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## Night Rider

Susan Sinclair

The night had fizzled out  
 Like a cigarette in a puddle.  
 My face was a badly fitted kitchen  
 Damp and dripping,  
 Piping trouble.  
 It had been a bad night,  
 And now I was slipping on the wet concrete pavements  
 Like Gene Kelly with Parkinsons.

I was lost, and confused  
 One fare short of a taxi  
 Two wheels short of a bike  
 My legs disobeyed everything I said  
 And I thought of being a dyke for the night  
 When a lovely looking lesbian stopped her car  
 And offered me a ride.

That's when I saw you  
 Big bright lights blinking to see me  
 As you turned the corner  
 Joy and relief surged through me like an orgasm.  
 It was you!  
 My Night Bus Home

I remember last week when I leaned my surrendered head against  
 you,  
 I nuzzled into the curve of your window,  
 And when I looked through you  
 I saw myself in your reflection:  
 Mascara slipping shadows down to my lips,  
 One pair of scissors short of a haircut,  
 One conversation short of coherence.  
 But you, Bus, made me bleary, blurry, beautiful.

On our first date  
You gave me the gift of kebab.  
It was half-eaten and still warm.

The second time we met  
You placed a half-smoked cigarette stub below my feet.  
When I saw that wrinkled butt waiting just for me,  
I knew you were my very own Winfield kingsize special.

And then, although we agreed to take it slow,  
On the third date we stopped  
For twenty minutes at the bus depot  
Just me and you  
We shared a cigarette in the back seat,  
And you put your lights out,  
And I spat out my chewing gum,  
And we sank into the engine hum,  
And it was then,  
My Night Bus Home,  
I knew you were the only one.

But Shakespeare was right when he said  
Parting is such sweet sorrow,  
How my eyes ache when they're intruded by the cruel sun  
And my heart breaks when our time is taken up by the dawn  
Women in their manky tabards  
Using you at six a.m. to get to  
Work.  
Or the  
Workies sweating up your seats with their lewd and lunging  
Bum-cracks.  
And then those kids with sticky sweets fingering your upholstery  
I know you think of me,  
As you heave and splutter under the weight  
Of briefcases and school-girl chatter  
  
Your exhaust fumes all day,  
Until, my Night Bus Home,  
The day gives way to night  
And me, and me alone.