she was several people
                    in front of me; putting
                    her items on the
                    checkout counter:

                    a plant;
                    four green bananas;
                    a bottle of salad dressing
                    and two well squeezed grapefruits
                    that i assumed had passed the test.

                    there are many things that
                    i do not understand.

                    this is just one of them.

          LARRY

          there for a while i was working for
          a fifty-year-old alcoholic;
          selling books and records at
          a place called the mad hatter.

          larry had this old volvo and
          when he'd get a bit drunk he'd
          want to go driving around town.

          he was always saying:

          this is a REAL CAR!
          this isn't no piece of SHIT!
          this car can stop on a DIME!

          and he'd whip it up to
          fifty or so and slam
          on the brakes

          SEE? this car has BRAKES!
          it stops like a car OUGHT TO!

          well, one day he whipped it
          on up and when he slammed on
          the brake nothing happened.

          when we finally stopped i
          said; ok, that's it, let
          me out, i'm walking.

          larry looked at me and said,
          john, don't worry, i know what's
          wrong and i can fix it.

several days later larry had
this part and we were parked
in front of the store with the
hood propped up, drinking beer
and doing car things

after four or five beers larry
said it was fixed and that it
was time for a test run.

we drove (slow) down back streets
to the high school and he whipped
it on up and slammed on the brakes.

SEE! SEE! I told you i could fix it!

and this is just to say, larry,
wherever you are, i hope that
time has been kind to you and
that your old volvo still stops
on a dime.

OUR CAT

sits in the window; fat
gut pressed up against
the screen; talking
shit to any cats
that come up on
his porch

he thinks he's a tough guy

the other morning my wife
saw a little white cat
chase our tough guy
through the house;

back into the study,
tail big, feet
sliding on the
hard wood

he still sits on the window
sill; talking his same line
of shit but i don't think
so many of the other cats
are buying it now.

                    — tom caufield

                    Conway AR