

Traveling Salesman

Slams again the door on
children, wife,
debts of his life; with
early enthusiasm would hit
his territory's four points
all at once, if able.
Like the last buffalo, his
coupe humps into the sun
for the country run; the center
line unreels toward barns and the
willing daughters of farmers.

He comes christ-like,
but with a Fuller line;
martyred on cross-roads, in
smoked rooms, by cracker
barrels and Franklin stoves.
Converts with drinks for the
house, cigars, pencils, and
a big piece of himself.
In those rooms where people
stiffen like cattails his
sample case opens, filled
with dreams, dirty jokes, and
old undies of farmers' daughters.

Keep 'em laughing the book says:
his knack and trespass is jowly
mirth. Sweat presses his skin
with salty tears. Slams his door
behind a final joke and the dusty
coupe drives into the complexities
of night, where headlights pierce
empty land. The lady of the hood
leads on, like any farmer's daughter.

-- Albert Drake

The Trumpeter
screaming at a
streaming
sun

-- Margaret Garrison