

Sunday Morning Church With Doc

On the train Sunday morning with church goes

We're taking different kinds of trips

But we're all headed to the same place.

Then the New Jersey Turnpike South, headed towards the parkway. Its almost as if I fell asleep on the A-train from Brooklyn and woke up in the strange and bizarre world of my Grandmother's. Here, things don't make sense when they should. Papers disappear when you know you had them just a minute ago.

Strange things happen and strange people populate this universe. Like this guy named "Doc." (I'm glad I know of this fella named "Doc." It seems that your life will be incomplete until you know someone you can call "Doc.") This Doc ain't no medical professional either. This Doc ain't no professional nuthin,' 'cept maybe *professionally* strange. But at the same time, Doc is every black man over 65 years old right now here in December od 2002. "Doc" talks with that Old Black Man voice – there 's some sort of accent there, but I'm not sure whether it's because of a regional influence, or that of time's passage.

Everything is "crayzuh" to Doc. 'Doc, the directions say to take exit 101.'

"Yeah, but exit 101 is crayzuh. It's a crayzuh exit."

There's some rasp in Doc's voice. Gravel that built up after all the drinking – and maybe because of the few times he blazed some reefer with his uptown friends. But mostly because of all the licka' he's had. Especially that homemade potion cousin Purdie used to make in the basment of that house they had down south. Nowadays Doc don't drink too often, well not serious drinking anyhow - as he would have people know. It's an everyday thing for Doc – a ritual drink. Sometimes he drinks to deliberately distract himself from cleaning all of the loose pieces of paper out of the car.

There's paper everywhere in Doc's car: under the seats, on the seats, on the dash, in the dash, under the dash. Piles of paper cluttering the back seat make it impossible for a passenger to be comfortable. Old articles from the newspaper; plastic bags as if he had just come from the grocery store, unloaded his foods and left the bags in the car; one leather glove looking warm and worn. The Club™ from when it first came out; and papers ... more papers. Paper towels and stained napkins – he'd probably try to offer you one too if your nose was running or something like that. If you had a crumb on your chin that you didn't know about. But he'd probably just try to knock the crumb off your chin without offering a napkin or even telling you that he was helping to maintain your appearance. And because his site is a little off, he would hit you kinda hard on the cheek and it would startle you – you'd have to restrain your impulse to yoke Doc up for hittin you like that. But you realize that Doc just can't see too well. Maybe his prescription ran out ... 20 years ago. Or it might be that his lenses are so crusty with accumulation he just can't see through them. On the other hand, it

could be the rubber band rigged between the two arms of the glasses that are not really giving them adequate support, so they slip down a bit, and Doc can't see too well. The flashlight that Doc's got in the back seat probably doesn't work and wouldn't help him to see better anyway. Besides, someone should tell Doc that he needs to focus in on that crumb that always seems to be hanging in the corner of his mouth.

Doc, my man, keep it together, Doc – with your tweed blazer and jacked up American-made compact car. The one with the rear right quarter pane window long gone since you backed into that low hanging branch of the tree. That's alright though, because the combination of loose paper, plastic bag, and duct tape covering the whole does the job just fine. Thanks for the ride Doc. Thanks for keeping an eye out on my Grandmother. Keep it together Doc, keep it together.