

## Putnam County

Tom Waits

I guess things were always quiet  
Around Putnam County  
Kind of shy and sleepy as it clung to the skirts  
Of the 2-lane, that was stretched out like an  
Asphalt dance floor where all the oldtimers would  
Hunker down in bib jeans and store bought boots  
Lyin' about their lives and the places that they'd been  
Suckin' on Coca Colas and be spittin' Days Work  
They's be suckin' on Coca Colas  
And be spittin' Day's Work  
Until the moon was a stray dog on the ridge and  
The taverns would be swollen until the naked eye  
Of 2am, and the Stratocaster guitars slung over  
Burgermeister beer guts, and the swizzle stick legs  
Jackknifed over naugahyde stools and the  
Witch hazel spread out over the linoleum floors,  
The pedal pushers stretched out over midriff bulge  
And the coiffed brunette curls over Maybelline eyes  
Wearing Prince Machiavelli, Estee Lauder,  
Smells so sweet  
I elbowed up at the counter with mixed feelings  
Over mixed drinks  
And Bubba and the Roadmasters moaned in pool hall  
Concentration as they knit their brows to  
Cover the entire Hank Williams Song Book  
And the old National register was singing to the  
Tune of \$57.57  
Until last call, one last game of 8 ball  
And Berneice would be putting the chairs on the tables,  
Someone come in say "Hey man, anyone got  
Any Jumper Cables, is that a 6 or a 12 volt?"  
And all the studs in town would toss 'em down  
And claim to fame as they stomped their feet  
Boasting about being able to get more ass  
Than a toilet seat.  
And the GMCs and the Straight 8 Fords  
Were coughing and wheezing and they  
Percolated as they tossed the gravel  
Underneath the fenders to weave home  
A wet slick anaconda of a two lane  
With tire irons and crowbars a rattlin'  
With a tool box and a pony saddle  
You're grinding gears, shifting into first  
Yea and that goddam tranny's just getting worse  
With the melodies of "see ya later"  
And screwdrivers on carburettors  
Talkin' shop about money to loan  
And palominos and strawberry roans  
See ya tomorrow, hello to the Mrs.  
Money to borrow and goodnight kisses  
The radio spittin' out Charlie Rich  
Sure can sing that sonofabitch  
And you weave home, weavin' home  
Leaving the little joint winking in the  
Dark warm narcotic American night  
Beneath a pin cushion sky and it's  
Home to toast and honey, start

Up the Ford, your lunch money's there on the  
Draining board, toilet's runnin' shake the  
Handle, telephone's ringin' it's Mrs Randal  
Where the hell are my goddam sandals  
And the porcelain poodles and the glass swans  
Staring down from the knick knack shelf  
With the parent permission slips for the  
Kids' field trips  
Pair of Muckalucks scraping across  
The shag carpet  
And the impending squint of  
First light, that lurked behind  
A weeping marquee in downtown Putnam  
And would be pullin' up any minute now  
Just like a bastard amber  
Velveeta yellow cab on a rainy corner  
And be blowin' it's horn, in every window  
In town.