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General Lee

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Renken: General Lee

GENERAL LEE

Samuel Stenger Renken

My grade school friend,
Brant Haze, was helping
start their stubborn Suburban
one morning before third
grade, accidentally turning
the key when his adopted
father asked him *not* to start it.

His skin is two tones
darker than small town, and it's true,
his attention span was nothing
to write his home country,
Brazil, about. His heart
wanted nothing more than to be
accepted. That morning the fan took
two of his father's fingers, and
Brant was heartbroken by his own
actions, so much so, that he began
acting out even more than usual
in class and spray painting the modules.

He is gifted
at making people laugh and drawing
cars, but that could only take him
so far through the maze of acceptance
that forms in rural America like
Imperial, where he found the time
to restore an exact replica
of the General Lee between
joints and keg stands in the fields
on the outskirts of town.

When he did finally find the nerve to drive that Charger with the Confederate Flag painted on the roof out of town, he didn't make it very far before missing a mandatory turn on Highway 81 in York, Nebraska, where he drove that shiny old Dodge through the sidewall of Napa Auto Parts and waited for a tow truck that would extract the vehicle from the spot where it quit driving beside the radiators and a wall of belts next to the showroom.