

From the Car
Rachel Blau DuPlessis

“We’re trapped in a car someone else is driving.”

Badly doesn’t begin to cover it.

Why did we hitch with this guy?

The empty stretches?—don’t ask,

his ego-go blather; his “they” / “them,”

the road disintegrating; him accelerating.

Actually, it’s all making me crazy.

Calculate: whether we could—

maybe/maybe not--survive the crash,

given there was about to be one.

Ans: Per-hap. By chance. May-be.

Sub-junct. But the verbs

no longer fall in our favor.

Still incipient, not quite “now,” such an event

“changed,” as people say afterward,

“everything.”

Some affected will never pull out,

pull back, put it together.

Even now defensive bodies

expose themselves to danger, being addicted

to sugar, selfies, and hard core stuff

to drug and to diddle,

to deaden foreboding,

to do anything whatever

so’s to feel stronger, sweetened, juiced up.

It’s epic; it’s a blockbuster;

clusters of crowd scenes around some

cult-phantasm, bombast, explosions.

What tribe is this the tale of?

Back three years, when the wind

was four days, four nights blowing,
the pressure gave me
relentless migraines--
and then the 6.6 earthquake.

Depends on where you live
in these fault zones
whether you personally felt that one

totally
partially
or not at all.

But foreshadowing the seizure,
the crushed frameworks--
with their body-heart collapse,

people knew without knowing. They
had spectral foresight,
premonitions of disaster

in seismic pre-ghosts
and piled-up emojis
but were slower at grasping
how much would be destroyed.

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Initial (triggering) citation, David Antin [on an experience hitch-hiking] in Antin and Charles Bernstein, *A Conversation with David Antin*, p. 34.