Cultural Daily

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Wanda Coleman: "I Live For My Car"

Wanda Coleman · Saturday, November 23rd, 2013

originally published on CW in March of 2012. RIP Wanda Coleman.
can't let go of it. to live is to drive. to have it function
smooth, flawless. to rise with morning and have it start
i pray to the mechanic for heat again and air conditioning
when i meet people i used to know i'm glad to see them until
i remember what i'm driving and am afraid they'll go outside and
see me climb into that struggle buggy and laugh deep long loud
i've become very proficient at keeping my car running. i
visit service stations and repair shops often which is why
i haven't a coat to wear or nice clothes or enough money each
month to pay the rent. i don't like my car to be dirty. i spend
saturday mornings scrubbing it down. i've promised it a new bumper
and a paint job. luckily this year i was able to pay registration
i dream that my car is transformed into a stylish
convertible and i'm riding along happily beneath sun glasses
the desert wind kissing my face my man beside me. we smile
we are very beautiful. sometimes the dreams become nightmares
i'm careening into an intersection the kids in the back seat scream
"mama!" i mash down on the brake. the pedal goes to the floor
i have frequent fantasies about running over people i don't like
with my car.
my car's an absolute necessity in this city of cars where
you come to know people best by how they maneuver on the freeway
make lane changes or handle off-ramps. i've promised myself
i will one day own a luxury model. it'll be something
i can leave my children. till then i'm on spark plugs and lug nuts
keeping the one i have mobile. i live for it. can't let go of it
to drive is to live

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