

WHAT'S A TRUCKIE'S JOB?

Let's give a little recognition
To the Aussie trucking tradition.
They're hard workin' men,
Drivin' down the road again.

Workin' all night long,
SINGIN' THE TRUCKIES' SONG;
This is where there's loads of fun,
But their job is never done.

They pull into a servo for a feed,
And a steamy hot shower well in need.
They're great Australian blokes,
With a washer, towel and smelly soaps.

Once they've had a few hours' rest,
They return to the road, where they perform best;
Dropping off products for you,
Then at the next big city, too.



When you see them shiny rigs and bright lights,
JUST KEEP DRIVIN' ON INTO THE NIGHT.
Sittin' up there in the cab is a dedicated trucker,
Who won't make it home for supper.

WITH WIVES AND CHILDREN ALL AT HOME,
They can only keep in touch by mobile phone.
Sometimes they're gone for a night or two,
Other days, they haven't a clue.

Now the government's got a new fatigue law,
With work diaries and lots more.
Our roads could be a safer place,
'Cause there's no need for a roaring race.

By Olivia Richardson (13, Maitland NSW)

Sydney Olympic Park



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FREIGHT AND FLIGHT

Dawn heat, tarred sky
pink-striped on the horizon
beyond the lights of Darwin and the coast.

My rig sails into this air as though
weightless, two cars tall,
like a low-flying plane, skimming

the highway at the leaf-height
of the woollybutt,

DUST CLOUDS STREAMING,

gauges twitching to the forces
gently carrying me seated
like a gull wafted by a thunderstorm.



Driving this B-double, I'm as lusty
as Apollo, when he hitched his shining chariot,
the sun:

ALL THE DAZZLEMENT

of power
focused in the steering column,

fierce stars arrowing
from the polished bull bar,
and a load that could crush me

a hundred times over –
but follows me
docile as a cloud.

By Judith Bishop (37, North Ryde NSW)

Sydney Olympic Park



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THUNDER ROAD



At night the horsepower shakes the tyres around the wheels of chrome,
And sends this sled of fire and steel towards the lights of home;

GEARS THAT WHINE A LONESOME SONG AS MILES PASS ON BY,

Stacks that crack and scream for fuel to throw into the sky.

Endlessly the thunder pounds, he counts another town,
And lightening strikes his very soul each time the hammer's down.

A dark and frantic highway, yet he knows he's not alone:

The crackle of the scanners chant, the ringing of the phone,

The red lights in the distance, the headlights right behind;

TOO MANY HOURS RIDIN' HARD ARE MESSIN' WITH HIS MIND.

Call the shoot, "all dark" to let another vehicle past,

"All back in line", back on the gas, his concentration fast;

For the timid have no place here, this life desires the brave—

And any lapse in focus sends you promptly to your grave.

By Mick O'Brien (41, Clonbinane VIC)

Sydney Olympic Park



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www.dustpoems.com

THE CARRIER

A carrier of cows, sheep, hay and super bins.
The link between paddocks and shop,
the family man with ten kids,

BUSHY BEARD AND TRUCK CABIN SKIN
quietly spoken, with an ongoing investment
in Mack trucks. Once
he hit a cow on the Heathmarsh Road
yet barely felt it bounce off the bull bar.

On windless nights
his Mack could be heard two miles away,
changing down gears before gravel bends,
working back through the ratios, entering the flat.
The sight of his truck meant work –
six heifers to be schooled in the dairy,
spreading fertiliser into the night.



Summer, I carted hay with him.
Grabbing bales off the loader with a hook
he turfed them like biscuits before me.
Four of us running the length of the tray
sweat dividing our backs, his teenage son
NUDGING THE MACK AROUND 200 ACRES.

Over months he began to lose weight
his pale frame shelled from the inside.
This man who used to drive a rusting Mercedes to Mass,
children hopping from doors endlessly;
this man who drove trucks for a district,
for a living. Gingerly
his coffin is placed on the Mack's bogey.

By Brendan Ryan (46, Portarlington VIC)

Sydney Olympic Park 



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NIGHT MISTRESS

Eyes feeling heavy, still there's no reprieve
As every K draws me closer to my goal.
Thinking of my family, I start to grieve:
This mistress of night has taken my soul.

Bull lights shine, piercing the dark abyss,
ILLUMINATED EYES GLINT IN FEAR;
How many, I wonder become a near miss—
Dart into the scrub then disappear?

ZZ Top blast their tune to no avail,
My head's ever cloudy on this chilly night.
FRESH COOL AIR I DEEPLY INHALE,
Hoping back home, everything's right.

My wife once again is sleeping alone,
I know she wishes I'd give it away;
Fearing the worst from the ringing phone,
Strength and bravery must be displayed.



White flash startles me from a trance—
Was this owl an omen, a greater spirit's will?
Through the darkness I continue my advance,
Remembering, micro-sleeps kill.

MIRRORS REFLECT AN UNTRACEABLE PAST,
Clearance lights snake into the distance;
Windscreen shows the future so vast,
This old rig shows no resistance.

Now at a truck stop, far from family and home,
Glad my night mistress for the moment has gone.
Why do I do this? The answer remains unknown;
I'll keep driving, I'll continue on.

By David J Delaney (55, Cairns QLD)

Sydney Olympic Park



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CALENTURE

further:

past fuel silos and stilted houses
the median now feverish halting

AIR RETAINS A DIESEL SHIMMER.

her thirst is verdant, cerebral
a calling
toward the language of uprooting
a rural tongue
cut through mouthfuls of gravel
slow hints at immersion

BEYOND THE LINE'S END.

off season we are
maritime slum
boarders: interior
girls wander absently
in shift dresses down
fallen stairwells
in a house with no doors.
outside the low road beckons.



pockets of decay
tinge border towns
sulphureous, balmy.
once more white lines
are revelations.

abandonment as a plaything
rustles toothless in the tall grass

ADJACENT VACANT LOTS.

disembarking she walks in blindfolds
remembering the curvature of floor pedals
the blurred resonance of bitumen tributaries.

drowning ends in a glassy sprawl.
roadside altars whisper
fire soars

HOME AGAIN

all the empty passageways entreat:
go sleep with dust.

By Lindsay Tuggle (32, Austinmer NSW)

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