

# Talmage Turtle

Curt Vevang

*Did you ever wonder ... why turtles cross the road?*

As I readied to hike the old lake road,  
I was told the town had a stringent code.  
If on the road, there's a turtle in stride,  
you must move him with care, off to the side.  
With this advice I was off on my hike.  
Will I meet a turtle? What are they like?  
All humor aside, I'm in amazement,  
just why a turtle would cross the pavement?  
But maybe he must - on his way to work.  
I'm sure he knows well the dangers that lurk.  
Perhaps Talmage Turtle kisses his mate,  
with lunch pail in hand, he heads out the gate.  
He gets to the road and across he heads.  
Hustling and watching for cars and mopeds.  
Then out of the blue, a palm from above.  
He's whisked back home in what passes for love.  
A caring hand just obeying the rule.  
But to a turtle it's an act so cruel.  
For now he's back home, back home at his door,  
from whence he must trek, off to work once more.

When Talmage leaves work he stops with his crew.  
They plot their routes home while having a brew.  
Then bravely he's off, he heads for the road.  
Will he get across? be crushed? or be towed?  
By now you've guessed it, he didn't get far,  
grabbed once again and placed back at the bar.  
He calls his dear wife to tell of his fate,  
"Hi turtle dove, I'll be a little late."

Nightmares plague him at the thought of the sight,  
of an alien hand grasping him tight.  
He tries to lie still, pretends to be dead.  
Possessed by such fear he draws in his head.  
There he cowers, in still rigor mortis,  
this once - ancient, bold and mighty tortoise.

Published in Northwest Cultural Council Poet and Artist  
Chapbook, 2012