

Old Bird

RICHARD NEWMAN

His old Impala burned more oil than gas,
slowing traffic back to the exit ramp,
and I saw as it finally came my turn to pass,
sticking through the window, a stump—
his arm rounded off above the elbow
and wrapped up in the long, cool highway wind—
and bobbing on his shoulder, all bright yellow
and red, a rooster. The man turned and grinned
as we traveled, even, between tall green seas
of cornstalks that threatened to crash over the road.
His rooster's feathers fluttered in the breeze.
Through his farm-dusted windshield, the bird glowed.
And though it took me miles to understand,
he'd raised his arm—a friendly wave of his hand.