

Car Talk

Alone with you in the coppertone Chevy --

After months away from home
I'd lost my certainty
at eighteen needed you
to make things right

You had always been there for answers
balancing on first skates
hitting the ball farther
tough math problems
meanings of strange words

"I'm not sure, Dad, about this dogma
not so sure we Catholics
have all the truth
nor we Americans

Can you put me back where I was
lift me back to my comfortable seat
in the car, heading toward the future
show me which route to take?"

"Thank God," I heard "You're beginning
to grow up. So bright, and yet
I worried would you ever learn
to navigate the roads of life"

"But I've lost my destination"

"No, you've just changed to a map
with another scale
Now you will steer
beyond the black and white
of well-posted highways"

Looking in the rearview mirror

I wonder why
I was taken aback to hear
you too had doubts
doubts were OK

I wonder how
many times before
you had tried to get me
to turn on the lights

I wonder how
you knew to idle
later on when my doubts
led to Vietnam protests
views crashing with your own

And I wonder how I knew

driving on
I would find direction
from moment to moment
my compass set true
by this talk
in our car