calls to me,  
Calls to me like a glorious offering only it feels innate.

The people are cold and made of stone, some will always be alone.  
The homeless are hearty and some you should watch for, headstrong and steady this life  
you'll pay for.  
They have constructed cardboard mansions in the alleys; they have house numbers  
painted with bloodmeal.  
Some say the presence of spells and wicked rituals plague the corridors, and it's  
inhabitants.  
Floggings and toe bindings have some of the unfortunate limping and upset.

In time those weak and those of fragile states, will soon drive the afterlife.  
You must get out here stranger; I can't be seen with anyone,  
I have a calling

"What?" I said back, "what's the calling", I figured I had better speak and make friends  
before he turned me into bloodmeal.

*"GET OUT, GET DOWN, NEVER FIND ME AGAIN, WALK THE OTHER WAY!"*

The truck sped off for the center of town and I was alone, in the dark, and completely  
freaked out.

In the middle of nowhere, I had no other choice but to take my chances and head into town.  
There had to be at least a few hours before sun up. Walking with a skip to lighten the mood a bit,  
I nodded at an old Mack truck and the driver slammed on the brakes. The window rolled down  
and a voice sounded out from the dungeon of the truck, "get out, don't go down that road, and  
don't ever nod at me again". The truck sped off using every bit of torque to regain speed. Why I  
kept walking? I don't know, but the two people I encountered were crazy enough for the rest.

Immeasurable moments pass by as I urgently press on toward the town. The name of the  
town was yet a mystery; the town line protruded old posts where the town's name used to hang.  
Someone or something perhaps wanted this town under raps. Finally reaching the first sign of  
life, some of what looked like the prominent ones in the town sat outside a local eatery. Keeping  
my mouth to me was probably ok; the townsfolk may not take kindly to drifters.

The sun peaked over the horizon and the glare reminded me of that spiny fracture in the  
Drivers windshield. Coincidentally as I made my way to the park in the center of town, the sound  
of a 92 350 echoed at me. Afraid the driver would see me; I sat down behind a dumpster and  
watched the truck as the Driver stopped between to parking lines.

There was a curious danger that came over me, and my mind set told me to follow the  
Driver. I wanted to spy on the drivers business. With daylight upon the town, I unzipped my

pack, pulled out an old cap from the very back, along with a new T-shirt. The driver won't recognize me in this. He tolled me to walk the other direction, and never find him again only, I never set out to find him; he was the first car to stop. Still, I didn't want him to see me, I just felt threatened and out of place.

The truck door swung open, bouncing off the hinges, then two legs broke bond with the floor board. A pair of feet touched the ground, he was barefoot. What was this all about? Tall, tall and skinny was he, the hunch in his spine was mysteriously creepy.

**(A figure emerged from the alley where I was hiding)**

Out of nowhere, I jumped from my skin, as a scowled old face rushed me and stopped in my personal space. This old face that slept in the dark alley had backed me into a corner, the short figure was hooded and all I could see was the eyes. Not really the eyes though, there were just black holes outlined in scared skin. My heart is beating in absolute fright, the flight or fight is setting in. Then the figure backed away:

**"The Driver you follow you foolish boy, you wonder about his naked feet huh,  
Well last time it happened, it was the shoe's that made them angry".  
"Bye bye foolish boy"**

The small hooded figure, troll like and creepy diminished into the dark alley. Barefoot sitting to barely standing the **Driver** almost fell, the blood rush made him faint. He stood up straight only to hunch just a little. The old cotton T on his back had few tears and one arm masked a gnarly scar. Old pants ripstained from top to bottom had been made into shorts, knee highs. In sight the way he was facing looked like a small bar. At the juncture of two buildings was indeed a small pub.

I watched the Driver smoke a cigarette while I gathered my things. He finished the cig in 4 or 5 puffs, the excess filter and rosined tobacco he put in his pocket. Walking toward the pub I followed quickly, no skip this time, I was undercover. Half way there then the man stopped, and I thought he was looking at me. I kept walking like I was gonna tie one on at he bar. I passed the man about 20 yards away and he was still looking the same direction. Like his head had been twisted and his spine was bound up. I opened the door, but stopped to read a sign on the inside pane of glass: And It Said.

We don't allow blacks or baggy slacks,  
No chisslers or grubbers  
Don't ask for rubbers  
We don't care, wear a shirt or not  
Your real chance depends on the shoes you've got  
Whatever. I walked in thinking nothing of it. The pub was dark with only a half lit neon sign to give off any light. The bartender was a small and belittled man, I think some roughens had broke is left hand. The other men at the bar were faceless like the man in the ally, but I felt intense focus upon myself. They had no eyes either, and their lips were straight. Most of them looked like they'd killed or rapped.

I ordered up a beer, and sat down and the bar, "what'll ya have stranger"? Well sir I have only some raw silver, would you take a trade for shot of something dark. "Don't worry stranger

I can help you out". Just then the Driver stepped to the door, he stopped and read the sign. He peeled the sign from the inside pane of glass and stuck it at the crest of his chest.

His presence in the pub had the attention of everyone. Standing there barefoot with a sign on his chest, the faceless Driver had fueled unrest. Full of trapped rage, the Driver stood there with a blind, magnitude stature. The tender poured a glass of water for the Driver, and when the Driver clinched the mug, the water boiled and gave off a sinister steam. I was the only one there with eyes besides the tender, and he was hiding under the bar. The Driver was no ordinary man. How so, I don't know. Just then I witnessed something take over him, like something had controlled his thoughts. Then in that insane switch to demonic demeanor the DRIVER SPOKE:

*All of you, that lost your sight  
Go ahead, recollect the night  
The air so thick, a humid drip  
Breath was choked, such heavy smoke*

*The sensuous woman, her undeserved sermon  
Violated and beaten, she died for no reason*

*I have no name but you've seen this face  
You walked all over it, smashed and laced  
The beauty you took, still an open book  
Well the beauty is back, for the final look*

*The vegative state, I hope you recall  
I took your eyes and your cries, I was the call*

The Driver drenched in sweat turned and walked out the swinging doors. With a strange look, through blood shot eyes, he looked back at the bar mates and said

*Your time will come, those who killed me,  
Soon you'll be dead with no hope for parole.*

As for me, well I'm not sure where I'm at or where I'm going, I know now that  
One way or another, a soul banished in hate and left unfinished,  
Will seek revenge....Then forever diminish.