

1992

We both ride in back. . .

Chris Macaluso
Denison University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.denison.edu/exile>



Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Macaluso, Chris (1992) "We both ride in back. . .," *Exile*: Vol. 39 : No. 1 , Article 55.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.denison.edu/exile/vol39/iss1/55>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the English at Denison Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Exile by an authorized editor of Denison Digital Commons.

We both ride in the back.
Shirts off.
Ankles covered in fresh cut grass
sweating in the Virginia sun.
My skin is brown,
his black as night.
This is my summer job,
it's his life.
The mowers on the trailer
rattle and clang as we roll down
the highway.
Junior tells stories:
about the scholarship he was offered
to play basketball at U.S.C..
"College don't teach ya nuthin',
look at chew."
He smiles bearing a front
tooth that is wrapped in gold
leaving only the shape of a heart
in the natural white enamel.
Junior tells me of the riots.
He talks of last Labor Day, 1990
Those that brought Virginia Beach national attention.
The "Guard" had to be called in
Black vs. White.
He tells me of other race wars,
scars from dog bites, stories of fire hoses.
The truck stops
Mowers, weedwackers
and gas cans clash in the trailer.
I ask,
"Why do you live down here
with all these rednecks?"
We pull our mower cords in unison.
"Ya see, in the soufh, dey hate da race,
and dey like the individuals. In the norfh
dey love da race, but dey hate da individual.
Judge me for who I am."
We go off to put a fresh coat of grass
on our ankles.
Cutting the Virginia field
under the hot sun,
my skin dark, shiny with sweat.
What Junior said, echoes
Over and over. I'm from the north.
We fought for black freedom.
I'm not racist.
Then I realized the most unlikely
event had occurred
I had to go to the South to find
I was.

Chris Macaluso '93