AS in DS: an eye on the road
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<td>CONTENTS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Sensibility Primer</td>
<td>P.S.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credits</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contents</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>Otto Das</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to use 'AS IN DS' as a Teaching Document</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EYE ON THE ROAD: AS IN DS: Introduction A.S.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASPECT 1: A new kind of Freedom Offered by the Car:</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASPECT 2: The Inherited Sensibility: The Way we have been brought up to see:</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASPECT 3: The New Sensibility resulting from the Moving View of Landscape:</td>
<td>47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASPECT 4: The Graphics of Movement:</td>
<td>91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASPECT 5: The Private Room on Wheels:</td>
<td>111</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASPECT 6: Change:</td>
<td>131</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postscript</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After-Papers: COBNETT'S Rural Rides:</td>
<td>153</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After-Papers: Rural Rides Revisited:</td>
<td>155</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Captions to images in order of appearance.</td>
<td>157</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and speed went up and you wanted a bit more air between the other idiot driver and yourself and your bodywork.

As for the Beatle generation – the mini got them. But for the middle-aged there is no forgetting your Volkswagen. It was not only love of animals or machines or sound (it was like a speed boat). You wore the Volks.

I remember thinking you were so close together in the Volks and so far apart in the DS your relationship as a married couple was bound to subtly change.

Now you could stand off the situation of each other.

Then it was love in a box.'

After it a big car was a kind of physical divorce. If ever one got the chance to repeat the space experience we must all have had in a pram, it was in the Volks. It was a well-made quality job, clean, cleanable, went without trouble, took you there and brought you back, comfortable, warm. And you were in return right up against it, looking out at the world.'

The car had changed our relationship with one another and how we observed our world and twenty years later we can work with this idea.

P.S.
September '82
becomes therefore a gateway into the city . . . and not only for tourists, for I am told it is where demonstrations assemble for marches on the city; so it is also a formal, symbolic, entry into the city for its citizens. This being so, should not that passage under the Rijksmuseum change altogether, and the museum entrances be reorganised? A classic problem of interventionist urbanism.

And those that enter London for the first time . . . dropped off the Airbus into the no-man’s land of the Cromwell Road or behind Victoria Station? Consider the visitors’ sense of connection between the form and the use of the city . . . entering from tourists’ buses parked in the formal nineteenth century streets . . . Constitution Hill near Buckingham Palace, or around the Albert Hall, in Queen’s Gate (originally the entry street to the Crystal Palace)? . . . first seeing Westminster – Mrs. Dalloway’s miracle arisen from the marshes – from the miserable strip of dead grass by Lambeth Palace?

A sensibility primer can perhaps only reach its readers obliquely, become operational over a long period. Consider this example from our own experience as working architects. The field boundary lines of Scot’s Pines, layer crossing behind layer when viewed from an open-tray on wheels – a jeep at speed – on the old straight Roman Road at Six Mile Bottom near Cambridge on the way to Hunstanton in the early fifties . . . to our first job. The talked-of film to record it never got made; but the notion of layers, of the mysterious occlusions that occur in layers passed, entered the form-language of our architecture in the late sixties. The time-elapsed is twenty years from observation to invention. Is this not the teacher’s dream, of saying something to a younger person which becomes understood and actable-upon years later?

And an example from an early essay called ‘Love in a beetle’ in Architectural Design, October, 1965, by A.S.:-

‘After a late ’fifties snowy winter I remember us driving off leaving all the streets standing – so our neighbour bought a tomato. And even if you did let the battery go, or run out after you’d switched over to the emergency tank it could be pushed – not like the jeep.

Manhandled – perhaps not like the 2 c.v. but sufficiently – out of a snow-drift sidled into through the VW’s liability to bum sway, or mud in a farm gate learning to reverse.

And with organization and know-how you could pack two whole contrary lives of luggage under cover and a baby to boot.

It only began to lose ground as the cost went up
Some examples:
Siena has acquired a traffic-restriction system which prevents cross-city vehicle movement even by residents and it has the beginnings of a peripheral circuit of spaced-away-from-the-historic-city roads via which one must now 'cross the city'. To get across may take 18 minutes walking (say 2 kms.) and 30 minutes, when lucky, driving (say 10 kms.). One's feelings about the nature of the city are deeply affected:

In the streets, walking, one sees Siena's individual citizens and its individual buildings face-to-face . . . . one sees them perhaps too well for our trafficked-city-adapted sensibilities which have learned to anaesthetize themselves against the noise and the abrasion of the 'too much' of the ordinary big city; so that when silence prevails we are overwhelmed to exhaustion by the pressures of seeing and acknowledging directly.

And outside the walls, driving, one sees the city as an object on the land.

Furthermore one observes with different eyes and feet and wheels its historic fabric . . . . for now vehicles must leave the city by a gate, go around and re-enter by another gate. By this repeated act one is made much more conscious of the gates and of what happens before them and around them. The roads through the gates, I am told, are now four to five metres higher than they were originally. There must have been many changes over the years at the gates. What change is needed now? To filter the 'bus-tourist' away from the Contradas (the Parishes)? to make places for the young travellers, the 'temporary citizen's? to assist the continuity of habitation of the Contradas by the renewal of the built-fabric inside the walls perhaps connecting green with green across the wall? to better-site the indicator signs (which are to a Regional standard and therefore would be dangerous to change)? to work with the road surfaces so as to reduce traffic speeds and induce a sense of 'other's territory' to tourists once they are inside the city walls?

The effort and investment of the last decade by the Sienese in protecting their city against traffic intrusion and thus making its antiquity a pleasure for tourists and citizens alike, deserves an inventive follow-up at the gates. 'AS in DS' as a movement sensibility primer prepares the mind for just such a jump of invention.

Another example of a new gateway into a city . . . . the boulevards of the Museumplein behind the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam have become the place where all the tourist buses park. The passage under the Rijksmuseum
naar zijn maximum. Pas nu kan de plaats van de auto in de stad in zijn volle omvang worden overzien. Vanaf nu kunnen scenario's geschreven en modellen opgesteld, die recht doen aan een open samenzijn met bewegingsvrijheid voor iedereen. De grootste zorg zal dan uit moeten gaan naar het samengaan van vele vormen van individueel en openbaar vervoer en de vorm en de kwaliteit van de openbare stedelijke ruimte. Dit boek kan een bijdrage leveren aan het ontwikkelen van een bewustzijn bij de nieuwe ervaringen die onze generaties opdoen in het beleven van onze gebouwde omgeving.

OTTO DAS.
zowel van ingenieurs als van ontwerpers, die auto's ontwikkelden met betere stroomlijn, minder brandstofverbruik en nog veel meer technische vernieuwingen. Maar de inspanningen van architecten en stedebouwkundigen zijn te gering gebleven om prototypes van verkeerstoplossingen inclusief parkeren te ontwikkelen waarin geen grote aanpassingen worden gepleegd op de ruimtelijke kwaliteiten van een voetganger gebonden omgevingen.

Wanneer we gerealiseerde plannen onderzoeken op de rol van het verkeer en vooral het parkeren, dan zien we in nieuwbouwwijken het verkeer als meest dominant ordeningspatroon met de gebouwen 'vrij' daartussen. Het parkeren, tussen weg en gebouw in, maakt maar zelden deel uit van het ontwerp. In het beeld van stedelijke gebieden die al bestonden voordat de auto zijn intrede deed, overheersen de gesloten bouwblokken met scherp afgetekend de openbare ruimte ertussen. Deze ruimte die vroeger grotendeels was gebruikt door voetgangers is nu vooral in gebruik voor het gemotoriseerd verkeer en voor stilstaande auto's, die een voortdurend obstakel vormen voor het oog. De auto heeft op het niveau van de voetganger de herinneringen aan onze historische steden langzaamaan vernietigd. Maar ook moet de vraag worden beantwoord waarom de buitenwijken niet in staat zijn een even grote aantrekkingskracht op de stadsbewoners uit te oefenen als de binnenstad. De eisen gesteld aan de ruimte die wordt gebruikt door voetgangers moet worden herschreven en daarvoor lijkt het nodig eerst nog eens te kijken en waar te nemen hoe het verkeer functioneert in stad en landschap.

Dit boek van Alison Smithson is het resultaat van kijken en zien onderweg van Londen naar het vakantiehuisje in Wiltshire rijdend in een Citroën DS. Het was in de tijd dat dit boek geschreven werd (1972) de enige auto waarin het comfort zo groot was dat onderweg in de auto kon worden geschreven, getekend en gefotografeerd. Het zou niet in Nederland geschreven kunnen zijn, omdat ervaringen met autorijden door ons platte en gecultiveerde land, bijna zonder maagdelijk landschap, totaal verschillend zouden zijn geweest. Maar iedereen die wel eens per auto op reis is geweest door landelijke gebieden in andere Europese landen, kan zijn eigen ervaringen herkennen in deze geschreven en getekende herinneringen. Deze beschrijvingen doen een poging om een nieuw gevoel tot ontwikkeling te brengen over de rol van de auto in de architectuur en de stedebouw, vanaf de autoweg, de straat, de parkeerplaats tot de toegang van de woning.

Ondanks de economische recessie was het aantal auto's in Nederland nog nooit zo hoog als op dit ogenblik (4,5 miljoen auto's op 14 miljoen mensen), maar men verwacht in de komende jaren geen groei meer van betekenis. Een soortgelijke ontwikkeling tekent zich af in andere westere landen. De stad breidt zich niet sterk meer uit en het aantal auto's groeit

AS IN DS: 8
OMDAT DE AUTO GEKOMEN IS OM TE BLIJVEN.

Pas als plannen zijn uitgevoerd en in gebruik zijn genomen kan worden beoordeeld of het ontwerp aan de verwachtingen voldoet, alle tekeningen en andere overdrachtstechnieken ten spijt; zij blijven slechts hulpmiddelen die tekortschieten als het gaat om een compleet beeld van de ruimtelijke kwaliteiten van een ontwerp. De beoordeling van architectuur en stedebouw begint eigenlijk pas als de ontwerper zijn werk al heeft gedaan. Het is dus onjuist om te veronderstellen dat de oude stad al af is omdat ze al gebouwd is; alsof het oude stadsdeel alle nieuwe bestemmingen als een spons op zou kunnen nemen. Ook past nog geen tevredenheid over de realisatie van nieuwe wijken, want deze moeten niet alleen getoetst aan de oorspronkelijke doelstellingen, maar ook aan de realiteit van het dagelijks leven.

De laatste decennia heeft het grote aantal auto’s en het evenredig toegenomen verkeer zware aanslagen gepleegd op de ruimte in de stad, waardoor voetganger gebonden bestemmingen zijn verdrongen of waardoor ze in de knel zijn geraakt. De auto is als een sluipmoordenaar de stad binnengerold, waardoor de meeste stadsbewoners - afwisselend voetganger en autörjder - het vermogen hebben verloren om de veranderingen in het ruimtegebruik waar te nemen. Maar de auto blijft ook de realisatie van een droom. Wat dat aangaat heeft alleen het vliegtuig de auto nog kunnen overtreffen. Is het niet heerlijk zonder noemenswaardige inspanning weg te kunnen rijden naar elke gewenste plek op deze wereld? Het dilemma ontstaat pas als iedereen een auto zou hebben en zou gebruiken om éénzelfde doel te bereiken. Het veroorzaakt situaties zoals bekend van voetbalstadions en nationale pretparken. Er werden grote parkeerplaatsen aangelegd, die van de autorijders het nodige geduld vragen bij aankomst en bij het verlaten van het terrein. Zo’n situatie doet zich ook voor bij veel binnenstedenoorden, maar hier wordt de auto op het terrein van bestemming toegelaten. In Venetië was de ‘stadionoplossing’ de enige manier om uit de parkeerproblemen te komen en ook hier moet ruim tijd worden genomen om de stad in of uit te gaan. Een nadeel dat ruimschoots opweegt tegen de prachtige ruimten in deze autovrije stad.

De droom van de autorijder wordt beperkt door massa’s andere autorijders. Maar bovendien zijn er vragen gerezen over luchtvervuiling, verkeerssliawaal, doden en gewonden ten gevolge van het verkeer; nadelen die niet alleen de autorijders, maar alle mensen gelijkwaardig treffen. Het zijn vragen die al tientallen jaren aanleiding geven om het ontaal over de auto af te roepen zonder overigens de groei van het aantal auto’s noemenswaard te kunnen beïnvloeden. Het heeft geleid tot vergrote inspanningen van de zijde van de autoindustrie,
realized with regard to the role of traffic in general and the parking problem in particular, we shall see that, in housing estates, traffic is the predominant factor in planning: the blocks are situated 'freely' in between the roads. Parking, between street and house, is hardly ever part of the plan. In urban areas that existed before the introduction of the car, closed blocks prevail, with the public space in between them marked sharply. This space which, in the past, was mainly used by pedestrians is now especially used by motorised traffic and for parking cars. These cars constantly block the view of people walking in the street. On a pedestrian level the car has gradually destroyed our memories of the historic cities. But we must also ask ourselves the question: why do suburbs fail to attract as many city-dwellers as the city centres do? The requirements made for the spaces used for pedestrian areas have to be reconsidered; therefore it seems necessary to, first of all, have a look at the role of traffic in town and country.

This book by Alison Smithson is the result of observing the landscape on journeys from London to Wiltshire driving a Citroën DS. At the time that the book was written (1972) this was the only car that was comfortable enough to enable people to write, make sketches, and take photographs while driving. It could not have been written in The Netherlands, because the experiences with driving through our flat and cultivated country, almost without virgin country, would have been entirely different. But everyone who has ever journeyed by car through rural areas in other European countries will be able to recognize his own experiences in these reminiscences, written and sketched. These descriptions try to develop new notions about the role of the car in architecture and town-planning, seen from the motorway, the road, the street, and from the parking-lot, up to the entrance of the house. In spite of the economic recession the number of cars in The Netherlands has never been greater than at this moment (4,5 million cars to 14 million people), but in the next years no increase of importance is expected. A similar development can be seen in other Western countries. The city has been built and the number of cars is expected to be nearly as large as it ever will be. It is only now that the role of the car can be fully assessed. From now on programs can be written and models drawn up that do justice to an open society with freedom of movement for everybody. Special attention will then have to be paid to the demands made by the many forms of private and public transport on the one hand and the quality of private and public urban areas on the other. This book may be a contribution to the development of a new way of experiencing our built-up areas for the present generations.

OTTO DAS.
BECAUSE THE CAR HAS COME TO STAY.

Only when a plan has been executed and put into use can it be judged on its merits, in spite of drawings and other means of representation. These will remain expedients, which fail when a plan has to be assessed on its spatial qualities. Therefore, as far as architecture and town-planning are concerned, work really begins when the architect or planner has already finished his job. There is no room for complacency about the fact that the city has already been built, as if the city could absorb every possible intervention like a sponge in the course of time.

During the past decades heavy attacks have been made on the space available in the city by the great number of cars and the amount of traffic, which has increased proportionately. On account of this situation the size of pedestrian areas have been reduced. The car has rolled into the city like an assassin; by now most city-dwellers — either in the role of pedestrian or car-driver — have lost the ability to observe changes in the use of space in the city caused by the presence of the car. But the car remains a dream come true. In this respect only the aeroplane has succeeded in surpassing the car. Is it not wonderful to be able to drive off to every place in this world you would like to go to without any effort to speak of? A dilemma arises when everybody has a car and uses it to reach one and the same destination. This creates situations like the ones we now see around football stadiums and national amusement parks. Large parking-lots are laid out, which demand a great deal of patience from car-drivers when entering and leaving the grounds. Situations like this also occur in many city centres, but in these cases the car is admitted to the grounds. In Venice the 'stadium solution' was the only way to solve the parking problem and here, too, ample time has to be taken to go in or out of the city. This is a drawback that is more than made up for by the existence of beautiful spots in a city free of cars.

The car-driver's dream is spoilt by the huge number of other drivers. Besides, questions have arisen about air-pollution, the din of traffic, and road victims; disadvantages that do not only affect car-drivers, but all people equally. These are questions which have been hanging over the car for dozens of years, but they have not been able to exercise any influence worth mentioning on the growing number of cars. The questions did lead, however, to increased efforts from the side of the motor-industry, both of engineers and designers, to design a car with a better streamline, less fuel consumption, and many other technical innovations. But the efforts of architects and town-planners have remained too small to develop prototypes of solutions for the traffic problem — including that of parking — that do not make heavy demands on the spatial qualities of pedestrian areas.

When we look into plans that have already been
AS in DS, acknowledgements of help received.

Alison Smithson, and the Department of Architecture at the University of Technology in Delft, wish to thank CITROËN NEDERLAND B.V., who financed the cutting of the published work to a profile.

Lay out by Alison Smithson executed by Ruud Mertens and Wienke Scheltens.

Workers on the book:
Maya Günther
An Hoek
Lis Pichler
Jurriaan van Stigt
Job Tarenskeen

Alison and Peter Smithson, architects in London, are guest professors; Otto Das, a Dutch architect, is a staff member, all attached to Vakgroep 8 of the Department of Architecture, University of Technology in Delft, The Netherlands.
A Sensibility Primer.

This is a diary of car-movement recording the evolving sensibility of a passenger in a car to the post-industrial landscape.

To the eighteenth century's inherited consciousness of nature and landscape Jane Austen's novels added her generation's perception of distance and time; a response to the news of movement of ships and armies in the Napoleonic Wars and, within England, to the ease of communication on trunk roads.

In the last quarter of the twentieth century, we have inherited a literature of man and machine in nature but there is as yet no equivalent of the eighteenth century's understanding which penetrated all to levels of society through the work of writers, artists, landscape designers, and architects.

This Primer is a document reaching out towards such an understanding. 

P.S. 
September '82
For the majority of people, the most interesting, carefree companionable times are spent in their car; "Sealed in a glass box on wheels", we again used in the collective sense - do not sense the air outside, smell something only after it has passed through the ventilation system, we read the weather through the glass of the windscreen or the side windows, feel the sun through this glass, are wonderfully protected from the most violent of storms in the wildest of landscapes. This is a normality.

EYE ON THE ROAD: AS IN DS: is not an 'obsession' . Experiences of transport already explored in previous writings are the scale of the railway network in 'The Euston Arch' and city streets seen from the bicycle at the end of the tram era in 'Young Girl'. These are merely fragments of our 'thinking' and 'doing' and 'going about our business.'

The Diary is in this way an aspect of our belief that everything is important as indicators and/or as 'fodder'; everything can be picked up and examined, turned over and thought freshly about to see if it will inform us directly of something we previously did not realise . or, simply, as in a Greek or Sicilian slave potter put into the clay to become a fragment of tangible connection in the palm of one's hand.

A.S.
September, 1982.
ASPECT 1: A NEW KIND OF FREEDOM OFFERED BY THE CAR:

The mobility that the car has given to everyone has helped to change our social patterns and, progressively, our social needs; for example, we no longer need to go to the centre we move to many centres ... and out of the city ... and out of the country altogether. Our social activity has adjusted; instead of sitting in a public auditorium or walking a city street, we are as other people in a similar vehicle: social contact is by implication ... we are told about it; watch it, occasionally read about it; but our physical experience of community adhesion is that 'we drive it'. 'We get in the car and go ... stop the car and get out'.

This new kind of freedom, achieved in the lifetime of our generation is now sufficiently immediate history that it can be considered ... to discover the nature of the sensibilities we must have unconsciously developed ... and to see if fresh appraisal of them can bring these sensibilities through to generate a rethinking of the many basic assumptions related to our 'inherited' way of seeing landscape and towns ... establishing a fresh understanding of what sort of places we wish to build towards.

... moved by the car along an ordinary curvilinear ex-lane through fields; all vegetation on either side the usual strong green, viewed under the most typical sky of grey-overcast causing conditions of considerable glare ... it is suddenly obvious that a passenger's view is worth describing ...

... a turn aside into the town recently by-passed ... on getting out, the air - it is realised - is chill ... a beautiful weeping willow screens the traffic still using the old main road which located this 'diner' ... a blood track leads to broken plate glass ... the car - in the meantime of the pause - has taken in a wasp ... requiring a race to find a Chemist's shop at Camberley.
... a most perfect small town ... a series of doors; gentle ways-in, barriers of quality to open-up to callers; squat proportions that have ample width to receive deliveries of hampers and suggesting that inside are passages of similar proportions ... tall pines and other distinguished trees behind a rose-brick wall, with grey-flint-panels ... a long wall ... with trees ... and close-behind the green up-slope of the hill-side for a back-drop ... 

... opalescent weather ... a washboard sound, for the car is running in a concrete channel, an urban sluice beginning a motorway ... as fringe-country met with, mist lies like steam exuded by the city ... first Service Station lies close in ... cars on flyover crawl like flies ... necessary to move in to slow lane for a large white Mercedes to pass and pull ahead ... this stretch of motorway the first portion built, where the dark green Volkswagen - medium size rear window, new in 1956 - was tried out ... sun over right shoulder touches all the new houses ... traffic streaming in to the city ... mesh of a parapet on a flyover striates in dazzle patterns, offering-up variations fast, as the flyover approached ... sunshine now floods across all, at a level with the ground, skimming all the traffic and the stubble in the fields with golden light; and warmth ...
a red single-decker bus amid the oncoming traffic....

constricted to two lanes this traffic immediately queues-up behind lorries passing each other....

of the cars joining the other lane and the many moving within sight on local roads, only a spring green, well-enamelled foreign car stands out among the slurp-shapes and dust-mixed colours passing....

turquoise blue cars at speed on a country road whose old route - seen from this piece of motorway - aligned as if coming at the motorway.... at last visual moment, circumspectly diverted; turquoise cars to be seen looping behind trees to cross over the speeding traffic, between mesh parapets whose wire patterns watermark the sky as this car moves forwards to pass under....

a puffed-up mackerel sky....

yellow-leafed poplars in a left-lying hollow....

patch of mist in another hollow.... black smoke from under lorries floats sideways, merges with the numerous pockets of hollow-held mists....

on-coming traffic comes out of a sun silvered by mist....

did they site this Service Station because of a propensity to pockets of mist here?.... or out of pure chance does the possibility of escape encourage so many drivers to take a coffee-break?....

moving round on concrete service routes - 'are these two- way?' - to regain the petrol pumps....
gone the layered, blobbed, mackerel cloud; sky now clear above the oncoming windscreens reflecting a full low sun . . . pine-woods blackish in the face of a weak sun . . .

mist smoking the sky to a grey not unlike smoke . . . smoke may even be genuine; bricks being baked, Accrington, Willenhall . . .
bare rafters of disused building rake the sky . . .
motor sounds an even tone, the washboard noise quite gone . . .
the car now in shade; the sun a come-on ahead . . .
running parallel to the railway . . . a pretty cream-painted wooden signal box, in sight of everyone on road yet, glass all broken . . .
sky clouded over now, but high above, french-blue showing through gaps in clouds . . . a blue-green field of winter-greens resonates on the left . . .
men spraying embankment are clad in coloured polythene macs; blue and green . . .
even-textured forestry patch of identical pines . . . successive forestry patches interspersed with landscape; a striking interposition due to all being illuminated by bright sun and seen against a hard grey sky . . .
cows on mounding hill: cows hold that stance given to lead-toy cattle . . . in fixed-leg position as if stuck in the green surface . . .
beautiful peach-shaded steam rising from orifices in the roofs of sheds . . .
yellow bridge ahead in the sunlight . . .
church towers have a fired appearance; trees blasted, bare limbed; hedge-lines blackened; why does mining so blight an area's trees, and hedges? vandalism? the soils pollution by fuel long since burnt in the houses?

devious embankment is green in the sunlight; two red bridges, plus a pedestrian bridge - so close - why not amalgamated?

land beginning to move about a bit; decent stone roofs, dipping sympathetically in the middle in magic-making response to the landscape.

oak trees green and gold against the blue-grey sky; gloom in the first tight valley makes brightly visible a light shining from miles away down the valley side... amazing gold light in the upper air.
well remembered this — profiles turn soft, mist-screened greys … hills remain close now; high profiles harsh blue, the pinnacles even brutal against the skyline; but near to, greens vibrate their evening tones, and browns show well … the canal left behind … road running with the railway — playing touch-last — come and go … the dusk passes for space around each field-tree of brown leaves … trees stand absolutely motionless, as if waiting for nightfall — will something happen? … a pause in nature where nothing moves … from behind the hills bright enough to be animal’s eyes, ahead, the afterglow; sides of vehicles shine faintly, while their head-lights are reflecting … a golden headlight now lights stone walls, shows drifts of leaves against them … the hills step that much closer …

tall chimneyed, the place stayed at twice before has warmly lit windows awaiting other guests … the town starts immediately … street lights, and shut-up buildings, headlights are night-time bright, shop lights fall greasily on the black moisture of stone pavements … the hills black ahead … drifting mist covers all but the light that distinguishes the sky … car starts to climb … to go over the shoulder having missed the way by passenger recognising the road as been on before, until startlingly, the wrong place for tonight is come upon … inside light on to find the map put away … now headlights pick up waving side curtains of stone walls, limestone shimmering in the close scanning beam … the walls indent and belly, lean distinctly on profiled bends; stones bristle and yet the walls heave on, two together, ever parting before the car climbing in narrow blind turns; fortunately the night so pitch dark as to reassure there is only one climbing car.
exit by the cement works and turn left into the last tortuous village . . . then climbing again . . . suddenly there, with the silence — mild for the time of year — the headlights picking out the gate, the pit of the stream at the side as told, white chippings of yard not described . . .

long down-slope . . . mainly heavy lorries — tarpaulin’d loads — scooting up moisture to such heights it is as if their industrial loads squirted out polluted-spray, rust-coloured against the road which is wet, the colour of sheet steel

a repellant grey sky; light strikes the road to make it now lighter in tone than the sky . . . beige clouds of spray billow beneath each car . . .

in the present sunlight water splashes appear explosive as if each tyre sent sideways water rockets . . .

a ribbed aluminium bodywork van passes, green letters on its side say dashingly: Houston . . .
a wish to call out to the car bearing an upturned table on its roof: 'You’re upside-down' . . .

three black and white cows on an over-bridge, followed by one, led by one; they seem hardly to progress but as the bridge fast approached, a lifted hoof glimpsed and progressive movement will take them off the bridge - by sundown

four - or so - over-bridges later, a horse and rider descend the down slope, between duck-egg blue railings and disappear behind the foremost hedgerow trees . . .

two single pot chimneys lean confidentially towards each other behind the veil of a chain link fence that encloses higher - intervening - ground that masks their prosaic sitting on a ridge . . . a little further on - in car time - a thought about the chimney tête-a-tête, then the return of the head to again face forwards is to the sight of two figures leaning together in friendship and conversation on the railing of an over-bridge . . .
bare hawthorn twigs of the hedges show grey in the headlights: a moment ago - in the valley bottom - the hawthorn profiled hairy, chocolate coloured in the moist air . . . . an ancient - cheese-cover-fronted - dull blue Renault recognised momentarily in the headlights . . . . left hand turn; then rushing away, climbing, a faint ticking in the engine, but when again on the top of the topography the car bounds forwards without the engine tick . . . . the road can be felt rolling over the hollows and bumps of the folds in the Plain . . . . a single leaf descends from the overhanging tree as the car turns the corner . . . . the moon's brightness, from high above, lights the paper written on . . . . the dark pine fringe walks the skyline which crests the fields that on both sides closely enfold the road's meander . . . . air milky until afternoon . . . .

beech leaves falling thick as snow flakes in still air are not yet brown.
suddenly wider after the Indian summer.

a day of rain noise on the car...

almost immediately the car joins a long queue... a fellow — in proportion a bear on a circus motorbike — then three heavy lorries, tight together, nose-to-tail (later, in London, the news on radio announces that: 'this evening two London nurses killed' on this stretch of road)...

just ‘knocking-off-time’ in the snow-works of motorway construction...

... such an amount of splash-up: and they just washed the car... day-light still not faded...

... poppies seem to bloom only when they remake the side of the road — or, more rarely — put to wheat a field long dormant under grass... and that's that for the poppies; the road-side will get sprayed and the farmer will also wipe out a second chance... the car is stopped by one poppyed field sighted on a previous journey but the day between has been strongly windy and the field is green; no longer bloodied; this morning's bloomings brought to naught... so by stages over thirty years, from fields seemingly more poppies than crops, pleasures of astonishment are no longer known about... the newly sown embankment of last winter waves silkily, darkly-bronzed stems of identical grasses...

... the weather divide announces — as it sometimes does — the land-configuration-frontier; the road immediately dryer: there is a fine drizzle that only needs the wipers once more to be done with... the clouds are moving; so lit by moonlight they resemble waves in a sea... a mackerel sky immediately above... around the cloud-muted moon (just vacated by Apollo 11), the moonlight touches successive waves of clouds and makes each more ethereal...
full moon (Apollo II not yet splashed-down) . . .
as boot loaded, the moon gradually gets eaten in rising mists although high in the branches of the beech trees . . .
cold night contrasting yesterday’s sun . . .
headlights pick-up and whiten stone gate posts no one ever enters; through the never opened opening can be seen the blue sky of first darkness . . .

beech-leaf drifts are plentiful at last: the leaves on the trees are a month late in being the colour of October beeches: brazen gold drifts fill green verge to moist edged tarmac . . . leaves fall slowly as car passes: there is no wind . . .
the colours of the country by day in this strangely late autumn have all been Gainsborough browns, as if allowing a sight of an historic country-side . . .
ASPECT 2: THE INHERITED SENSIBILITY:
THE WAY WE HAVE BEEN BROUGHT UP TO SEE:

The European sensibility relates to the way we have been taught to see the landscape. As an 'educated' society we are also able to construct jointly acceptable impressions of previous patterns of use, even previous attitudes, which together form a sort of 'shared' - part national, part European - 'memory' of the past. It is through this largely 'static veil' that we view our inheritance of the landscape.

..... wind from the opposite side-vent blows across the car interior at right-angles to the view driven into ..... a half, pumpkin-coloured moon ..... the expanse of road surface has for some reason an American look about it; maybe suggested in sound, perhaps by the colour of the moon ..... road narrows, verge comes close: suddenly the car joins a queue of vehicles in the night: moving fast, their combined displacement-wind washes the herbage of the verge ..... the very green weeds of hedgerow foot seen in the close ranked headlights look chilly, damp; how can anyone sleep outside tonight and be a tramp in hedgerows?

.... watchers on bridges over the motorway remind of a Sunday when jeep awaited repair in Montabaur, Germany, and confirm how inviting a late evening this is ..... new houses crowd up to the motorway side ..... then to both sides .....
at certain times of the year, the countryside looks at its best when thoroughly wet; the colours all distill out and are water-clear; become in tone more vital than themselves in nature: as are the green plants just under the water-surface at Fontaine de Vacleuse.

The washed and made misty wet laden grey-sky can be looked at as soothing in its quality the light lasts in such a rain-washed atmosphere... the dome of the sky shows the surrounding horizon clearly. sheep standing in threes,... car travels at fitful, winter-tea-time traffic...
wind blowing the young wheat into
the semblance of a surface of a lake, ripples across and across each rectangle without causing an overspill at the far edge. . . .
road passes under a slew bridge: compressed brick lines in an arching/slewing movement on a curve so precisely aim their lines these would be connected to a vanishing-point. . . . such visible play of geometries introduce into the bloodstream that stirring excitement described by the Surveyors to the Railways: 'the brick arches twisted their way into position': the connection of this particular heightened sensibility extends back to the Renaissance perspectivists . . .

rays of golden light - a Rembrandt light-rayed sky - beams shine down from behind a skyplate of charcoal shaded clouds, on to a sooty wood . . .
sun rayed down from clouds: very Dutch looking altogether this area . . .
day lifting slowly . . . trees - particularly birch - hang limp . . . the road surface being eaten up by the car is damp . . .
grass banks marred with the dried remnants of the year . . .
honey coloured clouds edge openings in the grey and reveal very high blue patches . . .
a few heaps of yellow tinted cumulus over to the east . . . fumes caught in a breath of wind while speeding in damp air are reminiscent of the jeep on a German road throughout storm-ridden, wild autumn . . .
a sunny patch ahead . . .
a train sound . . . instinctively first look at some smoke . . . only then realise a train pulled by a diesel will be sliding along elsewhere . . . into the sunshine at last . . . road dry
shadow on woods shows how weak the sunlight is .... 
whisked too far .... road improvements meant that without the usual messy grindings round people's High Street and Market corners, there could be no mindless turning this way and that correctly at the old places ... 
Griff Fender – what a marvellous name – Keep Moving .... 
Ingamells’ – day of provincial names on sides of vans; old, no-nonsense names related to soil .... 
five right-angle bends! Must have missed the bypass turning; this town picturesque; 
diamond jubilee building plaque .... 
cannot believe this road was ever remotely straight as it seems to be on the map .... 
Ingamells’ in front again .... 
a nicely coped brick wall .... blackened elm leaves fluttered down by passing traffic ....

FONTHILL TO LONDON 
the greens at this time of year almost perfectly balanced .... fields with the pre-ripening bloom Monet saw .... still fewer poppies than ever; those that flower are barely two inches across, shallow in cup, military red .... not the four inches across, three inches deep cup, the bleeding Spanish red that as late as the 'forties bloomed in fields favoured round Edinburgh by the Scotsman Calendar .... are flower colours – like that stained pink clover blooming at the wayside of the Causey Arch – darker the further north? ....

FONTHILL TO LONDON: 
watercress beds lie muddy dormant this time of year ....

day's-end Courbet sky of light cream clouds (a result of an afterglow in the blue of dusk) .... a forward layer of darker clouds emphasises the picture quality of the immense field running away to the now dark tree line .... 
seen against beech clumps, banked-up landscape lucid in detail; the foreground is lit well – as is characteristic of certain summer evenings ....

Stonehenge appears green of stone .... until – presented silhouetted against the last moments of sky brightness – it becomes difficult to see ....
The passenger enjoys being driven along: Grandmother liked to be 'taken for a drive'.

'They have painted the underneath of the girders red, looks terrific... there's a tricycle...'

Usually it is the passenger who comments...

The main road rises to the wooded stretch ahead, the finest of watercolourists' skies; a brush-stroke of duck-egg blue setting-off aggressive grey clouds; a foretaste of the stupendous water-sharp-colours of the view that never fails to please... the sun behind and to the right, shows to perfection massed bare woods and ivy clad trunks...

The sky opening-up to reveal blue...

A great rolling patchwork of fields, soft and silky, Millet-green in the after-sunset light... a group of fields as inviting as morning eiderdowns... to look into soft hollows as the car passes, recalls soothing pre-breakfast sport of childhood...

Rainfall slackened-off allows... from an eminence in the road... a view of a varying grey cloud-sheet, laid out across a sky that forms the major part of the view... a steely luminescence... profiles of pines seen from the downward slope of the two-lane motorway bring to mind picturesque landscape drawings of travel in rain in Swiss Alps...
green blocks of grass, almost downy in their drying greenness. A delicious blue-green such as portrayed by the lle de France painters, but these days, no poppies: a few white marguerites.

a long snaking, downwards tilted tunnel; its internal form branch-ribbed, leaf-skinned, more beautiful than any air-filled plastic-tube; not intestinal at all; a tubular passage of weight-releasing intricacy, a liberator of the imagination beyond all artistry. Despite all interest, this stretch of the journey seems three times longer than usual.

train of cars disposed in zig-zag on carriers passes over an old industrial High Street that could be just anywhere in the country. The car approaches the dirty brick railway bridge and either end, over the High Street's house-made-shop tops, can be seen the slow moving train: British pastel-coloured-cars zig-zagging out of sight in both directions. Buff and grey hard turquoise and cream similar freights must go out each week, same time; if one wanted to photograph awful grey English day improves to gay brightness of quite another country so these places remind of small towns before Old Salem: less witchy greening mud encases the lower boards of the tide mill, textured as mud deposited by swallows have-been-wood-once sidings and baulks left high and free of sea are engrained green; the paddle, with scoop awry, rests as what it was, but barely so; any renovator would have at first touch a handful of fibrous fragments and mud scales.

black buildings in hot sun bring to mind childhood summers of the north-east coast the soot-colour of the black shadows cast by heavy sunlight without power, denied surface-aid to bounce the light around; black shadows cast by hot sun on golden wood is another world
the light lasts well into the late return
just as the light has gone, a Gela-like assembly of tall silver tubes, carrying evening-size white lights, are high-speed-gas; but poorly reflected by comparison in that they preside over dank water not the Sicilian sea . . . a Wimpy pull-in—all else closed—done-up recently red, lit, . . . a coach, part filled, stands outside . . . departed passengers queue inside . . .

the bus still stands outside and all the faces of passengers marooned in the coach look into the interior of Wimpy and plaintively beg eating passengers to hurry; sit and stare woodenly, fixedly, as if turned to face their tea drinking fellow travellers by some circuitry: mechanical dolls in a bus late at night . . .

climbing out Whittington's way: pointed arches of Ruskin-influenced studio-flats the only eye-relief the entire traffic-swilled way . . .
lovely clear, still, day . . . red cherries ornamental . . . an Indian summer without wind . . .
teatime play on greens . . .
a glass windowed box floating along in the sun . . .

a number of city journeys unrecorded . . . self-maintenance takes its toll on city travel . . . simply changing face or pace or mood fills city crossing . . .

a blackbird singing, singing, above the noise of the halted cars and dawdling motors . . .

taxi; conveyance rented for the required distance: the autumnal park seen from an advantageous viewpoint . . . how other traffic behaves hardly concerns the passenger . . .

October may be London's most delightful month for enjoying urban landscape . . .
... a long track leading up a gentle slope to woods... the particular feel of the land conspires with logs gleaming with moisture, neatly stacked like shells, to recall pictures of Somme battlefields...
... the idea of really moving abode—moving house—has made the annual trek North—and South again—almost unmoving....
the scenery past Keele....
the long drag to Penrith, yet no need to take on water 'through-running Tebay' before playing 'climbing Shap' on the new extension to the motorway....

... the happy yellow of the Warwickshire elms.... (autumn before elm disease killed most of England's elms)
picnic under a Warwickshire walnut tree;
the finding of walnuts....
all jostle in a worried, move-oriented journey.... landscape wide spaced the disparate events but the mind too preoccupied with intended moving to record movement....
the night sky showing water-washed clouds of grey . . . . a threatening sky of a type favoured for Victorian sea-scapes, complete with ominous, lighter horizon . . . .

only occasion on which this fish and chip shop found open . . . . after ten o'clock but the fish are fresh and chips very good and worth the stopping for . . . .

now at this birthday-time, the last weekend in the house behind was spent without realising . . . . onwards and away from the old home the car rushes . . . . a man with a walking-stick just standing staring over a stile in a hedge; a composition of incident not observed for ages and ages; seeming not since 'thirties childhood'. . . .

a satinous lustre rests on one patch of landscape as Palmer recorded . . . . so silver . . . . a mysterious pool of sheen . . . .
silence of countryside when the car stops . . . .
There has been a change of perception, possibly bringing with it the beginning of an ability to distinguish between the inherited way of seeing and a fresh recognition of the nature of what we see. The growth of a new sensibility preceeds the inventions we require: - a new style of landscape gardening; an agricultural 'landscape' protected from pollution; settlements shielded from noise of movement and mechanism; dwellings that are protected in a way so that they may enjoy more of the benefits of 'nature'. . . . . these we should begin to envisage as we look out while moving past everything in our own-climate-cell.

. . . . . road, starting a descent, dips further into the landscape; the effect of the long descent is flattening to the surroundings; gradually expanding the dimensions of the hollow entered until at a certain moment, field hedgerows rise up and, shouldering leafy branches, blot out the bowl that recently was the surrounding landscape. Then, quite suddenly, the road is topping the next rise of the Plain, the car launched again into a topography that rises and falls, rowing around its progress . . . . the road ahead showing how, in places, it heaves across the land's forms . . . . the passenger dipped with the car out of this ever opening landscape, to be confined on a strip of tarmac, passed through rooms of fields late-summer-coloured as straw. . . . . surfaces again; in view ahead, two distant slopes slide; telescope; work one against the other, until shut out by rising intervening ground . . . . the car runs within a trapezium shaped frame: out-riding concrete kerb-faces white, the under-belting tarmac textured, fore-road ever seen in perspective . . . . where the road is curving, a curveous trapezium runs fixedly round before the car as if an extension to the chassis . . . . passing behind the car - seen in the cosmetic mirror - an ever running, streaming tail into the distance . . . . fore-frame and the aft-tail must butt at the passing of the car; would persuade that the car is fused to this black shape that snakes of its will through the landscape . . . . the landscape, as it is riven by the car's approach, is in its passing behind still opening up an instant more before it can close again, slowly . . . . the ground immediately ahead comes swiftly forward.
as if an undertow... entering each topographical lock of the surrounding Plain, at first a glimpse, then more gradually, the surface of the valley spreads until the car is on it... embedded in it... only to have its nose launched upward. ...

high verges obscure all but their own grass, the sky... the road embanked, still in a fold... beginning on the left, the verge folds down, as if a falling-open green shutter; exposed to view is space unto the distance... at the opposite side of the road the obscurant grass likewise falls away, to reveal a view that is picturesque... this sloping landscape's face, so exposed to view, draws closer, then gradually -- as if all its trees, odd houses, hedges, mounted on a drum revolved away from the advancing car -- disappears... the all over left view also downs with its backdrop, leaving only the forestage of grass verge with hazy space beyond... this grassy forestage mounts high, before it too sinks its line of trees into previously indistinguishable roadside folds... the car turns aside and passes down converging twists of tree'd hedgerows that nevertheless always part to let the car through...
tired greenery, remained by
summer, ready to drop and compost;
glare and haze make countryside-scene
gooey to view in passing...
but the stones benefit strangely from the
peculiar thick, adhesive quality of the air,
and loom-up ... impressive ...
appearing as twice their usual size
back-tat blocked-out ... all traffic
slowly piles-up ... people seem to be
observing this optical phenomenon
the stones are massive ... the
stones' weathered surfaces magnified
textural detail appears to be clearly
seen from the distance of the slope down
to the Y-junction ... everyone is
looking; no driver presses to hurry-on
'We must be up in the air': that kind of haze on the ridge-road, supportive evanescent light sufficient to provoke a small passenger's comment... sun trying to break through into the dips in the Plain
'We have come down now'....
.... a rabbit: a dead rabbit .... an angry blackbird grieving over its squashed mate gives way only at the last moment .... a yellow-hammer sits stock-still on the top of a post .... a rabbit so newly decapitated it must have been done by the vehicle just passing the red flag (an army - or is it contractor's - vehicle?) .... what is going on? .... such carnage in a few hundred yards?

.... black crow, obvious only in its landing with an openness of the wings - rather as if removing a coat; apparent, an almost backwards jump; two smart, running, stepping jumps .... the movement attracted at such a stage in the manœuvre that flight-in could be assumed .... but it could have been fright except that the crow then walked forwards in a very interested way as if attracted to something it wished to investigate greedily .... crows seem on the increase: perhaps related to the increasing carrion of hedgehogs on the roads ....

cheerful yellow willow branches .... sallow poplars in basket bareness .... red twigs of spindle ....

.... the dappled road looks empty the way it stretches ahead, yet two cars in this lane - four/five in the other direction - so used to traffic, this emptiness noteworthy ....

now the car is climbing behind a lorry and a van .... in long tunnels of green .... inner profile that of a Tudor coif framing the face....
two lorries pull out of a farm, the car follows the piled-high straw bales slowly on to the main-road ... following still - the lorries just starting-out - this car nearing the end of finding the way by byways, away from holiday cars ... tops and side bales on the lorries brush the traffic-worn under-surfaces of the trees ... the car still following slowly, as if mesmerised, is gently showered with short straw pieces ... all movement is in slow motion ... well ahead of the car, dead sticks and torn, summer-grotty leaves fall straight down, join a straw storm that swirls twistingly towards this car, swooshing over the bonnet, up and over the windscreen ... a few short straws cling as snow would wedge behind the windscreen-wipers, making confidential small moves, undecided whether to leave their retreat and rejoin the upswirl in the upwash of air ... the same satisfying movements as snow flakes played with the car that first Citroën time on the switchback south from Hadrian's Wall ...

... the car turns the acute Y-junction that allows a front view of the Folly while departing from it ... 'there's another of them' ... the lorry is climbing the slope like an old burdened woman behind which the car can safely edge-in to enjoy the midst of the gusts of straw emanating from the baled load ... the lorry driver waves to a friend over the right hedge where are two Massey Fergusson combines ... the car lingers in the straw-flaked-wake of the lorry; then, given the sign to pass, goes blackberrying ...

... three possible sites of sunsets; one cloud-break showing lemon-golden is however clearer and larger than the others ... the orange of the most sunset-seeming-patch of lit cloud gradually moves over in location after a mile is travelled and the realistic illusion of setting-sun proves to be a town's sodium-lights ...

the car is stopped, becomes a house on wheels ... the passenger looks out from the stationary car between two trees ... a sudden tipping-up rise in the road that is visible has the effect on the line of moving cars and lorries that pass across the view that they trundle past with the motions of toy cars on a continuous-running circuit, endlessly coming out of a tunnel with a flip-pop and across to disappear quick-pop ...
while sitting eating fish and chips the view darkens . . . to begin with the scene is coloured as the jig-saw given one Christmas in the 'thirties by John; ochre and blue trees in profile, the pinks of roses showing in the front gardens, the ochre-grey smoke of a bonfire rising in the middle distance of the back gardens . . . soon the scene darkens a stage further so that all dramatic variation is lost, smoke no longer can be seen; finally only bedroom-light-rectangles; car headlights: either side, the country-few street-lamps widely spaced . . .

car moving again, slowly edging back to the road; a drift of fir cones by the junction-side show up in the headlights a beautiful, light, summer-brown . . .

. . . how wet and black the night is . . .

if the passenger’s head is tilted and propped on one side by arm bracketed off the seat back, things passed are seen at quite a different angle and the sensation of movement becomes an oblique side-slip, a gravity-free, trajectory sort of movement, as seen in some sequences of moon-landings . . .

. . . the road is a shade of black . . . a stalking white line shows wide on the narrow black road . . . the first beech-leaf drifts are moistened and ginger, powerful indicators — despite the dark — as to the whereabouts of roadside bush bottoms . . . moonlit clouds now float against a clear sky . . .
LONDON TO FONTHILL: night

... this car goes straight ahead in the dark, towards red lights lined-up across the dark distance on a strangely higher level ... increasing now that this car's nose dips as the road points downwards ... a number of red lights cross from the left to the right, observed and considered in the darkness ... white lights can be seen moving from a point low-right to some destination left, apparently on a road suspended diagonally in mid-darkness, unconnected by any conceivable black-screen geometry either to this car's going straight on (just perceptibly downhill), or to the tailing red lights, fairly conspicuously moving left to right, now at closing spacing and at much higher level ... but the passenger knows that at this road's foot, the bend is 45° right then almost 45° left, which topographical geometry will bring it to the start of the white lights' angle of climb ... then via a curve, this car will come to show - in its turn of place - a red lighted tail moving across right ... this part of the route is contrived as if not proceeding meaningfully east to west ...

local journey: Tisbury

... tiny, first-fall beech leaves sail up behind the car travelling ahead ... one or two leaves float independently straight down from the overhanging beeches, to join those set in fresh, swirling motion by cars ... the stray frond of beech is set rustling by eddying breeze ... the past few cold days responsible for brittling the leaves ...

local journey: Tisbury to Shaftesbury

... the high enclosing banks are suaver for their first shearing of the year ... a suavity made svelter still for being moved so gently past ... may-blossomed hedges close enough to be stroked by the fore-air movement of the car climbing blindly, not so fast ... the car skims whoosingly upwards into brighter light ...

the lane winds ... hidden hazards are to be expected ... this time a road-surveyor with tape; the following mid-week-shopping-car will make him draw in his tape again ...

the car swooshes down a green channel of a lane; a soft brushing of the sides; as stream water must experience as it passes through one of the local, burgeoning water meadows ...
the smallest passenger beginning to notice the scenery: the others never really aware - no amount of hopefully-connective-patter made the others conscious of much beyond selected cars, brands of services to car and obtrusive passengers.

a family playing ball in a stubble field

another couple complete with deck-chairs taking their ease from driving

... may be the result of open-air-life on TV advertising this year ... or doing away with some fences ... or a freer taking of liberties...

unrelieved green of fields ... surface iridescence swished silkily by wind ...

countryside life becomes harder edged and noisier, yet more law-precise as mechanisation gets back in neatness that (believed) park-like-perfection enjoyed in the full-man-power days of pre-1914 and 14th century ... will days of softness - furring, purring, slurring - return? ... so that voices are again the greatest noise ... maybe the habit of occasionally shouting under strain is to re-establish the pre-eminence of person not machine ... will wood-smoke be the strongest smell again? ... sky clouds pure moist air and not some countries' high flown industrial pooping-out? ... was England always grey-glare skied? ... or are we blessed with the dust of European ages?

the land rolls gently, watched as the car moves ... woods soot-brown at base with tops of shaded charcoal: this is the rabbit area but none out, although dusky already at the wood edge ... perhaps too early in the day or too cold ... a pheasant beside a pale ginger back which might be its mate; unlikely so close to an early rabbit ...

... coot stalking the iris beds where never a yellow flag picked although passed-by thirteen such seasons ... too fast a bit of road to think of slowing, pulling in...

actual snow lying on joke-snow thrown up from a cutting at the roadworks ...

cloud edges all sunny coloured; the bodies of clouds look laden with rain ...

... three blue tractors in one field ...

dense golden tones of clouds may promise more snow - sledges taken back in hope - the snow dusting exists well over the usual divide of climate that centres the pendulum passage of this car on the Pennine chain ...
a strong small patch of sunlight ahead making rosy some old factories and roofs …. into the sun patch: indeed strong; the sunlight on everything around makes clouds above suddenly white by comparison . . . .

… the shadow of the car precedes — in swift good-dog movement — into the shadow of a low-lying village … sunlightshining almost horizontally across the so-called Plain, withheld awhile … emerging; first a willow made feathery by sunlight; then out on the landscape's top again the light is equal all around … this view never fails to please; the road location allows such far-seeing; so often, going back thus in the early evening when the weather has lifted, the distance seen spans miles …

in between high hedges to find this car is almost immediately behind another …

hawthorne loaded with berries this year and in this horizontal light every berry blood crimson …

new road running down hill … in this season of field burning, heavy mauve-tinged-buff smoke hangs over the fields …

the car approaches this route's topographical barrier … a modern white sports car swings out and away up the slope in front … grooved by the road, the fore-hill reads from this position on the road as forward defences, the postern of the land rising ahead … long slope up; holding distance to the sports car until over the top and on to the divided lanes … travelling either way this land formation is a barrier to be penetrated …

‘How red the sun behind’ — they say — a great orange globe merging to the sky it has coloured: yet daylight has so gone, that forward facing, the landscape's greens reflect nothing; the trees are unpleasant Hookers' green … only coming out of the roundabout do all the cat's-eyes in succession gleam orange … now some metal trunking on a lorry tinged apricot … a shame to miss looking directly at the sunset but not easy to turn round …

time to look for rabbits …

then the heap-of-snow joke that will be over when the motorway 'opens 1970' …

tree branches arch over this section of the road and this evening speed the approach of dusk …
two smoke wisps arrow in Concorde sharpness low across the Plain, pointing to lower falling beech hangings... the next dip reveals the wisps both come — by a trick of the air currents — not from a single source in the beech mass that has burnt out, but from a little fire on a grass slope beneath some cows, curling-up at first as crimped as hair around cattle horns... smoke rises to the top of the fold in the Plain so curled and seemingly disappears — creating a gap — then reappears as the smoke vapour first sighted, flowing level into that bifurcation of smoke the car now fronts as it moves onwards to leave the smoke rapidly behind....

the season.... the roseate end of the incredibly fine day.... suggests primitive, ritual, Michaelmas fires.... the sky is banded blue and mist and grey.... the trees' generic colours jump into resonant, detailed tones; each green just sufficiently touched by the turn to appear vibrant in this failing light.... the late-lasting light makes all things look good: lichen on slate glows saffron; the slate blooms mauve; smoke smudges pale blue against beeches blown barer than usual when seen by day, but in this day-ending light, still clothed with leaves sufficient to be full-coloured volumes.... a cloud of buff smoke is tree-formed in the back-garden of a house by the roundabout.... the air so still.... the season, that remind of the north's sparser growing vegetation.
the sun behind the car is lighting the newly ploughed land all around to a milk-chocolate colour. . . .
the car came in rain and was only momentarily held-up . . . . last time the car turned back from such a queue at this point and retraced its track to go round and drop over the top into Wyme to rejoin the main road . . . . the passenger should have remembered, having nothing else to do when the car is moving . . . . but now the light is so pleasantly falling on the view . . . . the sun all shining behind the car . . . . the view encourages the thought to take chocolate-coloured pencils to Tunisia next time to draw the mountains in such soft dying light . . . . a mauving-blue sky makes roofs of red and purple tile look as if a pool among the trees . . . . sighted for a long car-movement-moment from the motorway elevated by the motorway cutting, stranded in the meadow, a beautiful beech tree, its skirt shorn-off-level to a dramatic browse line about a metre off the coarse looking grass; presumably the field is regularly used by cattle . . . . (the motorway side of the tree died quite quickly, in eighteen months or so; for a couple of years the tree was half dead and half alive; then, somehow diminished - spring 1982 - stands dead). . . .
two red wing-lights on a yellow digger shine high above the grass... the line where the road -- by its light and shade -- appears to drastically change level -- or texture -- approaches the car fast enough ... plump, barely real ... again road tone change -- dark to light -- approaches the car at the same speed; not real ... a change from light-tone to mid-tone, a deeper sounding plunk ... these changes, quick as can be scanned ... then extremes of dark shadow cast by an overbridge, contrasting with bright light falling on the road's surface from the overbridge lights, are sped over soundlessly ... the golden river of light above has been guiding the car for miles ... a snaking, curvaceous canopy ... the moon that started as a faint strawberry-shaded shield hung on the wall of evening mists is brazen now in the smoking coverall of sky ... otherwise the motorway scene twists on ahead the same, until the last dipping curve after the rise ... then finish ... lights next obtrude on a passenger's mind, beset with current preoccupations, in a pantomime-setting woodlands-glade ... the continuous arching foliage over the road given its stage-flats effect by night-time ... leafy glade lit by a succession of cars, each tyre sounding with stealth-like-tread ... one light greenish, one orange tinted, one white; all very Babes-in-Wood ... two 'gear' clad motorbike men in the lights of a garage impart a pit-stop air to the scene (surely this is near where Lawrence was killed); the garage also has a 'thirties name: Velodrome ... the anti-splash-flaps behind the car in front are an odd pair and one blows higher in longer flap-beats than the other, so transmits -- in the context of the scene just passed and thought about -- that rabbit-eared-look that 'thirties motorcyclists in side-car combinations sported as head-gear ... leather has returned as 'gear'; also copied, the shine of oilskins ...
growth rarely enough to muzz Englands' most potent land-forms, where lines of walls across the surfaces, run with, or contra-to the contours, to make dry comment on topography).

... the wing mirror has been knocked out of usual position ... the window cannot be opened to adjust it without having someone hold the cat; as all just settled, all best left peaceful and undisturbed: the driver has not noticed ... the mirror gives the passenger a vignette of brightly lit countryside flashing past, but the picture is of the opposite hedgerow and shows a whizzing fence ... continuous picture passes at such speed it seems quicker than the real fences passing behind the mirror's back ... neither is the mirror's passing related to its progenitor the righthand fence ... not to car's projectile course; but is tiny meteoric passing at an obtuse angle.

... pearly pink sky echoes the turned furrow's shine in the ploughed field ... the rays of the furrows fan ... and closing, are obscured again ... moisture form this afternoon's few drops make a continually extending viewing-distance; the sun of all the pink ploughed fields contrives to make the Plain's extent dusty pink ... something about the siting of this roundabout shows the car's occupants the sky and these sky-effects are always worthy of notice - that is, nearly always are effects - yet well east of the known climate divide ... this time, a long lemon gash in the clouds ... lumpy clouds at the other side of the motorway with rusty-pink highlights ... the natural light goes gradually ... the light the car moves through more than ever seems to have a pinkish colour although here the sky is grey and heavy, probably with rain ... car lights are meaningful now ... tail-lights have been on some time ... headlights sweeping the way for each car ... each oncoming sea-anemone of headlights tends to glare in the dusk's haze ...
OXFORD TO LONDON

... traces of straw on a field - apparently laid out for calving cows - occurs in two wide stripes down a slope sheltered by a wood all along the cant of one side...

these yellow straw distributions are eye-fixes, moving through a 35° change of direction before the wood-edge finishes the viewing of them as effectively as a drawn curtain and then - with the full density of the wood obtained - as a shutting dark door. ...

the light seems improved a mite, as if dusk begun too early some miles back ...

... Henley car sliding down a long incline between fine winter-gold fields punctuated by well shaped, full grown, specimen trees ... cypresses ... pines in the bottoms ... a fine, dipping, smooth-cut hedge accompanies on the right all the way down as far as the cemetery and the houses ...

Meat and bone only; this ink-blue pick-up container sees the car on to motorway

OXFORD TO LONDON

... the sort of evening when it is said 'Nice evening now' and everyone agrees with something akin to relief ...

a cloud of seagulls, so pretty, in tight cluster, rising, weaving, over a dump ...

car passes the seagulls swiftly after a seemingly slow approach ...

suddenly one cloud is two clouds, each so tight-packed seen this way it is a wonder such big birds do not bump each other in their wheeling ...

OXFORD TO LONDON

... light now strikes sideways at the car, a wood streaks the road with bands of late-cast shadows ... the hedgerow trees are positioned to the road so as to flicker banded sunlight into the corner of the passenger's eye ... necessary to turn the head and look beyond the driver to watch the sun and shade patterns on the other road verge: to see a sunny wall beyond deeply shaded stems ... the odd underside of leaf lit by the sunlight penetrating the woods on the left and passing over the road in spot-light effect ...

... the sun position swings round crazily ...

the visors moved not two mile/minutes ago, again adjusted as the sun now on the right; the flicker of trees passed is entering the side window opposite to that before ...

a rise in the road and to such head-on glare that neither can vision adapt, nor action be made quick enough for safety: how much is known of such seasonal hazards, either on existing roads or in judging for siting or alignment of now?

AS IN DS: 64
the car is on a road that continually curves out of sight to the left. Movement has the effect that the left bank is spun past and that the right road boundary hardly appears to be moved past. The motion of previous vehicles still disturbs the left bank's weeds. The grasses waving so, makes it seem as if the disturbed mass of vegetation is a seaweed-like fringe to some giant, horizontal wheel, on to whose outside circular track, the length of time of turning suggests the car has blundered.

The light is very good for looking at the countryside patchworked by the ripening season. Sun behind the car, rain-full-grey sky ahead; the landscape resonates in all the green-based range of tones. Before the rain lashes the road, the car travels due north, perpendicular to its usual way back, having left the way at an important roundabout. To head up 'Cobbett's Way'...

As in DS-63.
the sky-glow from the town behind
the land shows-up in silhouette lollipop
trees...

the town-shielding land behind
the silhouettes is dotted with icy-blue
street-lamp-lights and squares of
late-to-bedder's windows...

right sprouts up, beyond where
Stonehenge is known to be standing.

London to

London to

Foothill...
a dark night. headlights wind through the night seemingly without throwing beams or lighting the air. blackness complete beyond each immediate light source.

a dark glimpse of a certain lodge reminds that the road now runs for a while alongside a high brick wall. It cannot be seen beside the car tonight. only hedges make discernible the car's lights because their dusty twigs reach out to show grey against the black sky and are situated relatively near the plane the car windows describe. car catches up with a bus to become lit by its lights. forlorn and lonely look of night travel reminding of Kings Lynn to Hunstanton road: such a time of night still following a red mini.

rose coloured sky first seen through bare branches; then over a rise in the road all around a rose air that matches the early evening tail lights so that these seem perforations in the rising land ahead, or stars of the same roseate firmament.
a gentle dip, then rise on to a three-lane each-way improved road; so the route becomes an appreciation-way again (and no longer a generator of that same desperate, penned-in sensation with which the passenger is overcome when facing genre paintings incarcerated in art galleries) . . .

a long strip of the land's horizon immediately under cloud comprises little bobbles of trees in strong bluish-dark profile, forming a pretty frieze to sky-paper . . .

... now, distant countryside laid out below the sunlight in range upon range of fine trees . . .

... the late April moon's full disc hangs with its half shadowed face astir; further and further behind the left shoulder, in a grey-blue sky, over a misted, mounding landscape; face that is always cocked to its right side . . .

the passenger further and further has to twist the head to look back at the moon: after ten at night . . .

. . .

a winking light in the lap of darkness; a car is mounding up-slope, seemingly on the turf and not on the track . . .
half sky indicates a town's sodium lights . . . the moon leans forward, hanging large over the roofs of the shops under old houses that border the street out of town . . . the moon again begins its slide out of the frame of the windscreen, far to the left; the passenger has again to further and further turn to see the moon's face over the left shoulder . . . then, a swing of the English road brings the moon sharply forward to an easily seen position . . .

a long-duration curve relentlessly edges the moon forwards in the side window until the passenger comfortably appreciates the friendly face . . . but before the moon can be pressed to pass the post to be in windscreen . . . the road relents and lets it slip . . .

the moon now has a pale etching of cirrus at its back . . . suddenly - at a roundabout - the moon appears within the windscreen's frame, creeping furtively across the brow of the glass . . .

. . .
landscape today appears composed of decorative-panels, as if scenery flats one behind the other. Each shadow-profile-sheet graced by fine, distinctly disposed specimen trees. Each cut-out-plane an agreeable different shade of mist; graded, darkening towards the foremost profile. The road improved to motorway-standard undertakes a long dip in approaching this scenery and prepares to curve in a gentle right-hook to the rear of the landscape stage. Four triangular posted-signs are suddenly sufficiently large in scale due to their position forwards of all specimen trees that for a moment or two, compose to be the darkest cut-out-trees in the stagey scene.

Climbing towards this cars going, in their going north, wood-loads - rift sawn - pass without any sense of roughening the flank of this car's progression south; side of rough wood on lorry purely visual. More sweetly climbing laden lorries at a decent distance... ahead, leaf shadows fall waveringly, as large snow-flakes, on the backs of departing vehicles. To write Avenger on the back of a passenger car is not civilized - a tank in the middle-east? In England why not a sound capable of more sibilant, sylvan, country-compatible, suggestion... Elspeth?
fins of smoking tail-moisture weave outwards, swirl inwards, in rhythmical fishy motion in the wake of the lorry called POTATOES: but which carries carrots among the boxes under its blue tarpaulin

first view down the motorway - the first connection missed wondering at the number and nationality of hitch-hikers - is of receding grey silhouettes of interstitial woods in full leaf . . . .

the visibility is so bad in the low cloud dripping rain, that batches of oncoming traffic have their side-lights on . . . . the speed at this beginning is slow; the car’s engine noise, and noise of other engines passed at sailing speed, is greater than the combined tyre and splash-up noise . . . .

the motorway visually becomes an ash-track; the central-strip where smooth is like a dirt-track of the Dogs’; like runnels of a pit-heap where not smooth; occasionally varied by great tyre-ruts . . . . and vestigial ridges of weeds . . . .

the scene is grey and because of this sOMBRE outlook in the rain, where ripening fields occur at the sides - particular when they come up to both sides of the motorway - the corn appears to close-in to the very edges of the lanes; shrinking, squeezing the pull-off margin; ripe countryside welling up to the motorway until visually the margin is nothing . . . . indeed where the corn rises to
certain levels, imperceptibly mastering the level of the motorway - (never, however, up to spill-over level) - the overall width of the traffic lanes also appears to shrink . . . .

windscreen-wipers flip right and left and are looked beyond . . .

when the immediate foreground scenery is changing little, speed seems negligible, the soft springing of this car imparts at these times a sensation of floating, even of bobbing unmoving as if at anchor when scenery is of much sameness . . . .

almost the only chance to stretch the gaze - a decent long look into the distance - is to be had on a motorway . . . . the city gets more confining, the discerning pedestrian need-be myopic, as views are pierced by obtruding blocks and skylines become studded with vile profiles . . . .

it has come so that to raise the eyes is to risk seeing another developer's monstrosity breaking the homogeneity . . . .

extremely rare in England for the motorway geometry to run absolutely counter to the landscape; for there is barely enough space for it to take big strides for any appreciable distance and, in this way, play German-autobahn seven-league-boot games . . . . such as the stretch past Montabaur heading south . . . . or passing out of Germany to Liege . . . . landscape-striding means that just as a cutting is passed through all there is to be seen is sky . . . . the land has dropped away, the car skims out into space, arrowing towards another cleft which by its shallowness also seems about to launch the vehicles over the natural surface . . . .

gate lodge - obvious because of its especial side alignment to the road and basic well-building - has two Doric columns in antis . . . . the side to the road has been converted to a roadside refreshment booth . . . . by looking back, it can be seen that the old rear has had a medley of suburban metal-frame windows inserted in it; four jumbled levels of them . . . . a motel-warren for dwarfs? . . . .

the slab-sides of cows, legs stuck in the grass of the field echo in their field the advertisement hoarding erect on timber sticks . . . . seen from the motorway, the cows are also lined-up with the old turning . . . . the cows continue the line of the side-road right into the green of the field; as if tarmac had melted under them . . . . maybe - even this moment - still dissolving: a start of a disease that will eventually eat up all tarmac . . . .
the side window clogged with rain drops blots out any view. Before any attempt at hillside appreciation, it is necessary to wind down the window and wipe away those drops in reach exposed; but the line of wipe it is possible to reach proves very high. The hillside sweeps down low in relation to road in the course of the most spectacular views. The wall to the road on the left and road dips conspire to limit the number of views across the valley.
ranks of hedge-row trees and woods take on the aspect of scenery flats with which scene-shifter-verderers clothe pantomime wings and these—apparently single-dimension ranks of trees—seem to be shifted—to left or right—by the line the motorway has chosen to follow in its crossing a variety of rolling field patterns growing trees on an embankment top—the simplest example first—move left—the old beech wood, just visible as a flat-scene behind this front-scene, remains static as the car moves past a front rank of fine hedge-row trees moves fast left—marching right across a mid-distance rank of flat trees that moves left only medium fast—a wing-flap-wood false starts on their right: remains static as the car moves right past a far line of hedge-row trees races to keep pace with the moving car another example of verderer-scene-shifters-landscape a scene in which five ranks of evenly matched hedge-row trees, receding parallel to the picture-plane, gyrate to the left—quick, quick, the two foremost—slow—the rear rank gyrates right to pass left closer to the car moving forwards four hedge-rows of elms all parallel to the motorway route—the foremost moves right with the car going forward—the second rank moves left—the two rear rows also move right with the car—the motorway ahead takes a long curve left, the car rounds the curve in the middle track of three available; long white dashes move towards the car and pass either side with easy regularity immediately in front of the car, no traffic only distant traffic optically seems pulling faster away left round the curve but this car maintains its actual distance to them.

slipping down a long slope in a slanting cutting; the road continually edged over towards the left by the lie of the land triangular field's stubble leached by the weather to the concrete colour of the bridge. Thus the season contrives a blend and is abetted by sun, shining under heavy pewter skies, turning colours to limey tones planting scheme on waste ground ploughed fields pressing like rising dough up to the cut made for the motorway cars—as if on slides—go off to the left between folds, to reappear to pass over this car moving forward more
vehicles wheel in – looking more genuinely self-propelled – to join the motorway on the left . . . a wind sways the car, has it rocking gently as the sea a boat in a harbour: even in this cutting swayed . . . .

the motorway cuts a wide swathe through the countryside ahead as if it has magnificently harvested the land for its use . . . . passes over the hills and far ahead . . . . sparse occupancy by vehicles allows the three-lanes space provided to give ample room to move in . . . . the sky a low, continuous grey; between sky and horizon, a band of burnished pollution: singe-brown compared with the attendant eye-shutting glare . . . . the car moving ever forward . . . . sky to the west reads as a flatter and flatter sheet . . . . low light accentuates the verge grass . . . . motorway cuts through a wood, easier on the eye these tree-walls . . . . a ride goes off at a choice angle; on either side, tree trunks diminish into the distance to make the ride a diagram on the marvels of perspective . . . . traffic thickening: all that space for one car too good to last . . . . big containers of obvious design; maybe quality does improve . . . . a little white, open, mock-sports car, not MG, rushing along, the man in a hat sitting upright, unprotected . . . .

. . . . the oiled-skin effect catches the eye – the battledress jacket is darkness-in-folds highlighted by street-light – the back of the van is also crumpled but – in the light of well-spaced-street-lights – shows black and glistening and seemingly well-maintained . . . . the hand that opens the black door exposing the dark interior is also black . . . . in successive High Streets on the way to the destination, lights all look as if they shine better in the cold of the evening . . . . the greengrocers' trays set-out at a slope before each shop, all stocked with apples and oranges, have a festive, Edwardian, late-night-shopping 'air' . . . .

slowly down a suburban street that is a traffic route . . . . so slowly that the wind blowing the rain against the car can be heard, the progress of leaves watched as they trundle before both wind and car that moves in the same direction . . . . the pouring rain of hours – since the car went on its visit – has covered the quieter roads with leaves, but on the
busier, car wear has not left leaves pasted as they were by rain but here the wet, dead leaves are stuck only on the pavement passed . . . .
as the car goes gently, considerately, down a long curving slope, the shiny-black road shows only on vertical stripes between dominating orange vertical stripes, equal in width to each other (allowing for the perspective seen from their actual beginning) . . . and this car moves over the stripes, black, then orange, in turn . . . car slowly following the road in its swinging-turn . . . . all the way down to the very bottom where the tarmac-way ahead is suave in the bronze sodium-lights . . . .

LEAVING LONDON
BY M 4

. . . . . . circular red sun is misted over by muddy, ill-profiled obscuration . . .
the sun is low enough to be cerise . . .
after forty miles the sun’s face is clear apart form a stray wisp of mist; quite Japanese . . .
but then the sun begins to go down behind a high lying bank of murk: cars are left in the obvious pollution of all this movement

. . . . . . very flat market-gardens conspire with the straight road and the oblique icy light to make the passenger into a long distance skater . . . .

M 4 ENTERING LONDON

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . two silver tube trains endlessly drawing apart; no gap appears yet each end definitely moving opposite ways . . .
does this car’s movement towards them and their silver, together conspire to show no gap? . . . . . . long drawn out departing finally exposes a static, silver, third train at rest between the two retreating trains . . . .

OXFORD TO STOWE

. . . . . . cloud-dappled slope approached from a goddy distance . . . . . . all sense of movement arrested by slope’s anonymity, lack of scale . . . .
the grass field that black cows are in is a sewn and squared-up area emolliused in a greater wood-edged field-clearing; to very side of the cattle, grain is ripening

. . . . . . unequal rays of sunlight pierce the gathering grey clouds beyond a field part-ploughed in bands, three wide and two narrow . . .
rays of sunlight fall over a wood stop a hill . . . . . . the divides of the fields – hedges with trees – run-up the hill, and via the rays, into the sky . . . . . . when the hill first partitioned, the hedge-lines presumably aimed to converge in the top of the hill, as
naturally as a cake would be sliced
.... the field divides now seen - from some distance - on the sloping surface, appear sent-down, ordained, positioned, by the light trays in the sky; yet the phenomenon is as fleeting, as coincidental as this passing in the car at this precise moment....

.... the countryside is in its September satisfaction.... patchy black stripes are seared on fields of satin stubble.... beech clumps hang misty blue.... nearer trees's edges are seen to be touched with rust; dried are the spaced ruts of first plough cuts....

.... young elms group round a few older trees of the same common species that stick up twice as high, as if within the mass their height had some special function: as if to become masts on a copse that would be a sailing ship.... if the copse-galleon were to come crashing through hedge-billows, breasting the green foliage, what a grinding on the motorway reef....

.... the light is low, promising; shining from behind the car, flat on to house fronts.... machine-cut stumps protrude a hand-span clear of tangled grass.... a swathe of twigs lies the length of the hollow that contains the hedgerline, luxurious trimmings compared with the dead grass, belying the rank-grown hedge so recently passed.... on the motorway verge a machine holds high a giant bundle of brown twigs, bigger than Wenceslas's peasant could have carried.... bundles - awkwardly sticking out twigs - are stacked - dripping-out at cut ends - burn with a cold looking flame; several men attend.... the car has run past the whole work-operation head on in direction to how it happened.... car slows: the earth has been showing greasy due to dampness of the morning's atmosphere; slowing shows clearly that where soil meets tarmacadum is established in patches a green seaweed-like growth.... car passes through a green-trunked beech coppice; on both sides of the road, trunks green-faced; so this must always be a dank passage to move in.... the near trees swoosh past, and receding trees ever and ever slower pass.... no pattern of planting is apparent; was an original plantation cut?.... this random, close growth self-seeded?....
routes show up on the slope ahead to the right, the snow, powdery and blowing from the ploughed field into the ways, shows them up amid bare bushes and tree stumps and earth folds and furrows - were these ancient agricultural tracks, that look so assured, broad and in the right position for being old? an extra deep furrow cast open in the ploughed field, having caught and held a goodly share of the blown snow, echoes the solid white line painted in the centre of the narrow road . . . this road recedes in importance . . . white snow-lines take pre-eminence . . . running parallel thus, the plough-furrow binds the car in its moving into the landscape, into the seasonal event in the countryside . . . car movement, car being there, for a few fleeting mile-moments coherently lines-up with a landscape of ages . . . snow lies inside the woods in little thin patches, less appreciable than the wind-sweepings of bright beech leaves whose cheerful ginger makes the snow look mean . . .

the old road goes straight on - the name on the sign post like 'Erehwon' - the traffic connecting distant places - now increased to take precedence over journeys joining local places - turns this road a bend left: a garage and a grass triangle contrive to conceal the entrance to ancient nowhere-place-spelt backwards . . .

not really cold, only very damp, outside the shelter of the car, the retraction of the skin reacting to the damp air is not much mediaeval fun.

OXFORD TO LONDON . . . cars weave in steady, even-speed succession, threading through a village the constant movement clefts the village more than would as swift a flowing stream

. . . . one car moves aside, lights a red tail and turns right . . .

day-light is dying; the Struwelpeter-fingered hedges darkly, swiftly, pass behind the ears . . .
milk-chocolate-coloured ploughed fields and winter-bleached grass only discernible by combination of human eye and mind . . .
car again wheels round the bend where is concealed the entrance to nowhere-place . . .

the sky, airy grey, contains a yellow filtrant, perhaps promising another snow dusting . . .
drifts of pink-tinged-lime leaf-containers, and in one week the beech leaves have fully unfurled from traffic-greyed startpoints to strew the ground under each tree with brown husk-rice that the passing cars have swooshed-up into tidal drifts... husks light-tan against the dark ginger-biscuit - chocolate coloured where wet - of last autumn's leaves... above, tier upon tier of pale green, waving, beech fronds

in the corner of a field stands an electricity pole, grey box on a little platform out of climbing reach... some memory of this field once deliciously yellow with buttercups, luxurious to picnic in on a hot day in 1954, the jeep standing in that lane

view for miles across sunlit September landscape... although early evening, ploughs still at work... one plough - wiping clean the last traces of the harvest - moving crabwise
trees are seen in perfect leafy detail
down other people's streets to get on the main road
down the street of one of the opponents of inner urban motorways, past his house to go anywhere northwards...

the road in some landscapes moves the car around a noticeable feature, as if the car attaches by a cord to some pivotal point... the arc of such an appreciable swing of the car by the roads curving can cover a good part of a mile in open landscapes... other times the curve of a road makes the car undertake a quite meaningless tight movement; from one position amid the fields to another alignment no more topographically obvious; with no sense in the swinging of the car - either point started from or point arrived at - such roads are without deflection-sense - even in the possible siting of a medieval duck-pond, or erstwhile cottage/hovel - and have instead a capacity to breed a sense of futility: then the journey begins to nag

return to dull weather again; lumpy clouds only just avoid bumping along the horizon ground...
... the road ahead being hilly obscures itself and the view ... the upward tilt of the car bonnet focuses attention on a miniature sunlit green landscape dotted with trees that floats in the driver's mirror ... cross of canal dereliction all gone a hundred years ago; the railway system will become as stripped to the way in its turn: the last clearing up after passengers going on here ... the last dip before the levelling out of the valley bottom ...

... mysteriously, other traffic appears around, as if a flow thickening by its own osmotic process ... then autumn colours begin to be discernable ... the light turns warmer, without however a sign of a possible seepage of sunlight from any portion of the smoked, overcast heavens ... the motorway verge and encroachment trees are mostly green as the light strengthens ... trees darken ... particularly those still green become dense and so just shapes against the lightening sky ...

... with increasing glare every feature in nature becomes self-assertive; surfaces repellent: gone the curious, peering detail of first light ... the men in cabs of lorries, in cars, are no longer the watchmen of the road by night but have the vulnerable look of early risers - maybe yearning for a cup of coffee, as is this passenger ... all the light we are about to receive has penetrated to the all-about ... rain-dewed grass stalks gleam a forecast of at least a few hours stasis in the quality of light ... a rough wind noise combines with the tread of tyre on road into a blustery sound; the faint buffetting by the wind that the car receives persuades that the car might be wind-powered; borne along on the noise of the wind's energy, (the rushing air being noisier than the engine at this speed) ... the shorn verge grass shows no sign of the traffic's passing, nor the wind's power ...

the dual carriageway of the motorway can be seen ahead passing through the pincers of a thick hedge; and thus forewarned the motorway crests a pass formed by two flanking embankments ... beyond these flanks the motorway appears to drop away ... vehicles appear to pop-up on to the skyline of the other carriageway and as animated toys begin their run on the right ... the embankment flanks rise and entrain the flow forwards ... through the man-made gap and over ...
the expansive outlook from the passenger seat is chill, the overall sky overcast; the wind catching the car still blustery . . . . bracing weather? . . . . the glass windowed box of the car encourages sedentary pleasures; the passivity induced by such congenial close surroundings breeds a reluctance to leave the car's comfort . . . .

the queuing for toast, the heat of the lights, the decor, make an awful halting place: would even for Charon's boat . . . .
... glaring sky ... moist road reflecting sky glare engenders a feeling of begin trapped between road and sky ... this combines with a plethora of items on either side of road to make motorway seem dangerous, as if a road of unknown category, an improved road ... even unmeant for traffic ... lined with too-near buildings thus abrasive.

... October wind whistling as car on road passes through the Vale of Evesham at a high level ... sailing into blue of a rainclouded dusk, the whole landscape is in shades of dusk-dark-blue ... the hills ahead, a wet-blue fringed light-blue that is itself fuzzily edged with blue-grey rain

... this is the stretch of road where the idea to write this diary took hold ... Malvern Hills towards Cheltenham ... leaving Worcester ...
ASPECT 4: THE GRAPHICS OF MOVEMENT

These have many natures:

: the official graphics of signs set up along the roads and read as we 'understand' to read them.

: these same signs looked at by a passenger seduced by conditions of visibility – particularly at night – who simply sees a moving view of shapes.

: the 'signs' another vehicle's condition/position give to a driver.

: human communication: the engaging of attention, one road user by another.

: the graphics of road alignment in the landscape.

: the graphics of character of road . . . and the mutation over the twenty four hours, fifty two weeks of a year's twelve months covering four seasons in all weathers. Old roads seem 'settled' in this matter of character whereas the capability for change of certain sections of modern road might lead a passenger to suspect that the road's engineer has no long knowledge of the route, nor the tricks of micro-climate, nor sufficient interest to have travelled 'his' route to discover its seasonal weather mutations: for example to know that in the night the topography releases – as blinding surprises – the lights of adjoining activity.

. . . tonight, the graphics that would instruct movement include triangles that could be Klee's . . . the prongs of tuning forks illuminated on a background of reflective glass grains . . . two-way arrows . . . soon followed by discs, blue, with arrows, all aslant: these indications, a heraldry of the roads . . .

dotty winking lights string out . . . warn of a ditch; each light source: on-off-on-off . . . or, if two sources looked at alternately: on, on, on . . .

an overview the top of a hill of yet another town's sodium lights; spread out in the atmosphere tonight like scattered foam on a pool of darkness . . . . the car is gliding down into the depths . . . appearing out of the seeming pool's surface, pairs of white lights approach . . . . and pass in the other lane as headlights . . . this road leads straight at the town, yet there seems no way that this road might be joined to that on which pairs of more distant white lights are moving . . . perhaps three - four - five pairs of lights at a time glide, one after the other, on a continuously replenished slide . . . after some car-minutes of approach, some rightwards threading small tail lights can be seen in the near depths of sodium froth at the foot of this long hill: the connection is indicated, this
road heading downhill must turn right across the foreground and must join an upward stream of traffic that – leftward – will pass the slide of descending white headlights…

peaceful, anonymous world of motorway embankments… tail lamp-sentinels erect on the crests… here is a place of possibilities: for departing, joining, passing over, circulating where tonight nothing is moving… above… or at the sides, and we pass through and under without distraction to the washboard sound of four tyre treads on a concrete surface until the last noticed of all the possibilities… the dashes of red that demarcate the joining lane appear like tail-papers on a kite.

LONDON TO FONTHILL: night

before the start, the moon is a little, bright, sequin’d silver crescent… road intensely black… and white…

moon develops a face as it lowers… oncoming headlights only once or twice trouble despite the blackness… the expanding town seems to be developing many towers of light… no place obtrusive; even the hangers of the aerodrome on the Downs-plateau and its parasite housing soften together into little lights…

the moon brazens; becomes more an object of earth than of sky… seen from the rear, a pale blue Volkswagen, dull oval window… a late 'fifties style Volkswagen window in a shiny dark blue body… newer-still window in a shiny dove-blue body makes three in historical succession…

moon, burnished copper, goes behind trees and into mists not before noticed… slow descent of moon tonight… at the final turning, a hare, back arching, fur bristling in the dew to become like a giant hedgehog, in motions slow goes into the verge also shining with dew… the divide-line of climate is hereabouts tonight… mists in swirls by the lake require dipped headlights…

silence… the sky full of stars…

Milky Way immediately above, the Plough very big over the woods as if much lower in the sky and nearer to earth than usual… most people in bed…
... black night ...

a cluster of lit discs and triangles far ahead are a Klee of a topiary shrubbery inhabited by pairs of large fireflies that — as the car turns out of the roundabout — are seen to move swifter right than the car actually moves: fireflies remain visible at the end of the stretch of road the car moves along ... the illusion dissolves ... pairs of circular lights, finest sea-anemones in night mist, speed towards the car moving forwards ... the lights of four bunched cars show no perspective distance ... three cars ... next, five — or four - play the same primitive game before eyes which are moved towards them as the cars towards this car must advance ... hardly any discernible variation of size of light — it can barely be judged which pair of headlights is in advance, which in retard — that there is order can be assumed only by the direction of their travel and so their exact sequence guessed at by a presumed direction ... a road very full of signs ... after the shrubbery of signs, another series ... then high signs ... diversion signs ... a horizontal bar pointing left ... more discs and bars and lines ... disposed as tiny flower-edging to herbaceous-border-paths, strings of tiny white cat's-eyes run into the distance ...

'Lights' Way' leads to, and joins, 'Reflectors' Way' ... the car stops ... a starry night ... clouds shaped as trapeziums composed as of smoke — a strange effect — trying to cover the Plough and the Great Bear, as if manufactured-patches for the purpose would, on touching their intended constellations, swivel and fit perfectly to cover the stars ...
the night is damp, wet ... the car moves aside in good time to dip away left down the take-off ... at this place the lights over the motorway spread-out over the adjoining lanes ... the greater number of lights over a greater width all read as a level plane above; a golden-barred ceiling echoing the light spread on the surface of night-wet-road ... the slanting lengths of rising and falling, joining and departing lanes serve to contain the relatively close, broad, parallel planes of surface suggested by lights and surface lit ... three cars cross the overbridge so close together as to become a conglomerate of three bead-cars in a beam of moving light ... ahead in this lane a car's headlights catch the concrete of the overbridge in such a way that the bridge appears to grow, fall forwards, then wilt ... two cars following the first can do the same trick with the bridge but paler illuminated ...

some British cars at night, with their thin wheels and nondescript curves, look like suburban armchairs on the move, even to the lumps - profiled by their own headlights - protruding underneath ...

an assorted bouquet of gladiola-lights to decipher; start at the right with a large yellow shell, obviously explains itself ... leaves the bulk of the bouquet - dissolving on approach - to be analysed as being backed by an arched porch topped by two yellow floodlit gables ... these gables, together with the road-house's rectangular white sign, are already passing to reveal that standard lights - here atop the roadside wall - were seen infilling in depth ...

the road yet to be travelled lies over the crest ... the traverse it will entail is pre-beamed in the sky in light ... very precisely the exact width, the light almost insistent, winks as if to stress, impress itself ... in fact it signalled that immediately over the crest is halted a car whose young people are getting out for relief ... quite unbelievable choice of position: this car swings out at once ... had the oncoming car that signalled now been alongside, and not away over the right shoulder! ... the passenger's shoulders hunch for followers not receiving an alert, nor such momentary luck finding evasion space vacant immediately post-crest ...
innumerable lights carpet the way; white and red cat's-eyes: orange iridescent strips: all spotted on black road in the black night: all swim away before the forward traveling car.

wherever left-take-off parts from the primary weaving path,

a scatter of lights rises-up a gentle bank.

the car moves forward steadily, as if drawn forward, mesmerised by the miniature lights; magically, effortlessly moving into their beginning in the distant-ahead.

road-reflectors pass the passenger's eye on either side, with a rhythmic flick.

in effect, such a pattern of miniature light-spots takes the car flying over cities of Europe by night; across Apennine fiery rivulets of continuous villages; over the groovy clusters in A/ps, by configuration each minusculely expressive of access and terrain.

pass by air into Germany; tonight's ground could be the sooty space below an aeroplane in which lights of habitation clearly show.

such a1 of real scale related to specific form of movement becomes travel as if on a magic carpet.

...some minor abnormality within the speeding van's headlights striates the light beams; that a bright stripe flies along the ground before the van, whizzing up the next slope, accompanied by other separate and distinct beams of light either side moving very fast.

maybe light-beam quality has to do with the dew suspended in the air; for as spotlights, these headlights spear over the near, ripening, fields as cat's-eyes not much smaller than a distant oncoming car's side lights.

same indistinction comparing roadside red cat's-eyes with disappearing tail-lights over the switch-back on to the tip of the Plain.

a framed view through traffic-worn arches of grown-together roadside hedges and trees: lights beyond: a white road and its arches playing perspective games within the car's volume again, leaves only one number-plate reflecting light...
wink from the tail lights, perhaps a dip in
the road . . . . then gone: all is darkness
beyond this car’s lights . . . .
the moon breaks cloud a second, then,
skeletal against the chink of moonlit sky
left by fast-moving black cloud, by the
right roadside, a yellow digger . . . .
white on turquoise signs: how fond the
State of this colour, ever since the 'forties

. . . . the main effect of movement in the
wet tonight has been that certain
reflections of lit motorway signs –
perfectly mirrored in the wet road surface
– retreated up towards their posts of
origin; a retrieval occurring as each sign
came within moved-towards range . . . .
other upside-down triangular signs and
red signs – so sign laden are some
portions of the road – by doubling up in
reflection and losing sense of depth,
make the view ahead look like
photographs of American roads at night
. . . . reminding where more penetrable –
and as season would dictate – of
approaching Berlin’s Funkturm; the
predominance of red giving a certain
effect of Christmas . . . .
... headlights are refracted by the mist into tiny, globules that change each oncoming aura into a Seurat-in-transit this unreal fracturing of light, the gentle movement of the well-cushioned ride, somehow eats up the distance the pointilist lights manoeuvre in the darkness such sideways movements the more noticeable because of the otherwise uninterrupted steady forwards movement of all the cars now this car is holding its distance behind a constellation of ruby lights ... headlights have lost their pointilist effect, yet the miasma at road level would still pretend to bear some portent ... lit number plates, as they approach, appear yellowish in the centre and have definite hyacinth-blue tingeing towards the corners of their frames ... the car passes that immense length of hedge that takes car-minutes to pass; the car successively dips into the several deprivities of its length's distance that would take an age to walk – and be most unpleasant, the way being so confined: the southern hedge verge grown particularly close to moving traffic ... ribbons of road twist away in resemblance of blowing streamers; or as the decorative tracer-smoke from diving formation fliers: the tinsel effect of reflection-catchin-wet make these analogies apt ... this camp also a source of tiny lights – blue – red – orange – white – that out-dot the stars ... down hill all the way past ... a red tail-light in a lay-by just passed ... down at the bottom of the hill the tiny white rectangle signifying the turning shows even at this distance: a new sign no longer countrified; the old, secretive, no better than a white handkerchief ... a crude fuzzy flower of light, each other drivers' headlights are blown seeds of dandelions; love-me-love-me-not ... a very dark night ... now headlights bright dots in blackness move ... a confusing bunched group of dots ... an orange Porsche passes; traffic fast on this stretch of road – tight – weaving, busy on going – two lanes beside a strip of verge: the pattern repeated alongside, going the other way on the old road at a higher level ... then the weaving road exposes bare trees against a sky dully lit by massed habitations whose mussed glow recalls Pathé newsreels of wartime bombing raids ...
LONDON TO FONTHILL: night
two reflectors and four tail-lights suggests a car mounted on top of a trailer. turn out to be a late 'twenties, hooded, two-seater Bentley. the night so wet, the motorway visibility very bad. tube train nosing the bridge as this car passes under. raining since mid-morning. the road seems covered with water. the lights of oncoming traffic passing round their curve across this car's path cast long reflections to make-believe out-going traffic has to pass between intersections of innumerable side-roads where cars are waiting. wet all the way so far as the Bentley turns quickly out of the roundabout ahead - therefore across this car's headlights - two tall plumes, peacock feathers, waver high off the rear wheels. Bentley holds its place ahead, darting among the traffic and repassing there by its nimbleness and verve.

patches of mist cause oncoming headlights to become layers of bright mist behind the central crash-barrier whose shadow-legs against the white effect thereby stick-up in the air as well as down to the ground. cat's-eyes bulging as grooved-bobbins or Nestorian knuckle-bones. this car's headlights shine down from the hill-crest at a long line of cat's-eyes that can be seen distinctly to the bottom distance. the cat's-eyes seem new, equal in dewyness. looking back over left shoulder, the spill-out from this car's tail-lights flickers: the flare-out from a rocket. at the start of the conifer'd area, a sandy young fox gives a glance of green eyes towards the approaching car, waiting for it to pass.

latest evening time ever travelled. mice, rabbits, rats, voles, owls, in number as never before.
the roundabout has had someone with a tar-brush tracing over all its construction joints; they appear suddenly, shining black, running a track such as a dog would run nose to the ground making those inexplicable little sharp wavering

at the speed the car is going away from the roundabout, this tracing can be seen ahead, just off axis under the white dashes painted on the road.

... rays of long extending light touch objects at great distance...reaching forwards - beyond all reason - from what must be a car-front-source...then the beams of light seem to disappear...two round lights that must be moving headlights, distend, become beams; a building is mysteriously illuminated, obliterated...all is darkness...a tree now picked-out in light, shown in detail before it too disappears back into darkness...a course the movement is taking is clearly delineated for appreciable moments when comes the source, eating-up its route rapidly...light-path rapidly shortening by the tip of new darkness where must move a car...

... Gush and Dent in big plain letters, white on blue - what do they do in their mid-British-size truck...there used to be a railway arch here...car at this very spot, stopped, while the army blew it up; stopping the car only long enough to detonate: such luck to be the time the then small passenger's friend also in the car...

a winking-light-topped verge-chewer moves slowly, yellow arm crooked sideways to gnaw away the late June verge...

the rain is a drizzle now...past the half-way mark...

notice says picnic area half-a-mile, and this being England, log-stools in a withdrawn, landscaped lay-by is not what is meant...

a solid white edge, six or nine inches wide, re-marks the old worn line that ran on the kerb's edge...
... orange letters ... green frames
... red triangles ... black arrows
... red frame, gold letters ... green sign ... green frame ... black lettering ... red triangle ... a multitude of tongues ... then quicker than can be written: red; white letters; dull-green zig-zag; blue; black; small, dull-green, gold and white letters ... such a plethora of communication symbols ... successive pairs of very bright lights, the car swims left; red lamps hang over the near kerb; dipped headlights illuminate them; lanterns hang on iron rods stuck aslant in the earth-fill of the newly revealed verge ...

... heavy, new, white dashes line the road edge; their qualities can be considered because traffic only creeping forward ... oncoming, glaring headlights are hair-raisingly close to this car at the right ... a side lane offers a release, the car moves forward alone, free lighting its way in the dark ... showing trees at peace against the night sky ...

... long shadows of the central lamp-posts lie across the motorway ... as the car tacks, shadows move like giant hands of a clock, tocking under the moving car ... as the motorway bends and twists, so are received in this car, shadows of cars, bulky on tall wheel-shapes such as now the drawn-fashion in advertisements ... the other crash-barrier and further verge railing shadow-cast an endless millipede walking down the carriageway ...

... a silver stripe on Nile-green painted steel posts ... silver ribs has the long spine of lights over; this the tube train passes under ...

cut grass seen from motorway surprisingly composes into a portion of Constable's The Hay-Wain ...

... motoring lights come on as car nears its destination ... orange press-studs curve away, as regularly spaced as set out on cards ... the lit train slides behind the columns of the central-strip lamps; train front moves from right to left; train-tail and middle just visible behind trees; train stops at station; this service must be frequent to be seen so often from the car ... surely at this time of summer night the trains should be homing to their depot therefore travelling more often from left to right: or do some sleep at Hammersmith ...

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FONTHILL TO LONDON: night

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LONDON TO OXFORD: M4

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RE-ENTERING LONDON: evening

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AS IN DS, 101
shadows wipe over again and again - the rear of the pale yellow van climbing ahead . . . the angle of the way changes . . . and the road levels out, shadows pass more swiftly across the van side in a brushing-motion . . .

sun shines on the van's faded, matt surface . . .

occasionally a cloud passes in front of the sun: that kind of day . . .
dark shadows cast from trees move along the van sides to streak - off side to tail - across its back, seemingly into tail-air where constantly - this car is moving after the van - is sought the after-image - in the air - half-believed - in solely due to the very definite, purposeful movements of the shadow into the air . . .
two construction cranes painted greeny-yellow-oxide catch the sunlight and are sighted far down the motorway against a white cloud; as if their heads are in the clouds: but cranes are not that tall . . . not at all really tall by the time travel on the motorway brings the car to passing them . . .

the silver tube train is just disappearing behind bushes over to the right, as if it had been waiting to see and is just sneaking-off . . . gleaming, gathering . . .

the view under the bridge expands upwards, the area of sky increases; the bridge seeming to rise up, stretch on its supports . . . the bridge appears to advance towards the car, the car then is free to move towards and under the bridge . . .

the silver tube-train moving near its bridge . . . motorway standard lights dipping under the silver train; then rising up the fly-over beyond . . . the gleaming, lighted snake moves across the bridge over the motorway and everything in sight takes on a semblance of movement . . .

today so wet, part of the way back as if driving in clouds . . . by late, wet, teatime, rectangles of shining telegraph wires are starred by the preceding headlights to stars and stripes . . .

notices, signs, tree trunks, all wet in the headlights . . . the rear-lights of car-rumps, the back of heads - 'is that a girl?' - who can tell these days? . . .

around the shapes the windscreen wipers clear, the rain drops do not move; stay merged in crackle-paint texture; in their standing depth are marbled glass . . .

looking sideways, there is no sign of fine rain raining; only the surface of things passed bear an oiled sheen . . .
through the very wet looking torrential rain, a selection of orange and glaring white headlights approach... which sampler proves not to be a traffic trend

leaving Henley cars turning right in a nasty manoeuvre - crossing the oncoming traffic to dip down a lane - block this car's way; to get past on the left and away from the scene of potential trouble, mounting the pavement... up the wooded hill where rain beats down so hard it seemingly passes through the trees above without blurring the beat of drops striking the roof of the car... probably grubbily washing pollution off the leaves back on to the cars and the road... although under the trees all the way up the hill, necessary to use the high speed windscreen wipers... the blockage circumnavigated has formed the oncoming traffic into a queue this far back; with a red Volkswagen's kindly lights last... the oncoming headlights throw sideways towering shadows of window frames belonging to the car ahead of this; its speeding shadow starting on the washed curb face... the headlights in this rain are light-direction-bands... kerb faces all shine in the wet... telegraph poles, treacle black - lope past - forwards they carry the eye but backwards wetly hop... wires movingly gleam, and streak, depending how watched... headlight beams from approaching traffic joining the road on the left, stab into a sky misty with falling rain... a girl in a maxi-coat waits at the start of a roundabout surely miles from anywhere... rain creating a ground mist now; effect as if the road surface hairy; this upwards thrusting mist is a splash-up of dross... rain slackens to drizzle sometimes but always condensing to bigger splashes before deluging down again in strength... dreadful visibility - fast, faster ticking wipers... oncoming headlights in the two opposing motorway lanes haze like glow-worms: all glare pleasurably lost... passing lorries cause splash-ups to rise as wraiths about their double rear wheels... only one - yellow - oncoming light in sight as if all others washed away... car rocking over cat's-eyes... lorry going past - doing 70 m.p.h. in the wet-skinned fast lane - nervous making, even allowing for the known slight inaccuracy of this dashboard's speedometer...
dense cluster of oncoming lights; on our moving forwards found to be evenly set out as a string of naked white bulbs distancing out the long curve. In the semi-circular patch wiped clean in the drizzle-masked windscreen can be seen a diagonal line that moves around, from being at one o’clock to rest at five o’clock. then back, from five o’clock - one-thirty - to rest at two o’clock,...

approaching fast a blue flashing light, and an orange... going to an accident?... for all this lot of cars over the centre divide move slowly - virtually stationary as this car passes swiftly back down the forming queue... that moves slowly here,...

in the semi-circular patch wiped clean in the drizzle-masked windscreen can be seen a diagonal line that moves around, from being at one o’clock to rest at five o’clock. then back, from five o’clock - one-thirty - to rest at two o’clock. A car with one low light... a few with side lights only... only the Volkswagen lights have a gentle regard for watching passenger... one yellow side light... two cross-eyed orange lights... slit-eyed yellow... another one white... must be twenty minutes worth of hold-up... lights dance in never ending line... the crash-barrier-rips shine beyond the upwards pull... beige ground water thrown-up by taxis... both at the left side... billowing around their flanks and tails, seemingly into the nose of this car... lorry speed-boatting away on road water... in rain, lights rise and dip and dip and rise... orange dashes go far before into the night... traffic stopped... car, which would have made the quarter to seven promised return, now waits: bus lettered Hindhead crawls on left; creep-up, creep away; infron over both rear wheels hangs a shining wet orange flap... the oncoming traffic goes happily past to join its accident queue (or in ignorance of its clearance)... car jammed against the centre crash barrier, a car before with tail lights dinted... the egg-shaped roundabout is laid out before the road’s gap in the full-grown beech-clump... approached this bright morning, the distant view moves across the gap like a scenic-strip... as if by a mechanical device an extraordinary length of landscape so passes, before the car’s final rounding of the roundabout’s curve closes the view... obliteration of the view before the car makes the last turn, left, to face the entire length of view, gap framed... then the car thrusts into full exposure to the view... ‘Suppose this is the real beginning of Salisbury Plain for us, as you see it at this gap’...
sodium-lamp lanes open-up, speed apart, and free the car from close proximity to oncoming traffic. endless pretty jewelled snake, bending, descending to penetrate the city.

overhead lights string together into a mounting, dipping curve; passing through itself. orange coloured dashes in retreating perspective like some two-by-two flight. on the right, oncoming traffic headlights: all is animation composed of lights, orange and white that sparkle and flash.
discernible against a same-grey background, under such overbearing skies the white painted dashes at the sides to roads dot past busily, annoyingly...

alternating light and shade of summer day and heavily leaved roadside trees... sunlight - allowed by withdrawal of verdant shade - passes across a van's back as it travels some way ahead... sudden withdrawal of shade, frequently repeated, makes it seem each time - at a glance - as if the van shunts sideways: the van's dusty surface, glancingly sunlit, makes it appear as if the bulk is made of some material other than sheet metal; perhaps felt?... flock paper?...

the broad green band on the double-decker bus combines with the advertisements to make the bus appear to either have a wide-hipped bustle or to be towing a windowed box... the tall hedges to the left appear to have bleached amazingly, or be splashed by some outside force so that the splashes die-out towards each bush centre...

a gesture made out of the car in front - to the right - is darkly seen in the night before its purpose effects a marvellous explosion into a comet of red sparks... a tobacco firework...

the evening star behind the left shoulder now joined by another... then another... yet also to the left a last remaining lucid glow on the horizon; a result of two days' wind clearing the sky. soon - in car time - tree-lined stretches show the sky blue, continuous in the gap above... car running with ever so many bobbing cars, following down never-ending serpentine roads in the night...

the kerb line gleams white... stripes, dots, or continuous lines of the centre indicate various silent instructions, or directions... occasionally there are staccato slowings and among these cars: no knowing why this far back from the originating impulse...

two milk lorries in succession, their drivers must get fed-up with nights such as this and still a whole summer to be driven through... the milk lorry in front proves to be again two on being passed...

ruby lights cluster and shimmer at the far end of the road's perspective... as a trick of sight they can be seen as being no farther away than the nearest vehicle...
but then the orange centre of lights with two attendant side-levels, together give away the perspective game that now curves in the air.

right and left, and right; and snaking left, an aerial galaxy that includes the lights of cars although this car still running on the ground, tyres thrumming over the ribs of concrete.

lights seem to willfully swing this way and that as if toying with the road's direction, playing with the cars to see them go.

an old Be Ro van: a touching dirty ghost from the thirties brings to mind the long gravelled walk between brick walls parallel to the colliery line at Shields.

... an old Be Ro van: a touching dirty ghost from the thirties brings to mind the long gravelled walk between brick walls parallel to the colliery line at Shields...
... the cat's eyes - two per setting - contrive to throw-up a single vertical beam of light in the night; both eyes are very brightly distinct yet only this one wand of light stands up a metre high at each setting before seeming to slightly bend over to the right; the light-wands bend at their diminishing, as if in a breeze, or become the tip of a reed in nature that grows so ... the effect is not in the windscreen; for whether the car travels in the left hand lane or the right, fast lane, or is moving right or left between the two, the thin reed fence is there ... on such a damp road surface, black and distinct and clear of traffic, these wands can be seen diminishing in height with distance ... the fence of wands is particularly evident when the nearest other car is so far ahead that its lighting of the road's surface is not visible and only the red spots of its tail show that a vehicle is there, ahead ... ...

... the car moves into dusk as though darkening tonight was a tangible happening effected by means of an additive to the air ... a tree appears like a tall bird, the kind that nod-drinks over a glass of water - strange never to have before noticed, either tree-bird or the companion group of trimmed trees, an odd ensemble, all shapes toparian - the thick enclosure of the air makes them visible, provides a back-drop to this weird, would seem Elizabethan garden (which traditionally can be appreciated because of the surrounding hedge); normally here, the Plain dropping away behind the bungalow, makes the topiary wholly unremarkable when moved past ... roll right, then left, rhythmically; just as each car in sight ahead had imitated the car it followed ... the headlights now on illuminate a beam of mist ... sign-lights at the last but one roundabout strode away and over and down the hill to the next junction ... miles from any dwelling so much power is used; this seems wrong in principle ... nearer come the road-lights - slowly - massively - horizontal ... great beams already in the falling natural light downward-shining on grey vapours after a hot day and clear zenith ... a pair of triangles stick up ... followed - over the hump - by four more ... In the misty air, just here, how tall the overbridge supports look tonight; concrete legs made taller by vapour make a viaduct of the simple overpassing ...
ASPECT 5: THE PRIVATE ROOM ON WHEELS:

The car is operative in all moods of the European climate, day or night.

To be within one’s own surfaces, with one’s things, perhaps enjoying a picnic seated in armchair comfort, looking at a view we chose, when we choose… this is the freedom given by technology, satisfying the delicate balance between togetherness/apartness, our sensibilities have been affected by our use of our ‘room on wheels’ but also, there comes a new awareness of the responsibilities inherent in our comfortable view of just anywhere. Our idea of quality of place, our will to bring through quality in all things, these should also be affected by our possession of a cell of perfected technology.

... heavy rain in patches....

such a changeful night; on dry stretches of road the car window becomes coated in chalk dust that a drizzle later rinses as milk down the windscreen....

heavy rain leaves oil-shine on the windscreen....

then there are – and have been – patches of visible mist; in one case brownish, however, allowing tail-lights to show clearly at distance....

dry now again, dirty after wet slicked roads....

weather forecast changeable conditions; nothing said of mist patches....

here has been wet, the car throws water aside; fresh rinsed hedgerow branches show in the headlights clean ash colour, or rich brown....

... a black wet night.... wet on the road, turned steam-like by movement, surrounds this car.... faster faster....

tock.... tock.... tock ....

the windscreen wipers try to best the amount of rain....

black night allowing only white rectangles to show outside the wet glass....

circles of light in red.... or white.... those in the car are cut off from all except lights passed in blackness and wet.... white dots on gate posts, and tiniest points of light....

white lines....

upright arrows....

only wiped-slates of signs beyond swishing lines of reflecting rain on black of night....

tungsten-coloured rectangles - cut-outs without depth of lighted windows - although known to be near the road, in the dark and wet are made remote....

might as well be riding in a train, so cut-off in the moving car....

things-seen are passed-by on the other side of a barrier of rain....
LEAVING
LONDON
VIA AIRPORT

... journey-time gives time in which to recover and tonight's spirited atmosphere would pretend it could support a body ... while the air about is visible by being clouded, still thicker air hangs in patches, in 'chaise-longue' drifts ...

as the car passes, some ground-level-light belonging to the airport searchlights-up into a dense column of whitened air ...

It is also a wet night ... surface water looks dangerous as the car joins the second motorway ... maybe because the car joins at slow speed ... the wet surface glistens ... wet shines evilly with great depth on the shoulder, smooth black tarmac undisturbed ... as the motorway actually starts at point joined, any surface water is not shifted as it would be by speeding traffic ... an adjoining car, in moving ahead quicker, speed-boats away on this car's right ...

... excess moisture cloudily supported in the air all around tonight ... cars' headlights are softened ... some have great swansdown-muffs of light ... others mere glow-worms hardly moving towards the moving car ... depending on the angle of oncoming, headlights can play searchlights ... car windscreen-wiper needs oiling; it gives a single short squeak ... bleeping sound ... the red reflecting-strips on posts to left ... white reflector-strips on posts to right ... white cat's-eyes dot ahead ... the sound of tyres running on concrete is a runway sound ... the car's speed in relation to both lights and sound is just balanced for starting the run to take-off ... the bleep as signals ... green cat's-eyes indicating ingress/egress happen to complete the illusion ... yet the car never takes-off ...

... after a rest, the windscreen-wipers have a two-beat squeak and no illusion signalled ...

... the air here opaque in regular puffs to the left of the headlights as if blowing back from some engine and the passenger looks curiously at the rear of the car just ahead for collusion in the phenomenon, but none ...

... here the air is steadily thick ... the other lane, vehicles are joined by their beams of light laid evenly along the road from vehicle to vehicle ... a rabbit, motionless ... shows how mild it is ...

... climbing headlights light the sky; they beam upwards showing, as in stencilled
profile, the bushes that this new lane - bifurcated from the old route - retained as central reservation... the pit of light to the left is glowing orange... second rabbit, facing left this time, yet again on the left verge, motionless... those in the corners of the back seat are respectively folded in laughter and incensed by the stuffing-up a trouser-leg - by the now surprised middle one - of an extremely sticky paper... 

the red cat's-eyes and the white cat's-eyes not in phase, maybe deliberately... the two rows measure-out their set intervals and pass severally to the sides of the car without a strobing effect... third rabbit, eyes red... car hitching perceptibly as it picks-up speed on the wet surface... down-lighters on their poles resemble a circus big-top in the night... strange... Stonehenge that - in the 'thirties - attracted unscreened army camps - in the 'seventies' gets these oversized lights (and more and still more tasteless blocks accrued to army camps) ... are the older religions still combatted by newer cult-rites?... short of the down-light, a new road texture in stripes alternate matt and shiny... this car is moving over the first of applied unreflecting surface... It is square... next patch is the original shiny-surface road-tarmac... twice more this lane only treated, as...
if the authorities blaming this lane; yet the one observed accident happened in north to south traffic and the last distinctly-seen-ahead accident totally unabated on an otherwise empty crossing . . .

shining eyes? . . . something crouching to the right? . . . a stoat, winter white, leap-dives-up into the left verge-bank . . . a lot of animals about tonight . . . shows how touching the weather is . . .

car blown to a wobble now and then on the long downwards slope . . .

up in the clouds again . . .
dark green van slewed across the road . . .

no lights, no sign of life, yet one . . . senses no accident . . .

even when the car slows, approaches, right up to the van’s nose . . .

the sign for the turning shows-up in the middle-distance, suspended - as far as a stranger might gauge - in mid-road; a ghostly square, fluorescent in the centre-depth of a dark vale . . .

... a man is calmly sitting looking the other way in the darkness . . . no acknowledgement, no interest, no signs, no excuse . . .

... warily this car creeps past the van’s nose . . .

LONDON TO FONTHILL: night

silence; mid-distance movement observed from an unadopted lane, the tungsten yellowed trunks of trees discreetly acting as a screen: comforting, such privacy from the traffic . . . the single concrete lamp standard - cast, smooth concrete - has faceted edges, a Paestum entasis, a number in black in the middle of its height . . . the light falls down the concrete, swiftly: ample light for those in front and privacy valued more than adequacy in the back (besides, not being able to see their chips might make them value their miracle of sight)

... fronds of ivy hang down decoratively, recognisable, yet at the same time marine . . . the wind - fate evening style - moves the fronds: (It is chill out of the car) . . . the traffic belts past unceasingly, at a lower level than the car rests concealed . . .

LONDON TO FONTHILL: night

... armchair comfort, rushing along through a black velvety night: head of passenger nods involuntarily with the movement . . .

the night changes before the on-rush of the car - the next mile is sky-lit by sodium-lamps - the following mile returned the night to natural black
yet another mile gone-by shows a township of lights laid out as it seen from a train: the sort of viaduct's view of French towns of an evening: deserted town-centres slightly to be pitied from remembered damp chill of northeast childhood-waits-for-buses.

the bus dips by with a kneading motion, slipping effortlessly past those sitting eating fish and chips in the car, front tipped towards the main road, parked at right-angles to both the road and the slip-road just pulled-off... the night is velvety black and because of the cold, the lights in the sky are bright and large... scatter of lights among trees repeated by a scatter of lights above... as if the army camps went up the sky and over and all about... the road here empty and the car picks-up speed... a little animal moved pointedly along the verge undetected by the headlights; at some speed too, for watched a car-moment; so fixedly along verge line, what attracted it so? made concentration so vital compared with hiding in the grass? towards a goal rather than away from an enemy? an animal dusty grey, pale under-body almost beige... owl now parallel to car on the right, files steadily to remain seemingly in a fixed position relative to the car for appreciable moments: the animal with galloping feet is a good half mile past therefore can bear no relation to what the owl is about in the same direction... tonight the high hum of moving-forwards is a combination of wind noise and road throb, heard unadulterated due to silence in the back seat: given up tormenting the prisoners in the box on wheels... dirty snow on the right verge appears, top folded in: then not another scrap for a while... occasionally a dirty dusting in some roots: insulated above a bed of beech leaves?... but otherwise it would appear as if too liberal use of salt has bleached the verges' vegetation... old snow again on the right verge, yet surely facing south? sound blows cold enough to cause a shiver... if it had been cold two days ago, or three before the snow, then it would have been worth the bother to carry back the sledges...
approaching traffic lights-up two head-and-shoulder silhouettes as in a lantern show; the rear window that screens them is a little rectangle of light on a black surface, black space... the motorway so straight that distant retreating and oncoming lights seem motionless... that these lights do not change position relative to each other, nor to this car, would thereby suspend this car static in blackness... but white dashes pass to the rear on either side with steady regularity....

the car stops in the wet... the use of the back of the Citroën handbook to make notes for the car's next check-up reminds of wait to see the Turbo-train at Évreux... must be the paper that reminds, something French in its surface... or was the passenger in that yard asked to make a note on maintenance at a similar time of early evening?... or has this place, with its high level station, a proportionate ample bareness of yard that the other station had?

... afternoon sun beats down... a time of day the car rarely travels unless inadvertently caught while heading North on a day journey; during the best parts of the day, the car is intended to be stopped at desirable places: cheating the occupants somehow to be driving in sun

LONDON TO GREAT STONE RACE: summer day

Tisbury
wooded land rises in the background. Beech fronds fringe the foreground. A beech trunk has been holed by humans as if by shrapnel to the leftside, a picture-book white-stake fence bears on its illuminated white surface a continuous movement of shadows of tree trunks, running towards this car as traffic moves past.

chestnuts' leaf frizzles normal for this time of the year. Already an autumn quality of light. 23rd said to be the first day of autumn - quite passed until now, not a spell for months spent in this car.

LONDON TO FONTHILL

where said to be the first day of autumn - quite passed until now, not a spell for months spent in this car.

a trip to site. A trip to ice....

the car waits stationary; outside it, pointed triangles of red white and aubergine on nicely straining strings flutter in the noon wind; the sunlight bright enough to decorate the stone facade with a duplicate of fluttering dark triangles, even more precise of edge and sharp of point; wriggling shadows lines over two village shops stretch in A's from dormer windows to facia boards, span the pennions all of a flutter over roof slope, via gutter, to facia.

The Beckford Arms

two beech leaves bowling along on their paper thin rims come racing towards the car as an October welcome. Beech leaves flying almost horizontally, far out over the field which slopes down at a far steeper angle than the angle of the leaves' descent all the vegetation in view goes gradually grey with the accumulation of fog some bare trees, so wrapped in ivy to their very cuffs, reach out twiggy fingers.

rain sometimes a relief in that it limits possibilities and makes sense of being sedentary in the car, which as a refuge from the elements is an incredibly civilised, comfortable, place to sit.
to be pointed at so soft an ethereal atmosphere produces a rococo sensation of drifting-up... on the top of the Plain; air so milky and iridescent as to be glory-come-upon-us...

into an elm-arched way, formed by passage of traffic... the darkened view shows thin sheets of sunlight falling; an open texture of the road's surface by the sun's striking low-angled, faint lorry smoke; framed ways worthy of matt-printing on creamy, deckle-edged photographic paper, German-'thirties'-style... the speeding lorry - the car moves-up to pass - bounds and rocks - small letters on cab-door read Rockingham... fields are displayed in depth and distance is established by trees definitely positioned in receding planes... speeding cars pleasantly glint...
sometimes the journey-time interminable, as if the road adhesive
such glutinous journeys — nothing rational to do with traffic or weather — tarnish the ideal of the goal. another time can be as simple as this return journey: the car slips into progressing so fast as to be well on the way before anyone could have looked around once, or twice, to appreciate the view or note the season. this season is urging the vegetation towards greater green and cowslips a particularly fine line of pines shows well agains spring ploughing on chalky ground then the line of pines rises and hackles to a crest as it is moved past one day of hot sun — journey undertaken — and the windscreen is splattered with green marks. here by chance the notebook centre has been used by a back-seat passenger to draw a car game.

to be going home to someone means the car is not simply aimed at a target but some pull is exerted on the meaning of its movement. very particular, emotive, seasonal quality of the countryside viewed in passing conspires with the car's being weighted down at the tail, heavy with apples, whose faint perfume penetrates the car-space sufficiently to bring Keats' lines to mind.

dropping-out of the mist just wrapping the higher ground, some fine conical shapes ending a line of trees; pure shapes, sporting the pale grey and smooth side of geometrical models; their pretense at absolute solidity convinced at by the obscurring quality in the far air. approaching nearer, the outline becomes hairy. then, fine twigs, in minute detail; the end tree is close. the is row seen in contiguous depth — a moment — before the car is passing down the length. the usual micro-climate pattern is of high ground clear of mist, each drop in road level taking the car swimming in misty hollows; this day, the pattern reversed to produce — a few feet higher in the Plain — a much finer snow dusting; a sparkling, even texture, as to seem an applied, artificial, make-believe; Santa-in-Arcade effect.
sound of air blowing in the car vents is a similar sound as air into the cabin of an aircraft on take-off: the car might well be up in clouds for it passes into mist quite obscuring sight of either side of motorway’s swathe of going mist thins, vision returns – but further surprises – for the land has dropped away either-side of the motorway now each side rises-up a flattened, lying back slow-rising akin to the movement of an Indian Dancer’s palm-up gesture a land-giant arousing from slumber

the car starts back as the sun begins its lighting of windows in the old mushroom field – that until this year, for years, has been ploughed – the grass to walk-in is wet chill to the feet no luck the earth has a good way to go to warm-up after last week’s rains the sun sinks red as car progresses the dusk is dusty, fogged with a mauvish shade after a mile or two the grass on new verges – this year’s sowing – lies newly cut; all perfect, identical stalks the air thickens almost in the time of noting – perhaps dew quickly forming one field of fires burning the straw the air above the field is pink there could be some road-mist this evening with all this damp

the natural land frontier shows in hard blue-grey profile but for too short a time to both appreciate and sketch did a horse drawn coach’s speed allow an impression? was a coachman any more stoppable? a weekday, 50 lines of washing blowing in the really cold-looking wind, contrasting, with the snugness of a glass-viewing-box-on-wheels sunlight touches the farthest ploughed-lands that are dusted so faintly, evenly, with powdered snow as to have taken on the look of distant rolling, glistening sands over-bridge after over-bridge, what a busy life this commuter’s suburb lives: New-England-style
... absolute stillness of elms in full foliage, without a tremble, as if on this early summer morning not a breath of air disturbs.... thick hazed air further preserves the stillness.... the car climbs-up into this immovable air caparisoned with the moisture from heavy dew in the act of rising after the night.... car nose tilts-up towards the muzzed hedge edging the horizon and bordering the road ahead.... a very bright morning.... bright glare, sun hot: too hot too early.... early hot sun has gone.... a single white light in the countryside.... the quiet of activity ceased contrasts with the continuous noise of this car's motion....

... fast moving, all lanes into and out of the city - no sign of blockage - maybe this a phenomenon of winter.... now the car is evenly running, held in check by a sports-car running parallel with a police-car full of hats.... cars try to pass, then each driver spots the pace-maker and falls back.... putty-coloured police-car pulls on to the hard shoulder under a bridge and instantly sports-car pulling ahead quite fast; all cars pick-up speed, no pretense of getting out of sight although daylight still.... a lay-by-a-glisten with glass cubes from a broken windscreen....

... a beautiful, subtle afternoon to be out in: regretfully enclosed in a car.... except on a magic carpet there is no way to conceive of motion enjoying the petal-softness of such an afternoon.... others are in a hurry to be on the move.... five fir-cones in hand the only tangible evidence of place visited.... the early evening sun-sink-air is rushed through hair, so pushing it into a role, an early 'thirties character, quite unlike itself.... occasionally some specially stressed feature of the landscape, or agricultural process, impresses itself through the open window.... for example; a field of green drying grass is being turned over.

Fonthill to London: summer morning

London to Oxford

Oxford to London

Oxford to London

Oxford to London

Oxford to London

As IN DS: 123

[Image of fir cones]
and, very visible this year, a cloud of pollen rises behind the machine doing the turning — another example; the car rushing, window open, through a beech wood, the shaded, tree-contained air passes in something of its character by both smell and temperature change —

stop for quadruple stamps; whether simply its start not noticed, or stopping coincided with its start — (strangely enough, memory suggests such a storm started here as amazingly before) — heavy spots splash in the open window immediately; not sufficient to need total wind-up protection but the driver re-enters quickly — is this another of these places on the weather-change line that hangs pendulum-wise from the Pennines? —

on the move again, the rain strength suddenly is forceful, as if a hose turned on, a second-speed windscreen wiper class of instant monsoon — a crash of thunder — the road here already narrowed by a swill-out from the gutters —

then, as through a waterfall, there is no longer downpour, no gutter spread; only summer-hard drizzle: vision returned as instantly as that; sunlight shining from behind, almost horizontally must be a rainbow somewhere —

...a big bear has — some journey previous to this — been drawn on the note-book page; or was it intended to be a person with round eyes and a black blob nose? ... air still warm ... traffic fast; free in both directions ... the window wound up but not fully closed either roars or whistles in passing air —

landing aircraft leave visible paraffin-plumes in their wake —

silver tube-train lurks among the hawthorn bushes for the signal —

polythene wrapper on the fly-over is mysterious, why a bandage on this section? —

there is no sunset to speak of ... red to crimson-lake discs have been the pattern lately ... the air coloured pink-grey ... the traffic would appear to float on the narrow fly-over in such light ... —

... the trees wave so the air must be moving outside ... black crows stand about in ploughed furrows; shiny liver-coloured furrows dwarfing crows to pretty blackbirds ... the engine noise drops to a hum; bicycle-suburbs slip past ...
unless a more desirable tight schedule to be met . . . . this time the car should have been parked an hour and a quarter already as a picnic larder: but this traffic is jammed together . . . . car made some headway by following other cars – hatted creations and grey toppers on the back ledge – up the margin . . . . a lorry of sand for the widening made the best progress this way, no one dared risk a metal to metal confrontation to gainsay passage . . . . which reminds that some blue lorry has given the top of this car’s bodywork a blue gauge sometime during the last ten days . . . .

the car travels in such strong sunlight, those screens of roadside hedges normally impenetrable can be seen through as if just a bead curtain; the space beyond lies in such bright sun as to show clearly through . . . .
car gently bounding over to the expensive car park, over the sort of ground the Stones will be pulled across . . . .

grass looks slippery but undulations must be considerable for this car to be loping so . . . . a rope down the slope between the cars noses and the track for the race . . . . picnic very late after first inspecting the Stones to be pulled . . . . nearly everyone else taking a post-prandial . . . .

. . . . balloon rises continuously, retreating up the long slope to the horizon . . . . the quiet . . . . the visible smoothness of travel . . . . the easy pace makes one yearn for the return of Zeppelins . . . .
polythene sack patchwork on top of all a farm’s stacks; farmer does not trust British climate any more . . . . fated to see fêtes today . . . . so tired, that even for a look-see at the Vicarage garden the car cannot be stopped to help with £2000 urgently needed for last three years at least . . . . besides, our prize-winner has measles and is not fête-worthy . . . .

STONE RACE TO FONTHILL
LONDON TO FONTHILL: winter night

... high up in the windscreen, cattle-eyes, ruby reflectors from the hill-side known to be ahead....

... stars very clear, and vision seems to see through their constellations in depth....

... Inn sign still lit, so not so late as deserted roads indicated: five cars nose to wall like a row of work-horses....

... been hedging, all very neat, the greyness shorn away and the underlying brown exposed....

... in all that has been seen can be sensed the lowest point of the year....

... visibility has closed right down; yet looking at the ground that passes at the car's window sill, the dead grass is gold with moisture, the bracken russet....

... now alongside, pine tree skirts, a washed green; birch stalks white but stained as if by soot in the moist air....

... apart from these near, resonant, signs of nature, all is shrouded in obscurity....
the depth of the empty conduit provoked passenger nerves during parking... more so moving off, for front wheel now known to be half-over the edge....

verge glistens coldly but teatime sun passes a touch of warmth through the window on to those inside the car....

the sun goes in... haze brazen... in the distance sunlight rays down; is seen against brown clouds; upper sky naval-camouflage grey... is the ginger-tinge air-polution?... an image of the city's in the sky?....

forwards car movement enforces a formal pose as for a portrait, except the passenger is both the sitter and the one who sees the composition framed in the windscreen....

... snow marking the rolling countryside as to the whereabouts of each hollow, each ancient grooved way, or cattle-homing: the snow marvellously shows these could-have-been-workings on the turf surface....

nearer houses, lines of sledges run long courses and in those places there are shovelled spoil heaps, some quite spewed over by road-crud: splash-up of industrial disgustingness....

the cold air outside the car has the disagreeable edge of north-east-winters... the radio telescopes are included in the tree fringe of the flat land as if giant clipped trees... a grass covered mound by the roadside.... there is not much to see, the land so flat, the distance seen is not far.... some bent back hedgerow bushes where a tree has been felled....

car should be back in the home-street by today's nightfall; the days are lengthening although down-cast skies have been suggesting day's-end all day....

now remembered as the car returns - oily crows in groups of three at their work on ploughed and sown fields - groups of birds flying probably include some of the crows observed earlier in the day, now homing for the night....

cores of snowmen identify public-parks: trolls among thin stemmed trees....
the air khaki coloured; even twenty years ago this would have been a horrible pea-souper. . . . the moon is beige, the air just cold enough to raw any starting inflammation of the mucous membrane . . . .

the whole of the city has taken on late nineteenth century monotones . . . . the river blueish-khaki . . . . the Houses of Parliament brown . . . . globes of light dot away and each illumination streaks the surface of the river greasily . . . . two barges . . . . hardly any movement of the water to disturb the reflection of the embankment and bridge lights that together bobble-trim and fringe the oily water . . . . reflections fanning by the car’s passing . . . . visibility very good considering the air so heavily coloured.

movement is a throw-away . . . . this part of the route last night traversed and by chance will be covered again tonight; no way of saving anything of movement, the accomplishment not something of which anything can be salvaged.

car exhaust would add to an unbearable atmosphere if earlier morning visibility even one tenth of last night’s . . . .

thin wire stems . . . . white lights . . . . some birds walking a ledge behind a conveyor-belt-casing . . . . necessary to look again to convince that the movement belongs to the birds . . . . not the conveyor . . . .

when the sky is exposed to any extent, the sun is a flat blush-pearl disc, the atmosphere smoking over its target as if swirling out from some source . . . .

water as on yesterday’s foggy evening all monotones . . . . a disc shines at the end of a long moist road . . . . the air is misty thus creating a very Japanese scene . . . . ‘moon rising’ turns out to be a sign illuminated by the long throw of car’s headlights . . . . turns out to have a X of St. Andrew’s on it . . . .
... passenger looking out of the front glass ... road edges dotting, fence posts dotting past ... car so heavily steady, looking could be out of the front of a diesel engine ... this car today maintains that same rolling gait remembered of steam traction, Newcastle to Edinburgh; that same muted, staccato, twitch as in passing Eyemouth and up past the change of earth colour to beyond Dunbar ...

... each car moves in its own little white cloud, visible against the grey road so all traffic is Baroquely speeding heavenward ... in ghostly air the embankments and fields are golden-tinged with ripening grasses studded with ragworts ...

... a strip of grey-blue begins to break the blackness ... grey light increases slowly, its sodden edge looks awful ... onward movement is towards a dawn-fringe of mediaeval misery; it is necessary to recall reality to disallow the skin's cringing ... the car allows dry clothes; provides the support of gently bounding, soft, felt-covered foam ... has warm air seeping from vents; the window de-misted ...

... the car is stationary, on a track surrounded as far as the eye can survey, by surging green acres of barley ... skylarks rise ... it is the season of wild roses, bladder campion ... patridges appear, search the field-track's ruts awhile, pass back between the stalks without any apparent disturbance of the poppy studding surface, sibilantly green, under an extensive, washed-out sky ... barley-heads tossing as if in a fury to be ripening, waving en masse as if to be reaching up taller ... blue-green stalks uphold grains of a yellowing that is not altogether a result of dayight, for the green whiskers are flushed with russet ...

... two lads, one in a camouflage hat and jacket, walk the road behind carrying guns ...
... tired passenger staring fixedly straight ahead, the mild sky is a lookable-at grey without glare... settling down for a long winter's drive

Hampshire Wiltshire Border

... fine rain against the windshield... such a distillation of moisture must descend out of the air onto anyone walking in the countryside this late evening; fine moisture ever so gently touching the face

Fonthill to London: A303: late evening summer

... immediately the car joins the road it would seem as if every car is trying to avoid the others by travelling late in the evening... virtually a queue, swift moving, well disposed as only in summer... a continuous stream on the road - almost always avoided before - car crawls, most drivers are fairly cautious... determined to get there intact

wind has cleared the entire horizon to expose magenta and burnished-blue sky behind the left shoulder: such as favoured by illustrators of Early British Settlements... ploughed land reads as pale cream rectangles in a grey-green landscape in the barely remaining after-glow... the lighted petrol stations very bright... the sky turns summer-evening-blue, red tail-lights shine their brightest... the long swing of the car, precisely following the road-curve, a lovely movement in this make of car... empty bus, rocking nose to tail with its good pace; so full of cars is the road, the bus has taken all this time to catch this car stopped in the petrol station... the evening star very big... summer-night sky-light only sufficient to show tarmac lolly.
a very complicated art-work covers page so densely the page has to be passed over (the finely drawn bear - or black-nosed man - got over written one night, inadvertently)
an early start in the black of night on
pre-dawn
wet, empty roads; the car's passage
punctuated by lit signs ... one car
reverses into the route and rushes off in a
guilty manner ...
white arrows direct traffic left, the unused
rectangle of road surface over-blow&n with
soft-black road-crud, tarmacadam brown
dirt with faintly tyre-marked borders
bridges so demonstrably various: is the
intention to signal that each crossing-over
should be independently known about?
... does it matter to passing traffic what
is passing over, except must it be so
often? ...
ASPECT 6: CHANGE

As something of a stocktaking ten years after the first writing of THE EYE ON THE ROAD: A DIARY OF A PASSENGER’S VIEW OF CAR MOVEMENT, this selected text covers the improvement of roads in the decade nineteen-seventy to nineteen-eighty.

We know we need to mutate places by building towards an image of towns-in-the-landscape that will satisfy the new sensibilities and allow freedom from pressures of all kinds.

.... pines rest very easily on the mind: a person does not even have to think about the problems of agriculture . . . . incredibly mild weather means the yellow of elms is wonderfully perpetuated . . . . holly and such shiny evergreens glisten darkly in the rain until obliterated from sight by the rain becoming a downpour . . . .

gorse in bloom has furry cases against the rain . . . .

the car slides endlessly forward, past specimen trees of the English landscape, the car movement allows the viewing of each specimen in three-quarters round: if not a mite more . . . .

odd thickets, perhaps allotment-land intended for poor cottagers to gather faggots in - certainly that sort of weak-trees of ages-past - seen in rain-and-sack-cloth-weather . . . .

misty sky touches the ground now and then as the contours rise . . . .

on the tarmacadam the steelly glint varies as road-tilt alters towards the sky-glare . . . . and the road angle alters wildly, changing continually in passing the car through the countryside under the sky . . . .

the car moves forever forwards, chasing some tail-lights . . . . some, but fewer, headlights approach, and pass . . . .

grass bright-wet . . . . hedgerows alternately line the way . . . . either make the car’s progression an avenue way or slip in a glimpse of a ploughed piece of topography . . . .
to hear the noise of the tyres on the rough, solid surface pleasantly confirms the truth of the car being in motion yet earthbound . . . . the road sound beneath the car at this season reminds that they are said to sit on the ground in Yugoslavia to root the Christmas wish of good for the coming year . . . . a Jacob's ladder of descending cars ahead . . . . coming-out white lights . . . . for a late dinner, or home from a meal in town after shopping . . . . the ascending ladder looks empty but when reached by the car the hill road is full enough of red lights and speed not fast . . . . a bus is moving four places ahead of the car; the night is wet enough for the bus's movement to raise very visible wisps of moisture from the road . . . . white, and yellow, and blue, circles in the night; and on the left, the solitary row of friendly gas lamps, each a dim yellow star in the rain . . . . now street-lamps begin, creating in old suburbs green aisles of light . . . . house's yellow lit window panes . . . . lit number-plates . . . . the car goes slower . . . . the night is composed of misty broken-black created by High Street lamps . . . .

Fonthill to London: Sunningdale

. . . . . some quality makes the drivers on this stretch competitive; the picturesque setting of the road's cut through ornamental pines? . . . . forces of attraction and repulsion spur on the outward bound drivers to resist encroachment by the climbing, inward-moving . . . . occasional gas lights, so pleasant to look directly at, do not get looked at here all year because of the surging movement of the traffic — one car-man's escape attempt becomes attack to those car-men in the other lane . . . . London-bound traffic sways outward, upward, menacing London-leavers . . . .
car held at gated crossing, a lit entry between shopfronts hereby in view: its uninviting glazed-brick character boringly draughty: proportions similar to entries everywhere, to be passed quickly as must any funnelled passage of air . . . . pattern of tiny triangles . . . . spotted about . . . . hang in the dark . . . . one tilted.
clumps of ragwort obvious in a field that waits fallow between two road-work-arms of a greater roundabout in formation—these yellow-topped platform-clumps are of a common level over the bronzed grass in a way that entirely changes the surface quality of the erstwhile agricultural field.

bottleneck this hill as if the Fort has still the power to make it dangerous for those who would approach the crest; the terrain-skirting road makes traffic climb single file; left flank fully exposed to ghostly salutes from the notches in the earthen ramparts.

'Always a tendency to rain here, have you noticed?'... indeed, this was where the flood happened blocking the road to detour Volkswagen one black-wet night; before level of road raised... always a tangle of cars seen at a distance yet they queue in order, patiently enough...

stock-cars on their carriers, going home

gate-lodge in early stockbrokers-style half-broken in use as a site hut in the work-path that extends the dual carriageway; west from the place never paused at to pick yellow flags, to where the bridge demolished... the little cars come round the distant bend in the motorway as if dodgems... the wet road-surface shines as do steel plates

... little lights in the dusk electrically sparkle in hard rain. momentarily, mistaken identity of bridge; not a trick of the tube but in reality a hurrying car on quite a different overbridge... civilized to have two crash barriers between out-going and approaching lanes... a high load of beetle-cars... red and blue signs on near-by high buildings... here the new stretch of motorway gradually veers left, leaving the blessing golden rays—first observed to the right—behind the car... the sky shows french-blue through clouds that are beige, touched with white... lower left, more distant the duck-egg horizon...
Fonthill to London

... the left-over notice of road-works required passenger-thought to recall the clearing away of the tile-hung, tall-chimneyed lodge ... passing the actual site, a few pale poppies in the centre-strip are a sure sign of road-works only the year before.

a hold-up - could that fast driving car, German number-plate? ... only the new junction has confused drivers: roll-on the motorway 'opening Spring '71'.

... strawberry stalls along the way - pull in 100 yards - do they measure along the road? - and reposition to make 100 metres next year? ... a worse hazard than suburban dogs because of sudden stopping ... places by-passed - became so well known - now may never be seen again

... have all these country cars been week-ending in London? ... first thought suggested cinema or function in Basingstoke but cars pass without let-up: the Royal Blue bus is virtually empty

Salisbury to London

... lorry moving at speed on the skyline ... at the speed this car matches ... is the skyline a proper road or a greenway as is usual hereabouts?

... the bulk carrier holds speed without pitching there - knowing that greenways run on crests - there is something sinister in its aplomb manner of keeping-pace ... the land bellies slowly by this road's dipping slightly, slides the bulk-carrier behind a gentle sky-line-slope of grass ... until snuffed out ... the bulk carrier appears to alight, and waits as it to pounce but this car is already passing, past the mouth of the side-road half-arrowed to this car's going ... stain marks on the road show the most concentrated choice of road-position by vehicles ... shadow stains of frequent passings of wheels ... two high hedges are displaced to the right of the axis of this road which therefore approaches the hedges headlong as if to rush with traffic up their outside left ... this road apparently aligned on the field to the twin hedges left, the left hedge of the parallel pair shows its left side throughout its perspective rising with the ploughed land and bearing left over the crest ... the road at the last moment before committal of traffic to the furrows swerves right and passes the car up the processional way between the two hedges ... such are the moods of English roads.
... the truly foul Y junction made worse
by painting on the road white stripes and
illuminating the oppressive sign board to
become a huge placard ghoul; one
football-stadium-flood would have lit the
entire junction-area far less dangerously
... beyond the reflected light the abrupt
darkness invites disaster ... the earth
embankment known to lie beyond the
dazing sign offers the only comfort-stop in
case of accident ... soon however -
perhaps 1971 as advertised - the new
junction will be in and another lousy
section of road so far used will not be
tavelled by this car ...
... a sign for deer where the new cutting
leading to the bypass is entered; passed
this way many years now, yet deer never
seen; even when the road wound
tortuous, closely wooded, so hazel
bushed it could be expected round the
next bend the sides to have quite grown
together in the dark and wet: but never
deer ...
...
the twist into the village being dealt with:
... nicely done ... will leave only the
wicked twist over the railway bridge which
gets nastier as lorries made bigger and
traffic flow thickens ...
... passenger stares into the sky,
letting the road skim undervision,
conscious only of the coursing speed at
which the white dashes divide the
motorway lanes ... the sense of
movement-at-ease which the passenger
has, becomes easily transferred into an
idea of being cloud borne
... particularly if the sky is full of large,
puffy, clouds, each densely bright and
these clouds are moving in the same
direction as the car ... later by the
swing of the road, or change
of wind possibly, the cloud's move-ment flows
across the car's movement ... today,
so many chariots of cloud are purposely
shaped, bulky enough to appear capable
of bearing a passenger ... the car's
passenger might play at being
carried in such movement-at-ease:
'Somewhere on this trip, we have passed
the 80,000 mile mark.' ...
...
the car leaves as darkness falls ...
... the birds went to roost some time
ago as the boot loaded ... still just
sufficient light however for the near
ploughed field to be read as brown by a
knowing eye ...
LONDON TO NORTH

... great crawler doing-in a pit heap; its work - where they have completed grassing - makes a lovely domed hill but there are places where period-identifying sliced-off conical slopes of rejected crud and dross should not be lost... the car hiccups in raising speed... 'car needs a service'.

wide expanse of white concrete with which the wind in the ventilators conspires to suppose deserted seafronts, off-season limbo such as the old sea-plane base at Shields...

FONTHILL TO LONDON

... two orange-silver shapes cut through landscape for cars to pass... a wood already clothed green on the side sliced open... for the rest, a splendid view of ordered, full-grown, farmed countryside, manipulated over centuries for growing, not artistic purposes. some poppies at the bridge springing; this their first year's growth on the new works: in Conservation Year will weedkillers eradicate them?

FONTHILL TO LONDON: night

... two opposing traffic streams directed on to one motorway side... red and white plastic decorations string-along with the moving car and bob to its passing... just a whole lot of lights, and around, dark... this year the build-up of traffic obvious; A 303 never so crowded so late in the year...

FONTHILL TO LONDON: New Year

... raining again... wild wind-lashed sound... patch of sun in the clouds with rays shining down - seen from the same end of roundabout as always but further round than in high summer because it is just past the winter equinox... how many times has this car come back in snow? - three times, possibly - milk lorries keep the main roads running...

M 4

... tube train leaving the overbridge - against the oyster sky only the silver upper-door-curves glint... the observer reads a moving line of evenly spaced porticos

1971

... passenger quite incapacitated to write about movement as home move planned...

AS IN DS. 136
Stonehenge, tall in summer morning haze. Black and white cows spread across the foreground; three cows close-flanked on the forward tumuli. These foreground beasts, the haze, make miniature the early tourists clustered round the base of the standing stones. Always the scale of this place is mysterious; ancient drawings, in all their different scales of man in relation to stones and stone to landscape can be seen to be true at some season or other, in certain lights or hazes.

Beyond Stonehenge, across the Plain, trees of a larch-like variety appear to be waist-deep in the corn ripening on the swell of the Plain. Two lorries loaded with baled straw throw back a shower of husks that dash hither and thither, short stalks hopping about the road. Blue, smoke-hazed heat is rising over an expansive view that has a post-harvest cellulose sheen and mica paleness.

... the car has passed the turning for years; this car and the ID before that, and the Volkswagen before that; if not the jeep... both in the days of the old fork, and the more recent time of the spaghetti-junction... from both A30 and A303 the place sign-posted, therefore, when at the final persuasion back-seat girl sleeps and those in the front relaxed a breath to recover themselves in such a moment whisked past the correct take-off, heading straight-on as for visiting... all not lost... the tie-road known to exist dips away as it obviously would from the topography so often studied... then climbs steadily, (again, much inferred from the views from either road)... the place itself quite unexpectedly suburban, of inter-wars' type... the station space-age in brightness surprises; continental in fashion of overhead lights... so after twelve years of regular travelling past the end of turnings, this place seen... part of the way there is as perfectly tunnelled-through-trees as a German Baroque pleached Allee... also reminiscent of Dutch roads around Otterlo...
new wooden railing edges a cut-through wood new-made embankment-profile proceeds to dip below road level tall bare tree-trunks line-up behind their fresh wood railing, risen now well above the level of the new motorway this kind of targeted-topography really created with the railways; by comparison the change the canal made to the landscape quite modest, local the motorways add breadth to route-taking the targeted topography of railway-make is viewed rising right-up-against the windows of the carriage compartments; or falling away immediately below and even more exaggerated, passing the passenger on tight-rope rails across girder-bridges for the car's passengers, no standing up and pressing forehead to the glass, squeezing the most out of scarifying spanning route-works for motor transport provide greater spaciousness; rarely dramatic excitement or minimal-width pioneering these swathes-spaces are especial to car movement, therefore the motorway shows passengers a new aspect of England: relatively unreminiscent by turning the head right, a white car and an Air-Force-blue van can be seen moving quickly along on the road previously used: originally the best length of old by-pass now by-passed thereby lost, both fish and chip shop and secluded eating place beside a public-authority wire-basket for disposal of wrappings the road works have taken so long, cut hedge-ends and breaks in woods have grown fresh faces in an older clump of trees, a thin old beech, wind-blown-askew, its root-structure never prepared for exposure one old, narrow remnant of woodland offers a look into a seventeenth century painter's scene, wild growth untempered by human manipulation; untouched by any previous proximity of agricultural cultivation
... an aluminium train paused, just off the bridge ... a nice long piece of transport cleanly shining ... an industrial age bridge ... an older viaduct has stone arches either side of spanning a canal ... alongside these, the bridge over the motorway; will any future generation feel sentiment for what it does? ...

... sick swing of roundabout where improvement comes to grief; change point of boundary or budget? ... back in the suburban, sub-human, fringe-slum of signs, barriers, blowing paper, petrol sales, car collections, fences and de-domesticated houses ... another go at being a car again ... thinning leaves on trees; the ground is littered ... in the place just come from leaves thick carpeted ... the grass is beige ... Gipsies abound; this has been a good summer for being a gypsy: one fire burns red ... the car on the new motorway so steady the passenger cannot resist looking at the Times laid on the seat alongside, then on lap ... unconsciously, the reading having set a different mental scene for the movement, the gaze tends to look straight-out sideways when head raised, out of the window situated at the left shoulder - a reflex as if travelling by train - looking straight into the countryside ... the view surprises ... composition unknown ... either never seen before or passenger confused as to whereabouts and nature of travel undertaken ... views previously done an injustice by not being looked at directly; never before full-faced enquiry into their qualities ... thus each of a number of glances-up takes the passenger a moment or two to locate ... becomes a game to place without forward glance cheating ... up until recently the weather has been wet which gives a resonance to the landscape's colours; the car left at nearly teatime in lovely weather ... occasionally the car meets heavy rain, head-on, but this too adds to the immense depth of the view ... a landscape in which are freshly presented clearly defined compositions ... well aligned specimen trees ... eye-catching detail and dramatically positioned foliage just tossed clean ... the road, in following the long crest of the last section of the journey, surveys
LEAVING LONDON
BY M 4

FONTHILL TO LONDON:
evening

CAMBRIDGE TO SIX MILE BOTTOM

CAMBRIDGE TO LONDON

the familiar - today stupendous -
panoramic view; a blue-bloom of distance
that makes the passenger want to say
'wait, let's pause and look at the view
awhile': but the driver at the best of times
must not be so surprised lest he consider
himself trifled with . . .
most times, on a hundred miles of journey,
so little wild-life to be seen, makes the
sight of rabbits between Beckford Arms
and destination worth mentioning to farm
mechanic - who agrees, a recent
phenomenon, seen them also passing to
and from his work . . .
first, and second, sightings of grey
squirrel, at destination, in beech trees on
right of way, over the wall . . . (later, ate
all the walnut crop) . . .
silver of the tube-train flickers
behind a line of trees . . . clears the trees
. . . the flicker had been accentuated by
only the doors being silver, notched-up
into each long roof of the train's carriages
. . .
crowded headlights, grouped like
curious peasants at the spectacle of this
car's joining - via the newly contrived
junction - the A 303 . . . the lights
approaching from the west seem to hang
back, shouldering each other, sheltered
by the turn of the embankments . . .

. . . as protection from the rain, two
workers on the new motoway wear white
funnels on their heads, the stalk pointing
skyward; the men are wrapped in layers of
tunics, tied worker's trousers, safety
tabards, hand protectors, bootees;
beside their two wheeled truck in slanting
rain, the group evokes engravings of
European miners, two, three, centuries
past; recreating the gnome costume of
operators of wooden waggonways . . .
houses still being built
front-to-the-road: has no one else a
dislike of traffic-stirred grass verge, or
objection to fumes at night when the
window might be open? . . .
ahead and still well lit, field and attractive
woods never picnicked in for they are not
that sort of distance out of the city on a
long journey to be breakfast place; nor
returning, to be worth bothering with
before destination . . .
back on the improved road . . .
clear signs . . .
BOAC poster says Earthshrinkers are coming here, in this traffic, nose to bumper at Albert Bridge head, the roadbed a hump on a wicked curve and all the cars twisting about and as fast as dodgems the passenger fancies earth expanders or people reducers on that curve a bus's skirt once caught on the jeep and de-flounced itself cruelly.

old General Lying In of which idea the passenger very fond despite this building's dirtied surface due to the roundabout traffic rounding, horrible giddiness experienced: passenger is often at this early stage in a journey doing face, or nails.

on 'Cobbett's Way', after midsummer, 7 pm the sun being to the car's rear the Way lies well-lit, detailed Cobbett's was the last 'sensibility of travel' but one, before the railways intervened before this way made into A34, Cobbett would sit the sort of four-square, sturdy horse that purposeful men rode and he wrote of the England he saw with his son he might have travelled in this direction at this time of year at about this hour of summer evening so in this sort of sunlight ahead, across the rear of the mitred frame of the gap, the landscape that is visible starts to be drawn, right to left then, whoosh, the cut-off end of the shorn embankment is seemingly torn past the view is all-about 200 degrees of view the old road is in a gully to the right, showing how much more the ups and downs for Cobbett's horse than for this car the old road skirts a curvaceous field boundary, this car's road flies over the declivity on a ridge of fill road cut in on the right, with supporting fill beneath left side before - in car time an immediate cleft a long curve on the right, a trio of sliced-off mounds whose grass embankments flank a straight run of road before another long ridge of fill crosses some great bowl in the topography.
traverse ended abruptly by a mound, steeply cleft . . . the surface rising to the right cut through such stiff chalk it is white, virtually bare of clinging plants . . . beyond, a view as all-about as any Cobbett admired . . .

horrid brick houses rash a valley that contains a flitch spire to a church Cobbett must have seen as old . . . maybe passed it closely down the hamlet’s street . . .

a showery sky ahead . . .

grass so green, as far as the land can be seen . . .

the inn now a spectator of a chalkscape of major road works.

whose white edges bloom with small-cup, blood-red, poppies . . .

Cobett, here, would have the sense of ‘homing’ to his friend Blounts’, to be there by summer’s dusk . . . the horse would know it, just as the cat now moves to the passenger’s feet as the car manoeuvres the road works, knowing – without looking – the car is about to be back on the A 303, and, sensing this – the nearness of ‘Snuff’s Way’ – settles peacefully to sleep on the foam-backed haircord carpet . . .

. . . the motorway starts climbing before Tebay so seriously we are persuaded in the blackness of the windy night we are already on Shap . . . in this lane, sparse traffic . . . in the other, quite a density of headlights that because of the lashing rain occasionally bemuse, even frightens to halting movements in the wet the few travellers north . . .

the nip-point of the hills at Tebay impresses itself by headlights beaming blindingly south from the old road that here descends steeply from on high on the left . . . our cautious preceeders quite scattering in gaining for themselves emergency halting length . . . the motorways are fraught this year with chicanes to allow rebuilding,
reconstructing of the hard-shoulder, the cutting out of cracks; therefore drivers watchful but bemused ... the tail of one of these hard-shoulder works confines this well spaced line of cars in the wild night and - third - we follow into the blackness of the storm where the good surface leads, off to the left ... to find we are swinging wide, signposted back to Tebay, east to Brough over the Pennines ... the second defaulter is already backing-up rather than face the long curve away into an increasingly sheltered void ... the van-lead defaulter - goes slower and slower in dejection and is passed at the roundabout where this car starts back up the vast corkscrew to continue north awhile ... the rain is slashing the headlights to nothing ... the motorway regained, the rain up Shap is sheet water ... it recalls heroic tales of when steam trains faced the 'long drag up Shap double-headed after taking on water through-running Tebay': in childhood, a splattering of the train's windows gave the signal that such taking-up of water from some troughs was happening ... the rain pelts and buffets the Safari of the mid-'seventies ... sounds like muffled sand-blasting whose impact is half caught on the wind ... there is a miracle in the movement that plows on though the storm ... in the wonder of the encapsuled moving-arm-chair-comfort ... the tiny interior in the vastness where the edge of the Pennines touches the Lake District ... the car is passed through the wild night in the wild landscape that the first railway engine drivers and firemen had to face without a covering to their cab, without glass even in the forward holes ... the night loud with noises ... so motion magically becomes to seem effortless and the large body of the car seems borne up the long incline on the wings of the storm ... as we run parallel to the railway track we experience that rough cross wind, yet the old car completely weathertight, shaming us in our knowing we sell it ...
at the top the rain suddenly stops; below, the orange lights of the modernised Penrith...

the mysterious but pretty pattern of orange globes floating over red and white lights sort itself out as a new junction ..., leading to the junction, an avenue of sodium-lights in very ugly glass slugs, adhered to cricked swan-necked standards ..., yet inside the town, something of the old integrity ...

A.S.
edited into six 'aspects', 1981
final editing, Delft, September 1-7-1982
always a nasty turn this, over the railway - worst piece of old road maybe all the way to Exeter .......

headlights pick-up varying portions of domestic stone wall, shadow-patterned by tall rectangles on stilts, as following headlights lap and overlap, chasing dark and lighter crossing shadows at concertina'd speeds . . . . now slow, for black box atop hill shows up in bright dipped headlights .... a road-user might think an intelligent road engineer would regularly survey by car the stretch of road in his care .... by night as well as by day . . . . over seasons . . . . to know the road in use as regards dangers, the placement of signs, patterns of use, moods of users; those inadequacies that cannot show up on a drawing: night glare at odd angles, road surfaces that in some lights and night conditions visually peter-out or allow vehicles to skulk unseen . . . the junction - as last time - traffic blocked; this time only a singly lorry - turnips in nets amidships - bars the way . . . .

moonlight shines through a thinning of a cloud . . . . due to the thinning-out of the treescape and removal of intervening ground cover - marking the onset of the motorway works - crest traffic up on the left above this car is highlighted by others' headlights: knowledge of the local topography and the proximity of the other road can place the car-lights sailing-past on the crest-line; darkness makes them seem in the sky, so sunken is this old road: so movement prematurely conveys a properly engineered junction . . . .

quite a cross wind acting on the outside of the car; the improved road being more exposed than it looks maybe explains why the old road ducked-down so deeply set in hedges . . . . a helicopter is having to struggle with the wind as it turns from presenting its tail to this car moving fairly fast . . . . to turn open-tall-frame to left, head to right, in black profile against the puffy wind-moved clouds . . . . the car almost catches-up with the helicopter undertaking this manoeuvre over the trees . . . .

there must be a landing space some other side of this area - is it wood or forest? - lying concealed although the road now climbs - and coming the other way - gives a good view over the tree tops as far as you would think necessary for spotting a likely location . . . .
the car joins the road and on so doing mounts the first hill, headlights top the rise ahead as the car climbs ....
the remodelling of the road makes now a greater distinction between the main road and the by-road (before that, there was something of a progressive diminishing, a hierarchy of importance, spuriously directed at the by-road, so that it was a puzzle what happened progressively to the main road that had still so far to go westwards) .... now the Fonthill by-road more truly justifies the right-angle turn whereas previously after the turn off the main road, the traffic has always been so different that the car has always been allowed to run, without perceptibly picking-up speed; the act of turning always more of passing a physical barrier than the going through the house-arch across the next road in ....

.LONDON TO FONTHILL: night

.... Coca Cola bottle rested on the car carpet hits a passenger foot at the roundabout .... these new stretches of road-expanses quite empty, decent folk long dispersed .... only little lights show along the road side .... the black sky passes the car through with a noise such as a continuous draught .... a man on a motorbike from afar gleams as a silver triangle, the reason for the effect turns out to be a silver crash helmet ....

.... the car shudders slowing, the Coca-Cola, half drunk, goes glup ....

.LONDON TO FONTHILL: night

Basingstoke Bypass: night

.... then the moving round a bend on some unforeseen crest in the night - lays out before the car, splattered bright dots of light of the expanding town ....
tail-light caught up with, traffic converges, again on the right a stream of headlights rush towards this car .... always cars pass on this stretch of three-lane road of two-way traffic: one after the other swings out .... headlights rise in a gradual motion, their slow mounting in the dark reminds of such slow moving things as bubbles ....
November 7th 1982:

... I am in the silver tube-train that slows on the bend, lurks in the bushes before crossing the M3 into London where headlights of the homing cars of Sunday evening wheel in a wide curving towards the bridge I am carried over into the bushes to go to Delft at the second mock-up stage of AS in DS.

POSTSCRIPT:
The permutations of movement within the capabilities of the private car can be experienced in the pattern of things seen from it. Monitoring the sensations of movement so experienced can raise the mere mechanics of movement to a level of appreciation giving us thereby a taste of a sensibility about movement. It is not easy to rise into a new sensibility as if Venus rising fresh from the sea — more like some drawings of an old man Neptune burdened with sea-jetsam and covered withal in seaweed. To reflect on what is especial for us at the start of the 'seventies in the steady quality of luxurious movement on well-made European roads, the beginnings of today's numbers and the services supporting cities, lie in the Victorian era; and as large parts of present-day cities and towns have hardly changed as much as Pompeii from the life that was in them at their moment of cohesion, so now our seeing is difficult to purify from the way we believe visually-aware Victorians' saw; therefore pictures by Atkinson Grimshaw or Sutcliffe of the gas-lit street, or coal-fire-smoke-polluted air of the period of objectivity moves forward.

With landscape, we are most encumbered by established English sensibilities; and so deeply involved we have in front of our eyes almost a pre-formed vision, the where-wth-all to relive the whole spirit of the English picturesque. To surmount this fixed-vision, the passenger has behaved towards scenes passing the windows almost as mechanically as the needle of a seismograph. The result, hopefully, being an unmisted record of the countryside passed.
through by the car on the road, not unknowingly attuned to the past known aesthetic … where references sprang to mind these have been given, that they might, if need be, become subtracted from the record by the reader. To be thus true to movement as it happened, routes repeat … as seasons also come round again … and times of exit from, and entry to cities re-occur.

Ease of repetition of place, achieved by a whole series of a driver’s reactions — almost instinctively-mechanical — are aspects of car-movement.

The pleasures of the sensibility found in car-movement are to do with immediacy … expediency … despite the increase in size of cities and towns, as accessible as … get in and go … stop the car and get out. To reach boats, aeroplanes, trains, the passenger travels a preliminary distance, each transport type involving a number of machine-harassed entrances … and in all these cases you are with people … walking on surfaces others have dirtied. On glass-like plastic-sheeted ramps … queuing between ‘thirties sideboards … immediacy is lost … except when you open the door of the personal car on a new place.

Allied to this immediacy aspect, the particular poetry of any movement has much to do with the magic wrought by the withdrawal of noise, vibration, disequilibrium … the getting away from the noise of others, the sense of others. The achievement of movement itself — which release is only possible because others make it so — has almost become — if not a social goal — at least a reassurance of well-being to a wide band of society. If we think about freedom of movement responsibility, the support society gives allows immediacy … mechanical movement implies worlds of support organisations and responsibilities: our knowledge of this and its wider implications is tense-making compared — one imagines — with the passenger’s observation of the passing scene from carriages … repairable … on a one-off basis; drawn by whose by-products in the proper place only improve the earth. Sealed in a car, the urban scene is glassy, even fume-free, clean, modulated, relatively silent beyond the immediate engine noise: but car-joy — as far as the ambience of the persons not in a car at that moment — is dearly bought: this period documented has to be a transitory raw period, the next sensibility will have to be about others — a sensibility about people, one to another. Why all of us persevered in using the car, tasting the pleasure-of-use, knowing what we know in the early ‘seventies, is in itself well-worth documenting …
Introduction, Asa Briggs, 1957: 'The first ride was from London to Newbury on a foggy day in October 1821.'

'Hurstbourne Tarrant, Hants, Nov. 2. Friday. (1821). . . . I came from Burghclere this morning, and through the park of Lord Caernarvon, at Highclere. It is a fine season to look at woods. The oaks are still covered, the beeches in their best dress, the elms yet pretty green, and the beautiful ashes only beginning to turn off. This is, according to my fancy, the prettiest park I have ever seen. A great variety of hill and dell. A good deal of water . . . . I like this place better than Fonthill, Blenheim, Stowe, and any other gentleman's grounds that I have seen . . . . The great beauty of the place is, the lofty downs, as steep, in some places, as the roof of a house, which form a sort of boundary, in the form of a part of a crescent, to about a third part of the park, and then slope off and get more distant, for about half another third part. A part of these downs is covered with trees, chiefly beech, the colour of which, at this season, forms a most beautiful contrast with that of the down itself, which is so green and so smooth! From the vale in the park, along which we rode, we looked apparently almost perpendicularly up at the downs, where the trees have extended themselves by seed more in some places than others, and thereby formed numerous salient parts of various forms, and, of course, as many and variously formed glades. These, which are always so beautiful in forests and parks, are particularly beautiful in this lofty situation and with verdure so smooth as that of these chalky downs. Our horses put up a score or two of hares as we crossed the park . . . . Upon leaving the park, and coming over the hills to this pretty vale of Uphusband . . . .' 

'Burghclere (Hants) Sunday, 18 Nov. . . . Between Ilsley and Newbury the country is enclosed; the land middling, a stony loam; the woods and coppices frequent, and neither very good till we came within a short distance of Newbury.' 'Burghclere, Tuesday, 20 Nov. . . . At about two miles from Inkpen we came to the end of our pilgrimage. The farm, which was Mr Taffe's; where he used the first drill that ever was used; where he practised his husbandry; where he wrote that book, which does so much honour to his memory, and to which the cultivators of England owe so much; this farm is on an open and somewhat bleak spot, in Berkshire, on the borders of Wiltshire, and within a very short distance of a part of Hampshire. The ground is a loam, mixed with flints, and has the chalk at no great distance beneath it.'

'Burghclere, Monday Morning, 31 October, 1825 . . . compared with a country where high downs prevail, with here and there a large wood on the top or
the side of a hill, and where you see, in the deep dells, near and there a farm-house, and here a village, the buildings sheltered by a group of lofty trees. This is my taste, and here, in the north of Hampshire, it has its full gratification. I like to look at the winding side of a great down, with two or three numerous flocks of sheep on it, belonging to different farms. ... Of these 13 miles (from Winchester to Whitchurch) we rode about eight or nine upon the green-sward, or over fields equally smooth.

And here is one great pleasure of living in countries of this sort: no sloughs, no ditches, no nasty dirty lanes, and the hedges, where there are any, are more for boundary marks than for fences. 'Hurstbourne Tarrant (commonly called Uphusband) Wednesday, 11 October 1826. ... Coming from Burghclere you come up near a mile of steep hill, from the top of which you can see all over the country, even to the Isle of Wight; to your right you see a great part of Wiltshire; into Surrey on your left, and turning round, you see lying below you the whole of Berkshire, great part of Oxfordshire, and part of Gloucestershire. ... From the top of this lofty chain you come to Uphusband (or the Upper Hurstbourne) over two miles or more of ground, descending in the way that the body of a snake goes down (when he is going fast) from the high part, near the head, down to the tail; that is to say, over a series of hill and dell, but the dell part going constantly on increasing upon the hilly part, till you come down to this village; and then you, continuing on (southward) towards Andover, go up, directly, half a mile of hill so steep that it makes it very difficult for an ordinary team with a load to take it up at all. So this Uphusband (or because higher up the valley than the other Hurstbournes), the flat part of the road to which, from the north, comes in between the two side-hills, is in as narrow and deep a dell as any place that I ever saw.'

'S Kensington, Thursday, 26 Oct (1826) ... During this ride I have been several times wet to the skin. At some times of my life, after having indulged for a long while in dodging myself up into the house, these soakings would have frightened me half out of my senses; but I care very little about them. I avoid getting myself wet if I can; but it is very seldom that rain, come when it would, has prevented me from performing the day's journey that I had laid out beforehand.'

Cobbett: 'should say the villages of North Bovant and Bishopton, between Heytesbury and Warmminster in Wiltshire; ... as appertaining to rural objects, everything that I delight in. Smooth and verdant Downs on hills and valleys of endless variety as to height and depth and shape; rich corn-land, unencumbered by fences; meadows in due proportion, and those watered at pleasure; and, lastly, the homesteads, and villages, sheltered in winter and shaded in summer by lofty and beautiful trees; to which may be added roads never dirty and a stream never dry.'
CAPTIONS TO IMAGES IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

All photographs by P. Smithson unless otherwise credited.

Citroën DS photograph of Citroën Nederland B.V.

Inner front and rear covers: Citroën ID OS; plan, line drawing: Citroën, Slough.

Citroën DS: side elevation, line drawing: Citroën, Slough.

Citroën spare part packaging.

Citroën: side elevation; Letraset: mid - 1970's.


Growth of population and car ownership in the Netherlands.

Passenger's view of lines of pines as field divides: Six Mile Bottom, Cambridgeshire, February, 1974.

Citroën ID DS: Bauen & Wohnen; circa 1960.

Passenger's view, Allendale; spring, 1957.

Citroën CX Reflex passenger's view: London to Fonthill; spring, 1982: A.M.S.: M 3 leaving London;

M 3 approaching heathland, Camberley area; Surrey; Caravan site behind trees on left, by over-bridge; Over-bridges in series, near Bagshot;

Approaching Fleet Service Station, Hampshire; Take-off left, return-lane right; Fleet Service Station; Volkswagen 'Beetle';

Lengthening view ahead; Reading/Alton return lane to M 3; Basingstoke by-pass in deep cutting with dead beech tree ahead right; Departing/joining lanes; Before A 303 take-off;

A 303 take-off ahead left; straight ahead under gantry to Southampton, for which (on right) M 3 becomes A 30 over crest; Old stretch of A 303; road-works for dual-carriage way in woods to left.

After passing the 'gap' at Micheldever roundabout, start of long hedge on left; 'snow' of dual-carriage way works ahead and right; The crest that marks the climate divide on A 303; ahead, typical beech clumps of Salisbury Plain; Wiltshire in bottom;

First sighting of Stonehenge, Wiltshire; A 303 left-fork at Stonehenge; Dual-carriage way of early 1980's passing Yarnbury Castle; Wylde in bottom; Fonthill woods on skyline; On top of the Plain, having climbed out of Wylde; Stockton woods ahead right;

Edited map: the Midlands: BP Road Map 3.

Edited map: Location of Little Chef; Camberley 001; Bagshot 007: Little Chef Road Map.

Edited map: the Midlands: BP Road Map 3

London to North; end of May - 24th - Whit, 1974: sketch 39; sketch 40, passenger's verge tree, Ashwell; 41 (top); Sketch 42; 43; 44;

Sketch 45; 46; 47;

Sketch 48; 49;
28. Sketch 50.

29. Editted map: road following Midland Railway line, from Hellifield, where it starts its long climb, up past Settle, to Ribblehead: Ordnance Survey: Skipton and District, 1 inch to mile. Crown Copyright Reserved.

30. Stockton-on-Tees to London; first day May, 1974 (diary note: home by 6 pm): sketch 11; 12; 14; 13; 15; 17; 18; 20.


33. Citroën DS 9 FGK in grass (pair on AS IN DS 128), after washing, Upper Lawn, Fonthill; September, 1966.

34. Citroën CX Reflex passenger's view, Fonthill; February, 1982: A.M.S.:


37. Jeep: side view; in hot weather trim; Regent's Park Circle; July 1955.


39. Salisbury Plain from A 303: June, 1981: '...the view that never fails to please.': sketch 166.

40. Citroën DS: at Tidemill, Salem, Suffolk: May, 1970. Subsequently, this mill has been restored.


42. London, Cambridge to Stockton-on-Tees; series beginning the passenger's view sketch-book (although book and two grey pens bought in Durham, between September 28th and October 1st, 1973 or between February 17th-23rd, 1974): end of April, 1974: sketch 1; 2 (two interlocked sketches, have been separated); 3;
Sketch 4; 5; 6; 7; London to Fonthill; mid-June evening - 14th - 1974; sketch 114.

London, Cambridge to Stockton-on-Tees: sketch 8; 9; may be a close-up of sketch 61 on AS IN DS 85; 10;

London to Fonthill; mid-June evening - 21st - 1974; sketch 112.

Fonthill to A 303; June, 1981: sketch 158.

Passenger’s scan of stone walls of hill-farm ‘on tops’; modulation indicates lines of field drains: trip north, January/February, 1956.

Wiltshire; May 3rd, 1974 (not in diary, yet in sketch-book before last two visits to Stockton-on-Tees that year): sketch 23; 24; 25; 26;

Sketch 28 (two interlocked sketches have been separated); 29; 30; 31; 32;

Sketch 34; 35; 36; 37.


Citroën DS: carried by Djebra ferry: postcard. Reguluni Chamam.

Cutting in M3 by-passing Basingstoke (see photograph AS IN DS 20): sketch 166 (last image made for AS IN DS), 1981.

Wiltshire to London; entering London; May 3rd, 1974: sketch 38.

London to Southampton: July, 1980 (for birthday picnic, in rain: sketch 152; 153; 154; 155; 156;

‘... left side spun past’: sketch 157

Edited map: South West England: Shell Road Map 1.

London to Wiltshire via Wokingham, Berkshire; end June, 1981: sketch 133; 134; 135; 136; 137; 138.

Edited map: the Midlands: BP Road Map 3.

Cambridge to Stockton-on-Tees; second week of June (by diary notes, P.S. appears to have driven London, Cambridge, Stockton-on-Tees, London, on 8th and 9th June, 1974); sketch 96; 99; 100; 101 (see sketch 97 on AS IN DS 72); 102; 103.

Stockton-on-Tees to London; end of Whit - June 1st - 1974 (diary note: home by 5 pm.): sketch 73; 74; 75; 76; 77;

Sketch 78; 79; 80; 81; 82;

Sketch 83; 84; 85; 86; 87;

Sketch 88; 89; 90; 91; 92; 93;

Sketch 94; 95;
72 Sketch 96; 97 (this repeats passenger's view sketch 101, AS IN DS 66, but in different light conditions).

74 Stockton-on-Tees to Richmond, Leyburn, West Witton, Sedburgh, London by M6; second weekend June - 9th - 1974: sketch 104; 105; 106; 107; 108;

75 Sketch 109;


Stockton-on-Tees to Richmond, Leyburn, West Witton, Sedburgh, London by M6; second weekend June - 9th - 1974: sketch 110; 111.

80 London to Fonthill; mid-June evening - 21st - 1974: sketch 113.

81 London to Cambridge; third weekend June - 25th - 1976: sketch 126; caption draws attention to 'optical illusion'.

82 Sketch 127; 128; 129.

Cambridge to London: sketch 130; 131; 132.

83 Edited map: road running with Midland Railway, Settle to Ribblehead where they cross the west to east road over Pennines: Ordnance Survey: Wensleydale, 1 inch to mile. Crown Copyright Reserved.


84 Beamish to Vindolanda (to deposit in Beamish Museum items from 12 Zetland Road's closing): Whit - May 29th? - 1974: sketch 70; 71; 72.

85 Newcastle to Holy Island; White - May 27th? - 1974: sketch 58; 59; 60; 61; 62;

86 Sketch 63; 64; 65; 66; 67; 68.

87 Stockton-on-Tees, Durham, Jarrow pre-dawn start; before breakfast on quayside, Newcastle: Whit - May 27th? - 1974: sketch 51; 52; 53;

88 Sketch 54; 55; 56; 57.

89 Edited and overlaid maps: the Midlands: BP Road Map 3.

90 Passenger's verge view: Thorpe Thewles Viaduct, disused, alongside Stockton-on-Tees to Durham road; 21st February, 1974: (visit 17th-23rd).

92-93 Edited map: A 303 on top of the Plain and Wylye Valley and climb past Yarnbury Castle; Ordnance Survey: Salisbury and The Plain; 1:50,000. Crown Copyright Reserved.
He was accompanied by his son on the ride from his seed farm in Kensington to Hurstbourne Tarrant in Hampshire.

Wednesday, 25th Sept. 1822. This morning I set off, in rather a drizzling rain, from Kensington, on horseback, accompanied by my son (James), with intention of going to Upham, near Andover, which is situated in the north-west corner of Hampshire. My object was not to see inns and turnpike-roads, but to see the country; to see the farmers at home, and to see the labourers in the fields; and to do this you must either go on foot or on horseback.

Saturday, 28th Sept. (1822) . . . we have come over roads and lanes of flint and chalk. The weather being dry again, the ground under you, as solid as iron, makes a great rattling with the horses feet.
Citroën CX Reflex passenger's view: London to Fonthill; spring, 1982; mid-point on road beside long hedge; on right, plantation new twenty or so years ago (when journeys to Fonthill began); ahead, 'snow' of dual-carriageway works coming from Bulington Cross roundabout on 'Cobbett's Way' (running south from Newbury). A.S.

Edited map: A 303 passing Thruxton (aerodrome used for stock-car racing, etc.); Ordnance Survey: Salisbury and The Plain. Crown Copyright Reserved.

Wiltshire to London: end of June evening - 22nd - 1980: leaving Fonthill; sketch 139;

Sketch 144;

Sketch 145; 146; 148; 149; 150; 151.

Summer meadow trees: Constable's 'The Hay Wain': tear-sheet.

Citroën CX Reflex passenger's view; London to Oxford;

February 14th, 1982: A.M.S.:
Climbing in cutting on M 4; Pine plantations, M 4;
Birds over M 4;
Newbury turn-off indicated on M 4.
Haze still not lifted, on M 4.

Citroën ID 93 DLT at Upper Lawn, Fonthill: 1962: (Note shepherd's mobile hut in background, as mentioned in Hardy's Wessex novels).


Edited map: London to Southampton; towards Fonthill, past Romsey; South West England: Shell Road Map 1;


Child's coloured pencil drawings of rabbits (colours as own stuffed toy rabbit).

Child's coloured ink drawing of Si., Sa., So.? Early 1970's.

Child's car-drawing of Upper Lawn with wood smoke; late 1980's.


Citroën DS at Great Stone Race; June 3rd, 1970.

Children's car game: 'hangmen'; early 1970's.


Edited map: Salisbury (to market and cathedral, perhaps twice a year), the alternative routes back to Upper Lawn, Fonthill: South West England; Shell Road Map 1:

Approaching Wilton crossroads on A 303; 1981; sketch 161.
Child’s Invented game to do with the car: mid-1960’s.

Child’s coloured ink drawing of house passed by car: early 1970’s (the house at the Andover roundabout is also referred to mid-page AS IN DS 58).

Child’s green and blue ink drawing of Michelin man; mid-1970’s (a Michelin man had been given as a Christmas present – 1973 – and was taken to Upper Lawn, Fonthill to sit on the stone window seat for the week after Christmas).

Fir cones from the grounds of St Hilda’s, Oxford; representative of all the fir cones – and stones and shells – that the DS have carried home; February, 1970.

One of the round-blob-nose bear family: child’s drawing; early 1970’s.


Child’s cut-out drawing of Snuff-cat who travelled in the car to Upper Lawn; circa 1972.


Citroën DS 9 FGK in washing position in grass (pair on AS IN DS 30): Upper Lawn; Fonthill woods in background; September 1966.

One of round-blob-nose bear family; child’s drawing; early 1970’s.

Child’s crayon drawing; late 1960’s.

Stepped terrace of houses, Morton, near Keighley, Airedale: tear-sheet.

Citroën ID 93 DLT: series: picnic at Garesdale Head, West Riding of Yorkshire; half-term trip north; spring, 1965.

Citroën avant-tracton beside DS Safari, Priory Walk; February, 1975.

London to Fonthill; mid-June evening – 14th – 1974: sketch 121.

Wiltshire to London; mid-June – 16th – 1974: sketch 129;

Sketch 124

London to Fonthill and June evening – 22nd – 1980: sketch 119;

Sketch 120.

Notice of Removal Priory Walk to Gliston Road, June, 1971: (in fact, to the other side of Priory Walk).


Citroën avant-tracton’s nose beside DS Safari, Priory Walk; February, 1975.


London to Fonthill; mid-June evening – 14th – 1974: sketch 116;
Sketch 118; 117; 140


Bullington Cross, 'hold-up'; 1981: sketch 163; 164; 143

Sketch 165.


Edited map: Tebay, Shap, Brough Penrith, Carlisle, Scotland: Texaco, Northern England.

Citroën DS Safari: last photographs; in snow, in yard, Gilston Road; November, 1981: A.M.S.

Child's invented game to do with the car: mid-1960's.


Atkinson Grimshaw's 'Liverpool Quay by Moonlight' (one of many similar); 1887: tear-sheet.


Edited map to locate three 'architects' of the last English 'sensibility' when resident in Hampshire: Southern and Eastern England: Shell Road Map 2.

Passenger's seat view of Allendale; spring, 1957

Citroën DS Safari at Collet de Déze, Gard; August, 1974. (Clarissa Woods').
In this diary - a passenger's eye on english roads in the 1970's - a sensibility to car movement has its beginnings.