

Burma Shave

Tom Waits

A licorice tattoo turned a gun metal blue
Scrawled across the shoulders of a dying town
Took the one-eyed Jackson across the railroad tracks
And the scar on its belly pulled a stranger passing through
He's a juvenile delinquent, never learned how to behave
But the cops would never think to look in Burma shave

And the road was like a ribbon and the moon was like a bone
He didn't seem to be like any guy she'd ever known
He kinda looked like Farley Granger with his hair slicked back
She says, "I'm a sucker for a fella in a cowboy hat"

How far are you going, he said, "Depends on what you mean"
He says, "I'm only stopping here to get some gasoline
And I guess I'm going that way just as long as it's paved
I guess you'd say, I'm on my way to Burma Shave"

And with her knees upon the glove compartment
She took out her barrettes and her hair spilled out like root beer
And she popped her gum and arched her back
Hell, Marysville ain't nothing but a wide spot in the road

Some night my heart pounds just like thunder
I don't know why it don't explode
'Cause everyone in this stinking town has got one foot in the grave
And I'd rather take my chances out in Burma Shave

Presley's what I go by, why don't you change the stations
Count the grain elevators in the rear view mirror
She said, "Mister anywhere you point this thing
It got to beat the hell out of the sting of going to bed
With every dream that dies here every mornin'"

And so drill me a hole with a barber pole
And I'm jumping my parole just like a fugitive tonight
Why don't you have another swig and pass that car if you're so brave
I wanna get there before the sun comes up in Burma Shave

And the spider web crack and the mustang screamed
The smoke from the tires and the twisted machine
Just a nickel's worth of dreams and every wish bone that they saved
Lie swindled from them on the way to Burma Shave

And the sun hit the derrick and cast a bat wing shadow
Up against the car door on the shot gun side
And when they pulled her from the wreck
You know she still had on her shades
They say that dreams are growing wild just this side of Burma Shave