

“On the Road” Platform Florida Art Party # 8
September 29, 2006

As part of being in Platform artists are asked questions. Some of their answers are edited down and published as their bio in the Platform magazine which is given to every attendee when entering each Platform Art Party.

For this event, the theme of which is “On the Road”, we asked the artists to describe a childhood memory of a road trip. Following are some of the answers:

”What I remember most is pretending to be asleep whenever we got home so my dad would carry me to my bed and tuck me in. Cheesy, but true.” -Rik Swartzwelder

“No matter how long the trip or how many hours, or how old, I crawled into the back of the station wagon, with the suitcases, camping gear, and all that entailed, and slept...the whole way. If I am not driving, I curl up in the car seat and do the same thing now.”

-Carol Frye

“As a kid I was always in the back seat sandwiched between my sisters as we made our annual trip to Indiana to see family. At that time, I remember being miserable on the trip, but loving the lights of Knoxville. Thinking about it now, those memories I’ll always cherish – my dad waking me up at 4 a.m. to see “the lights” coming down out of the mountains.” -Matt Larson

“We pulled onto the shoulder of the road to help a car that flipped over on the interstate. The passengers were remarkably fine. One of them was really interested in my flashlight (booked with a radio and other cool gadgets) and wanted to buy it off of me. I just remember thinking, ‘you escaped death and all you want is a radio-flashlight’.”

-Ashley Gilbert

“I remember playing all kinds of games with my aunt in the back seat of my mother’s ’56 Chevy convertible on a trip from St. Louis, Missouri to Pass-A-Grille, Florida. The trip took three days to arrive at the vacation apartment just across the road from the beach. It was the most magical vacation I can ever remember.” -Jeffrey Fullgraf

“That is very difficult because I grew up less than affluent and we didn’t have an automobile. I had an uncle who was a salesman and had a new car every two years or so. When he came by our house I would sit for hours in his cars, memorizing every detail of their design and pretending to drive down the highway on imaginary road trips. Later, in Jr. High and High School, I would study all of the new cars in detail as soon as they were introduced each year. Those early experiences made me an incurable “car buff” for all my life.” -Whitney A. McFarlin

“The first long road trip I took was when I was 10. My family drove from Florida to Virginia for vacation. The trip stands out in my mind quite a bit. It was the first time I

remember seeing mountains. Just watching the landscape change as we drove out of the swampy marshes of Florida, through the hills of Georgia and the Carolinas and into the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia was the most amazing thing I had experienced in my 10 years of life. It set the pace for the rest of my life and created a passion for travel.”

-Michael DiDomenico

“Although not strictly from my childhood, my best memory of a road trip was when I moved to San Francisco to work at the San Francisco Opera. My father accompanied me on a five day road tri p from Massachusetts to California to help me find a place to live and get settled. It is one of my fondest memories of my Dad, who was one of the strongest influences in my work, and along with my Mother, made possible all the myriad of opportunities for me to develop as an artist, craftsman and person.”

-Thomas Monaco

“We rode a ferry across the Columbia River into a ghost town with beautiful trees and houses one knew were empty of people, but still, it felt as though the music just stopped.”

-Anthony Piekarski

“Riding all eight of us in our, new to us, funeral home ’53 Cadillac limousine on our way to summer camp.” -Suzanne Roth

“We took a road trip with I was twelve to visit relatives in Kentucky. I fell asleep in the backseat and unknowingly used the loaf of bread that my Mom packed for sandwiches as my pillow. Whoops!” -Chalet Zell

“My most vivid memory was when I was ten years old. I was riding in the back seat of a 1956 Pontiac. It was the hottest day of the summer, and I rode with the sweat running down my face, arms, and whole body while I stared at the sweep second hand of my Bulova. I watched that hand go through thirty-eight revolutions, thinking it would make the trip end faster. That memory is a constant reminder of how much more comfortable travel is now and it is remarkable that a road trip across two states is hardly an ordeal when compared to that short trip in the heat of a Florida summer so many years ago.”

-Bill Sargent

“A childhood memory I tend to equate to being on the road has to be the Thanksgiving vacation trip camping in north Florida, in an old time Winnebago. We were cruising down the highway with the big W representation on the side. Camping was a big part of growing up for me, my dad tended to haul the family on these trips quite often. This particular trip in the Winnebago was quite notable because on the trip back she (the Winnebago) wasn’t holding up to the traffic speeds very well and we had to get off the highway – taking local roads for the last two hours of the trip. I miss those days a lot.

-Brandon McLean

An excerpt from “On the Road”, a short story by Brenda Patterson, for the September 29th, 2006 Art Party # 8 magazine.

“Fried chicken. Bananas. Chocolate pudding in a pull tab-topped can. Favorite childhood travel memories always begin with food in creased paper bags. And Greyhound bus stations.

“Our mother dreamed of buying a Winnebago, giving up our apartment and driving all over the country. However, the reality of being a divorced mother of two elementary school children prevented the Winnebago purchase. Yet, every other summer during my childhood we climbed on a Greyhound bus and spent a month outside Florida, staying with an assortment of her friends and acquaintances.

“The perennial school essay, “How I Spent My Summer Vacation” allowed me to regale my teachers and classmates with our travels. I showed off a blue yo-yo emblazoned with *Chinatown NY*. Tales of staccato Chinese from the table beside us, a rice mountain dispatched under a flurry of chopsticks and my discovery of a street person who appeared to not be breathing were questioned by only a handful of classmates. At recess I recreated, for a select few, the drive down a New Orleans street: the lattice work balconies and the grownups’ panicked reaction to my sighting, through an open doorway, of a naked woman dancing on a tabletop.” -Brenda Patterson