



Debris of an Automobile Giving Birth to a Blind Horse Biting a Telephone
Salvador Dalí, 1938

It Must Be That

crack
in the car seat
below the body bend,

the subconscious of the machine.
We pay it no heed,
occupied with the business of driving,

shifting gears and steering and moving around.
At best we acknowledge seat belt receptacles
always protruding there from the crack

like flat umbilical cords,
and offering to save our lives.
We use them ruefully,

repelled by their cold surface,
gauging the mileage against the rubble that will come—
always comes there in the crack.

We drive fast and sure behind the firm wheel,
confident above the nickel hubcaps
and the throbbing engine,

steering and clutching and shifting gears and
steering
in our smooth cars.

Sometime, when the brush has vanished
or the checkbook is missing,
after a scramble through the heavily mapped glove box

and a timid stare under the seat
(strangely seeing through the oil quarts to the back floor)
we must

we must approach the crack.
And then we know,
in our own subconscious dread,

there are held the corpses of familiar objects,
their absence loud in our throats.
Gloveless

the real, bare hands must push back the folds and,
shuddering,
reach into that dank abyss,

that nothingness,
that everythingness at the heart of the motor car,
there where the hapless coins plummet,

where broken pencils rot amidst batting and springs,
where all which we hand or hold ends,
gorged by that inevitable, senseless mouth,

that grave of the plastic bodies,
that chasm of the wheeling universe,
that crack of the driving mind.

It is not worth the trip there,
no,
not even for knowledge.

And so we drive,
gripped by the awful belt line,
shifting always steering in desperate ease while,

behind our eyes,
a bruised and greasy map slips silently down.