

## AUBADE: LAKE ERIE—FIFTY YEARS LATER

by **Tim Cronley**

Those who lifted up their hitch-hiking heads  
 To serenade their cousin, the honeyed sun  
 Are now mendicants sans loge.  
 Their fevered, aging bodies sway  
 Among the cruel green wheat  
 In attitudes of supplication  
 While caravans of wealth pass them by.

But unlike Buddha they can't run along behind  
 Benevolent rickshaws and beg for bread.  
 These metal creatures move too fast for human feet;  
 Their cruise controls are set to speed their paths  
 Forward along I. S. 90 into the desert of plenty.  
 While their keepers, unable to solve  
 The Koan of their own greed,  
 Make no stops for mendicants.

The double-bottomed dromedaries  
 Filled with the riches of the East  
 Roar defiantly past these resurrected Luthers  
 Heading West: their pornographic mud-flaps  
 Waving sayonara to the poor.  
 And every hundred miles  
 The apocalyptic beasts are coaxed to a halt  
 And their naked-lady flaps fall meekly slack  
 As their 18 synthetic tires roll to a stop  
 Over computerized weigh scales  
 Where the Government minutely estimates  
 The gravity of the western freight.

Belching diesel fumes  
 Into the dawning light over Lake Erie  
 The speeding monsters blur insidiously past  
 The Dordogne-like vineyards  
 Smothering their leaves with their foul breath  
 Their bellies stuffed with food  
 Destined to feed the over-fed  
 With more—while the wandering fugitives starve.

And the obscene whine of their passing  
 Leaves the suffering innocents dumbly still  
 Beneath the impassive hay-colored sun.