



Query

Maybe I'm getting spiritual in my old age, flaky. Maybe it's all the therapy. But lately, when I'm driving in my car, I find I can utterly ground myself by listening to the stereo. A good song comes on and it makes the drive worthwhile: I zoom, I feel a part of the world, for a moment everything is good and exactly how it is supposed to be. I am driving and I am getting somewhere and the music is good. It's all right, everything is all right, and those topics that vex me — stressful practice, doomed marriage — recede, they disappear, and all that's left is the highway and the cars on it, the car ahead, the car behind.

What I achieve is immanence, a manner of religious experience in which, to my understanding, everything is contained within. I have a completeness, which extends to purpose: I have something to do, a simple task, moving from point A to point B, and it's made perfect by the soundtrack. I'm buoyed by the soundtrack. I'm transmogrifying the sound into the feeling of satisfaction.

I know, I know. It's just driving home from work. Just how strange has Ursus become?

The thing is, I don't care. I love the drive home, it's both short and eternal, a half-hour of sedate driving and listening that makes me feel good. I can take pleasure from this simple thing, whereas before I rushed to work, I rushed home, I had a purpose and that was to get to my destination in the shortest time possible, I had *work to do*, after all. *Work to do*. It

was a treadmill, endless, and now I feel free, free from the treadmill.

Do you know what I mean? To possess oneself, to know one's surroundings, to be satisfied with the same, to feel free? To listen to Keane's *Somewhere Only We Know* and feel guilty pleasure at the piano-driven syrupy lyrics; to rock out, I mean absolutely rock out, to the Foo Fighters' *Everlong*, to U2's *Beautiful Day* (an obvious choice, I know, but such a monumental tune, such a sunny-sky tonic deserves inclusion), to the Tragically Hip's apoplectic *Blow at High Dough*. None of these songs are part of my collection, perhaps explaining the power they have over me. When one of these comes on, I feel as if something has been affirmed, I feel a rightness that is, in the end, inexplicable, perhaps I can get as close as this: for a 5-minute interval, I feel chosen.

It's an illusion, I know, but it's a powerful one, a welcome one. Who wants to feel alone in their car, who wants to feel alone at all? I feel part of a larger existence when a good song comes on, part of a design.

Perhaps I should stop here.

— Dr. Ursus

With this issue, we bid adieu to Dr. Ursus. We at *CMAJ* extend a big thank you to him for his sometimes cranky, sometimes humorous, but always honest, insights into the life and times of a physician in Canada. We'll miss you, Bear!