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## The Squad Car

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# The Squad Car

by Rynn Williams

A forty-nine Dodge with squishy balloon tires,  
black and white and solid as a milking cow,  
with an engine that tore the heart out of anyone  
wrong-side-up this side of the line.

Saturdays, once around the loop—no candy  
fingerprints, no scuffmarks, no giggling.  
Battered-metal headset taped up in black,  
the alien intellect of dials and knobs.

How the gears shifted—gently  
easing  
into full throttle, rousing like an animal  
or maybe a ripe flower falling open, petals  
dropping away one by one, revealing its crux.

He'd drive me careful past the bank,  
the five-and-dime, speed up down the stretch  
and back by the old road. Lulled and regular,  
all the Saturday town-people standing

in their Saturday places, slightly in awe  
on the far side of our glass.  
I needed the safety of the car,  
the way it circled the plaza like a planet

orbiting the sun, the continuity,  
quick lemon-wax clean, rounded  
chrome hubs and fenders a force field.  
Something too, of the moon: light and dark.

And the word itself: squad. How it implied a unit,  
a posse of two. Oh that coal blue uniform,  
pressed till it shined, with the badge,  
like the north star, there on his chest.

