

IN SEARCH OF AMERICA – PART 2
A Reefer Trilogy in Four Parts

So, there we were
Somewhere in Oklahoma
Nothing but horizons all around
And there's this dude
Nicely dressed, small sack
Hitchhiking.

Hey, man. Where you headed?
Palo Alto? As in California? Seriously?
Hop in. We're headed that way.
And he does.

Now, get this.
We load up an 8-track tape
- yeah, an 8-TRACK TAPE -
Crosby, Stills, Nash, Young
And get wholly weirded out on O-HI-O
You know

*"Tin soldiers and Nixon coming,
We're finally on our own.
This summer I hear the drumming
Four dead in Ohio."*

Anyway
Before you know it
We're in Texas
The Panhandle
Wind whipping us from one side of the road to the other ...
When he says
Amarillo, cool, let me out.

Before parting
He gave us his phone number
Give me a ring
When you get to town
And, poof,
He's gone
Like magic
Or a ghost
Into the night.

Well, scientists we aren't
But we're driving
He's walking
Who's gonna make it to Palo Alto first?

Course ...
Got caught up in New Mexico a bit
Riley's traditional "Laguna" pottery
... made a real monkey of the Great White Father
... but that's a different story
Wound up with a tomato plant on the dash
Driving around the Navajo res
Staring down a mess of cows
Checking out the Hopi dudes
Bare-backed
Braids and turquoise
And the trading post
Real Indians, speaking real Indian
Petrified Forests
Painted Deserts
Flying squirrels
I mean
There's nothing like this back home.

Busted at the California "border"
What's with this "united" States thing
... sneaking tomatoes ... sneaking TOMATOES no less
... on open display, on the dash
Into the Golden state
"... stuck in Folsom prison ... "

Long story short,
It took us a while
To reach Palo Alto.

But there he was.
An art conservator.
What a talented dude.
Stayed a few days.
Weird town - Stanford and all.
Lots of coffee shops that WEREN'T beatnik pads ...
Go figure.

Well, one thing led to another.
We avoided Redding
Like he said to do.

Watched ourselves in southern Oregon.
Watched everyone else in Portland.
Eventually
Found ourselves
Home – of sorts –
a place to crash
- Maybe to stay, if the mood struck us -
Among friends
In Mount Vernon, Washington ...
craziest bunch of
mountain rescue
sculpture-making
berry-picking,
mustard-growing
dope-smoking
Hippie types
I ever did see.

Abby Hoffman
Grizzley Adams
And Pablo Picasso
All rolled into one.