

The Shift by Stacey Hajdik

I wake up each and every Saturday morning to a familiar, yet peculiar sound that drones on for hours, protruding from the driveway, to the left of the still overcast bedroom. The clock claims 5:15 a.m., but, as always, I could have sworn I had just settled into a comfortable position, one that would secure me in slumber for the rest of the weekend.

But my husband, Charlie, has other plans. He is apparently in charge of alerting the sun to its daily duties. He's in the shower as the street dreams. He's right out there, living his dream.

I've often pondered the intimate connection between my husband and his 911 Carrera 4S in lapis blue metallic. He's never actually disclosed this detailed title to me, but I'm observant, even intrigued with his obsession.

The invisible, yet very present aura around the Porsche first triggered my curiosity in the great machine. Why didn't Charlie discuss his passion for automobiles with me? Did I need some secret password in order to be initiated into the language of motor vehicles? And why does he wake before the crack of dawn to sit and chat with the car? It seems he just looks at it, considers what might be going on underneath to create such an explosive force, an underappreciated power. He gets this mischievous grin on his face when he rolls around on his plank of wood, exhilarated at the mere opportunity of gaining a personal relationship with the latent components.

I'm an English professor, and a writer. I lose myself in the power of metaphors and imagery; in

the sensuality of poetry. So I got to thinking, is Charlie's Porsche my Catcher in the Rye? Does the car emanate excitement and beauty, like some sort of hidden truth revealed only through deep contemplation? Like a Chianti? A literary symbol?

Or is the car more in sync with my shoe fetish? One in which the true appeal lies in my newfound ability to prance around the room, completely liberated, once my feet are tucked slyly into the crimson leather. Maybe this is how he feels driving alone, with the windows down, "All Right Now" rising into the open air, illuminating the distant fields of trees, tickling the leaves. Maybe this is when he feels freedom for the first time all over again, and maybe he, too, feels temporarily extracted from the menial of the planet, into a crystal realm of uprising joy. The joy you can feel in your stomach, in your lungs.

One particular morning when I was once again awakened by the whine of Charlie's engine, I wrestled with the idea of throwing back the covers and facing the day, light or no light. I challenged myself to a productive morning, and shook off my sleepy concerns.

The smell of fresh ground coffee with a hint of caramel invaded the living room leading to the kitchen, and after crossing the breakfast room, I peered threw the blinds to find Charlie applying wax, polishing, perfecting, and reflecting, just as the ground began to heat. He was in the editing room that was my life, and I wanted to ask him if his Porsche was the first poem I ever got published, or if it was my Tequila Rose strappy sandal.

Maybe the car represented both. Perhaps it embodied a great many dreams just out of reach; a

plethora of memories, sympathies and untouched desires. I grabbed my mug and headed into my office at the back of the house. After making my way over stacks of old newspapers, I located my chair and took a warm sip of the morning brew. I began rummaging through old story ideas when I noticed a royal blue satin ribbon, from the PCA, delicately displayed next to my keyboard. "Honorable Mention" in gold lettering beamed up with pride from the center.

