

2010

# Driving In October, I Burst Into Tears

Jim Crenner

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.uiowa.edu/iowareview>

Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Crenner, Jim. "Driving In October, I Burst Into Tears." *The Iowa Review* 40.1 (2010): 81-82. Web.  
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.6852>

This Contents is brought to you for free and open access by Iowa Research Online. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Iowa Review by an authorized administrator of Iowa Research Online. For more information, please contact [lib-ir@uiowa.edu](mailto:lib-ir@uiowa.edu).

## DRIVING IN OCTOBER, I BURST INTO TEARS

A deeply loving schizophrenic man of forty-five,  
my son has spent the day helping me rip out the frost-  
killed remnants of the garden, put away the tools,

hoses, lawn chairs—the season. I've taken him home  
to his lonely apartment, an hour away, and am returning  
to my un-lonely house, and Elena, at work on an article.

I'm driving into the west an hour after sunset, NPR  
on the radio, an actor named Robbie Coltrane—who  
played Hagrid in the Harry Potter movies—talking

about his new hit TV show called “Incredible Britain.”  
Each week he takes a crew to some little backwater  
village and films the live-action of a local tradition.

81

In one show, the populations of two adjacent towns vie  
to kick, carry, throw, or otherwise propel a small keg  
of beer some miles across the line into their town first—

hundreds battle, with no rules but the unwritten one  
of no killing. This tradition, says Robbie, goes back  
to Roman England. “There's about eleven or twelve

hundred people,” he says, in his lilting burr: “It's like  
the biggest rugby scrum on the face of the earth!”  
Just then I crest a hill at sixty on the empty two-lane

blacktop ribboning through these central New York  
farmlands—where one town once tried to start a tradition  
of making the world's largest pancake but sustained it

Jim Crenner

for only one year—and up ahead high on the next rise  
behold a streetlight glowing a civilized electric yellow  
against the ocean-green expanse of the evening sky,

cloud-tracked and apricot-smudged—and I burst into tears.  
There could be a TV show called “Incredible Everything”  
and the thought of leaving everything forever in another

decade or so undoes me. My vision blurred, I feel a front  
tire hit the gravel shoulder and I jerk the wheel sharply,  
thinking, what would my son say about this sentimental

applauding of the world’s wonders? “Better to keep your  
eyes on the daggone road, father,” I guess, and, thinking  
I’m going to laugh out loud, I burst into tears again—

82

though whether out of euphoria or despair, I couldn’t say.  
Well—yes, I probably could, if it mattered. But it doesn’t.  
What does though is how incredible it is that it doesn’t.