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We're driving. Driving. Driving. It's been hot all day and now a cool breeze starts to push in the window. I look over at the mountains. (They've been cruising along beside us for hours.) The breeze is chasing the sun away. It's like all the heat has gone over to the west and the mountains have swallowed it up. And everything's starting to smell different too...the clouds are scrubbing the ground with a big shadow, and this aroma is rising up as it passes.

I stick my head out to sniff at the air, and a motorbike goes past. Bam-nyaaaah! This guy is completely black. His bike's black too. And he's going soooo fast, he's like a smear. And he leaves behind his own smell...that stuff they put in petrol at the speedway?

The whole country's sloshing around with the smells that get left behind every time something happens. It's like history in the air.

I try to keep my eye on the bike. Just as he shrinks to nothing and disappears around the side of a hill, a big snag of lightning phwangs down into a paddock, like it's trying to snag one of those sheep that are always looking at us as we pass by.

In no time, it's raining. Smell it! Now the car's become an old ocean liner, and we're drifting on water that goes deepdown salty and green for mile after mile. Dad stays at the steering-wheel. He's our captain now, and he's on a mission. But it's like we're going nowhere and service stations and silos just float past and then leave us behind. You see, it's changed again—the countryside—it's ALIVE, it's on the move, and this trip was the first time I learned about it...just a kid going nuts in the back of a car.

I look up in the sky, and there's definitely something going on up there. And then I look behind us, and I see three or four of them following us! The GHOSTS are rising up from the road, each one as big as a man. They're like steam, and as soon as you see them, they disappear. But you know they're still there. And they're beautiful too, the way they walk. Swaying—like steam—kind of floating and sliding, as if they're practising the right way to be on Planet Earth. As if they can only just remember what it's like to be human. Or like they're IMAGINING it because this is their very first time. I decide I'm not afraid of them. No, I like them, these ghosts that are following us around. Maybe they're wanting to tell me something. To give me a message to carry around, like I could be a chattering parrot flying from tree to tree, or like wire between telephone poles.

I close my eyes. Maybe I sleep for a bit, I don't know. But when I open my eyes, the sun's done a swap with the moon. We hear on the radio that a crop circle's just been found, way out on a farm west of Narromine. My Dad's grinning like a big ol' frog. He's loving the idea of these things. Well, yeah, something's going on for him too!

I'm thinking about all this—how parents are people too—when we come over a little hill, and off in the distance there's a bunch of cars pulled up, and torches are waving around. The highway's choking on something.

We coast on down, slow and quiet. Dad's turned off the engine and we've just rolled the last two hundred meters or so. It didn't make ordinary sense, but somehow it seemed the right thing to do.

A lady's waving a bright tartan blanket. And there's a sound like air rushing out of a hole in the sky. The lady runs past. She's screeching. She's running straight down the road, flapping like she's wishing the blanket was wings. Dad gets out and says, 'nobody move.' He walks towards the thing. The rest of us, we sit there. Then I open the door. I'm expecting somebody to stop me, but it only takes two seconds to get out and five seconds to see it. That's all I needed, and it didn't matter that Mum scooped me up straightaway afterwards.

There, sitting on the white line, is the motorbike guy. His bike's on its side, way down the road. And he's just sitting there in his black leather suit, his arms and legs straight out in front of him. But the thing is, there's flames all around him, like he's in this pool full of fire, and he's not moving even a finger. And there's a smell coming off him. And Dad's standing there in front of him, inside the ring of flames, with one arm held out. And the air between them, it's shimmering.

I get yanked back in the car, and everybody's saying 'DON'T LOOK'. Then I smell the rain come down again—this sheet of water just flies along the road and puts out the fire. I climb out the window in time to see the bike guy tumble over. I see one of those steam-ghosts rise up behind him and take off for the sky. Dad looks at it too, tilting his head back like a big old bird.

One big drop of rain hits me, SMACK, in the middle of the forehead.

*Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Ross Gibson.*