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New Jersey is the only state I know where the road system is unmapped. The state, I feel sure, was much easier to travel in colonial times than today. In the old days, a traveler followed the axe marks on the trees and camped by the rivers. Nowadays, however, racing along at 65 miles per hour, holding three inches of space between the front and rear of bumperless cars, an exit sign announcing a lane change 30 feet from the exit to Ant Crawl Avenue enroute to Dip Street is a challenge indeed.

After I landed in Philadelphia, I tried to buy a New Jersey map and failed. I had a new McNally road atlas along, and the rental people furnished an abbreviated map of New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Once I crossed over into New Jersey, however, the maps disagreed on how to go by Princeton and to my ultimate destination up west of New York City.

The density and momentum of the traffic continued to increase outside of Philadelphia. Over across the state line, signs began to appear: "Right Turns Only." I needed to exit to the left to go by Princeton University. I'd roll up to a signal light and spot the correct highway number, only to be pushed on further by a "no left turn" sign. On top of the trauma of being locked in the wrong lane, the turn indicator signals on the rent car kept clicking and clacking without flashing on the dashboard. Took about 10 blocks to

discover the clicking was my head throbbing from a tension attack.

Way past the last Princeton exit, a sign warned Route 95 was merging into the New York Turnpike. I cut across two lanes of solid Peterbilts and Toyotas to make a right turn. I knew I'd be safer anywhere in the country than lost in New York City.

The turn proved to be a moment of enlightenment. Slowly it sunk in: "the only way to make a left turn at an intersection in New Jersey is to turn right and a circle goes around to the traffic light, thus the meaning of right turns only."

The situation was so desperate, I stopped for directions at a car lot. The salesman paused at his desk and mocked my drawl: "Wal, Tex, whut yawl needs to do is go back on that thar turnpike and take exit 83, thurty miles from here." I was so relieved I complimented him on his accurate enunciation of our idiom and also how lucky I felt running into a bilingual car salesman.

Safe on the way, I had better tell where I was headed. Every two years the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation underwrites a poetry festival at Stanhope, New Jersey. The "R" in the Foundation's title stands for Rockefeller. Geraldine, a daughter of John D., left enough dough to her foundation to bankroll holding a \$3 million festival every two weeks, much less pulling one off every two years. Bill Moyer taped the last festival on PBS, drawing more attention

to what was already the largest poetry festival in the Americas.

Hotel reservations were tight a month before the festival. Twelve thousand people buy tickets for the four-day affair. Among the patrons are 1000 teachers, loads of students, plus special bus service from West Point Academy and New York City. My room was an hour's drive from Stanhope. I added 30 minutes travel time, stopping at fire houses and gasoline stations for directions.

The worst guide was a fireman. He must have been suffering mental fatigue from playing too much solitaire or dominoes. Had I followed his directions, the festival would have ended before I made home base. Several gasoline grinders tied for being the most incomprehensible. Hotel clerks helped the most. They did radical things for guides, like consult maps and write down directions.

I had plenty of reasons to go to the festival. Miss Greengross read lots of poetry the six semesters I was in the fifth grade. The Northeast is beautiful in September. And I was worn out by the drouth and weary of the political malaise darkening our country. I wanted to hear the poet laureate of the United States and all the other gifted poets on the program read their work. I was tired of pricing cow feed and pasturing old ewes on dry stubble and cactus fruit. I wanted to hear new words and phrases instead of old phrases, like "captive cattle" and "imported lamb."

The first morning breakfast was at picnic tables underneath hardwood trees, setting their golden leaves to flight in the sharp autumn air. Beneath a large white gazebo, people gathered to listen to amateurs read. Under an enormous green circus tent, a jazz group played. On the walks, Peruvian Indians played out a furious dance of aborigine passion on a rawhide drum and wood flute.

Time dissolved, and I was glad I had risked my life on the Jersey expressways and braved the insult of a secondhand car salesman to make the festival ...