Barrier

Albert Jensen*
Ah, there you are. Where ever have you been? Come on now, please! You'll have yourself a mess. What ever are you doing underneath The bed? You'll make yourself a perfect mess! Your Father's out there waiting in the car! Come out here right this minute! Davie! Please! Are you all right? Uhn. Here take my hand. Now will you please just take my hand? Now, please. You surely know that we must get to church. You like to go to church, now don't you, dear? Remember all the fun at Sunday School? Your Father's waiting, dear. Now what's the matter? He didn't mean a word of it. It's just . . . Your Father simply gets upset on days like this When everything is so confused with church . . . Now take my hand, now please . . . Davie! Janice! Now stop that silly crying for a minute! He won't come out. This bed just weighs too much To move and I can only get my arm Beneath it — Get the broom or something long! And hurry! We should be at church right now. Now, Davie, please. I'll be a perfect mess With all this crawling on the dirty floor And so will you! Now you give me your hand! I'm sorry dear, don't cry. Oh, please don't cry! I have a little something here for you. If you'll give me your hand then we'll go see Just what it is. I'll bet you'll like This gift . . . Davie! Davie! I'll drag you out! You hear?
Janice! Stop your God-damned crying  
For a single minute! Give me the broom!  
Davie! I'll drag you out, you hear? You hear?  
We have to get to church!  

*Albert Jensen, Sc. & H. Sr.*

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**Destination Nowhere**

The car and I merge into one. I can feel my nerves extending into the metal, feeling the road. The road rushes directly at my eyes, plunging under the car at the last moment. I watch the crack in the center of the road as it slips past. Black white — black white — black white — black white —

The wind sweeps over the windshield and down the back of my neck, cooling my sun-warmed skin. We approach another car. Settle to a slower speed. Truck coming now. Can’t pass. The wind roar fades to a sound like the inside of a seashell. My ears seem super-sensitive without the pressure of the wind. I’m aware of the motor. It has an impressive sound, smooth and powerful. The truck passes, creating a small explosion in the air by my left ear. Now the road is straight and clear.

My muscles respond quickly and automatically. Left hand snaps the signal arm down. Left foot pushes the clutch halfway in. Right foot depresses the accelerator slightly. Right hand snaps the gearshift lever from fourth to third. Left foot slips off the clutch. Right foot presses down. Arms pull the wheel to the left. Small movements become one flow of motion, one thought. The seat seems to grab me and push, I brace my neck. We start to pass. Above the increasing wind roar, I hear the motor’s purr change to a low-throated growl. I watch the red tachometer needle approach the red line on the dial. They close on each other like scissors. My muscles again respond automatically, and we shift back into fourth gear. The growl subsides to a purr again.