

HAWK

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(Chanting by Native American author Wilfred Pelletier, an Odawa from Manitoulin Island, 1927-2000)

I decided one morning just to see what I'd see
If I drove my car beyond Sault (pronounced "Soo") Ste. Marie.
There's a weary wagon-burner (pejorative for "Indian") kinda wavin' at me,
So I picks him up just to see what he ... just to see what he be.
I says "Uh, you got a name?" He says "Call me Hawk.
I come down pure from the Mi'kmaq (pronounced "Mickmack") stock
I'm all messed up from a three-day walk.
I hope ya don't mind if I just don't ... if I just don't talk."

He was only twenty-one and change,
Headin' west to rearrange his mind.
He was lookin' for the olden days
Of animals and of golden ways to dine.
We took his native homeland away,
And though we tried, we failed to slay his kind.
So he shakes a bit and drops his head,
To dream of chicks and lots of young red wine.

Well he wakes up later and he asks the time.
I says "Ya slept three hours it's a quarter past nine.
So how far are ya goin'?" And his eyes crack mine.
"I got a brother in Flin Flon workin' in ... workin' in a mine."
I says "What do ya do?" And he asks me "When?"
I says "Here and there or now and then."
He says "I fly 'round lookin' for a rat or a hen,
And I try not to kill any lily white ... Any lily white men."

He was only twenty-one and ...

Well his brain was barely able to hate,
And his stomach growled like a lion at the gate,
So I asked if he had eaten of late.
He said "Not since Sunday 'round about ... half past eight."
So we ate and we smoked and we laughed and we sang.
We boggled at the power of the upper class gang.
Bandon Manitoba was our last harangue.
He was gone in the morning when the desk clerk ... rang.

He was only twenty-one and ...