

ANDREW FELD

THERE

Sound of the air's fabric tearing apart,
Of the fire-trees shedding their skins and falling,
Falling in August when the drought of March
 April, May, June, and July
 Ignites and all the insects come swarming
East, fleeing the burning West. Sound of the Harley-
Davidsons making their pilgrimage to Sturgis,
South Dakota, swarming inside I-
90's east-west corridor like fire-maddened insects.

Of the great fire-forests of the West
We say this harvest is the overdue
Returning of the fire-pigeons to their nests,
 That fire-power so long accrued
 Ignites and we become the fire. 161
So on TV the burning flags are ours
Because they're burning. So on the Internet
A woman with a flame painted on each breast
Rides the back of a motorcycle all the way to Sturgis.

A woman with a flame painted on each breast
Looked down at me in my green Honda Civic,
Across the distance actors keep to keep the fiction
 Real. I saw her in a Gulf station
 Talking to the child in her cell phone
As a dozen digital cameras focused in on
Her red, blue, and yellow latex. Then on the Internet.
If you close your eyes and touch your laptop screen
It feels just like her body-painted skin.

Sweetie, Mommy and Daddy'll be home soon
But now they're riding a full tank of gas
To the Trail of Tears Rest Area parking lot,

Where there'll be beer and barbeque
In a vinegar and honey sauce,
The sweet charred meat a burnt offering to
The distance ritual requires us to cross
So we'll arrive annealed as sacred groves passed through
The purifying fire. And Sweetie, we *love* you

But now we're riding our good credit lines across
The *mise en scène* of our indigenous holocaust
To the Trail of Tears Rest Area parking lot,
Through the Badlands' Brazil-waxed hills
Where the country's all passed out on pills
And peppermint Schnapps, ready for some black-out sex
We'd totally deny if it wasn't on the Internet
With captions and disclaimers in four languages.
Les femmes de motards deviennent sauvages!

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The Badlands are a picnic table with a Weber Grill
Sunset of ash-gray coals and wet mesquite
Slowly smoking the poorest cuts of meat
Until the knotted tendons, fat and gristle
Dissolve, and from the deepest cells
The long-pent sugars are released, sweet
As the wasp's black honey, which is the axle-grease
Thick wetness of the woman you're having an affair
With. If she's your wife at home, she isn't here.

In the Trail of Tears Rest Area parking lot
Harley-Davidsons circle like angry wasps
The sweet sewage smelling Porta-Potties
And the deep-throated thoracic thrum
Of their Soft-Tails & Dyna-Glides
Is the frustration of a million wasps amplified
As they circle around the lily's rim,

By their imperfect mouths' design denied
The deeply seated nectaries within.

And then the door you've been waiting for opens
To the sour cell of everyone's digestion
And the sweetly perfumed sanitizer.

 Inside my green Civic the air-
 Conditioner blows a cold wind
From November 2004, post-election.
I get good mileage out of my despair.
Under a sky blue as a bottle of Evian
The motorcyclists rev their unmuffled engines.

The sound of their engines is an anthem
You have to hear at the loudest possible volume
To understand. Trust me, you have to be there,

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 A cold liter of Evian
 Vibrating in your hand as they sing of Sturgis,
The coals of pollen glowing deep inside the calyx,
To have tasted their empty carbs and carcinogens,
To have seen the cracks in the fire and her white skin
Showing through in the parking lot outside the Gulf Station

As her voice cracks telling the child in her cell phone
Don't cry, even if the tank and our good credit lines
Run dry we can still coast there on the fumes,

 The greasy highway will take us there
 As borne upon a beetle's wing.
There, the garden is guarded by walls of painted fire.
There, the bud & its blight are one & we love our infection.
There, we are the anthem with our flawed mouths we sing.
There, there, Sweetie, don't cry, she said. There. There.