

30,000 Pounds of Bananas

Harry Chapin

It was just after dark when the truck started down
the hill that leads into Scranton Pennsylvania.
Carrying thirty thousand pounds of bananas.
Carrying thirty thousand pounds (hit it Big John) of bananas.

He was a young driver,
just out on his second job.
And he was carrying the next day's pasty fruits
for everyone in that coal-scarred city
where children play without despair
in backyard slag-piles and folks manage to eat each day
about thirty thousand pounds of bananas.
Yes, just about thirty thousand pounds (scream it again, John) .

He passed a sign that he should have seen,
saying "shift to low gear, a fifty dollar fine my friend."
He was thinking perhaps about the warm-breathed woman
who was waiting at the journey's end.
He started down the two mile drop,
the curving road that wound from the top of the hill.
He was pushing on through the shortening miles that ran down to the depot.
Just a few more miles to go,
then he'd go home and have her ease his long, cramped day away.
and the smell of thirty thousand pounds of bananas.
Yes the smell of thirty thousand pounds of bananas.

He was picking speed as the city spread its twinkling lights below him.
But he paid no heed as the shivering thoughts of the nights
delights went through him.
His foot nudged the brakes to slow him down.
But the pedal floored easy without a sound.
He said "Christ!"
It was funny how he had named the only man who could save him now.
He was trapped inside a dead-end hellslide,
riding on his fear-hunched back
was every one of those yellow green
I'm telling you thirty thousand pounds of bananas.
Yes, there were thirty thousand pounds of bananas.

He barely made the sweeping curve that led into the steepest grade.
And he missed the thankful passing bus at ninety miles an hour.
And he said "God, make it a dream!"
as he rode his last ride down.
And he said "God, make it a dream!"
as he rode his last ride down.
And he sideswiped nineteen neat parked cars,
clipped off thirteen telephone poles,
hit two houses, bruised eight trees,
and Blue-Crossed seven people.
it was then he lost his head,
not to mention an arm or two before he stopped.
And he slid for four hundred yards
along the hill that leads into Scranton, Pennsylvania.
All those thirty thousand pounds of bananas.

You know the man who told me about it on the bus,
as it went up the hill out of Scranton, Pennsylvania,

he shrugged his shoulders, he shook his head,
and he said (and this is exactly what he said)
"Boy that sure must've been something.
Just imagine thirty thousand pounds of bananas.
Yes, there were thirty thousand pounds of mashed bananas.
Of bananas. Just bananas. Thirty thousand pounds.
of Bananas. not no driver now. Just bananas!" "