

Charles Goodrich

Black Bug

Hunched over the wheel
of his thirty-five-year-old Volkswagen,
snap-brim cap tugged low,
my old friend Richard
drives past the Courthouse
with two bales of straw wedged in the back seat.

He doesn't see me wave,
intent as he is on driving
well below the speed limit,
with a log truck bearing down on his tail,
down-shifting,
blatting out black exhaust.

I can taste that trucker's anger,
the whole culture's impatience
with the Richards of the world
poking along, attending
to small things.

Among the few
who remain unseduced
by the glamour of speed, Richard
ages uncomplainingly, a John Keats
growing more peculiar by the day, his wits intact,
negative capability incarnate.