

HARRY THE HIPPIE

by Brad Reed

Old Harry was a hippie with hair down to his waist,
who never hurt a living thing, and lived his life in peace.
With gentle hands and sandaled feet, he loved the earth below.
With open heart and kindly smile, blessed all he came to know.

Though friends and lovers came and went throughout his wandering life,
one thing remained through Harry's years, more loyal than a wife.
His old VeeDub, a fifty-nine, with rainbows on the sides
and stickers in the windows, and a peace flag flying high.

Harry and his beetle were partners all their days,
until that dark and mournful day, when they parted ways.
Harry's heart, so full of love, finally gave it up,
and Harry died where he had lived, in his beloved bug.

Surprised, he was, when at the gates, St. Peter stood alert,
and asked him how he'd led his life, if any he had hurt.
"You see," said Peter in booming voice, "before I let you through,"
"Any hurt you caused down there, must be repaid to you."

Harry's soul jumped in his chest, and he smiled a kindly smile.
"I've hurt no one on earth," he said, "it never was my style."
But Peter frowned and clucked his tongue then pointed to a line
of people who wore angry looks that went about a mile.

"All of these," old Peter said, "you've hurt and must repay,
"So take it like a man," he said, "receive what you have made."
Harry stood confused and sad, and wracked his addled brain.
Each face he'd known flashed through his mind, but none had he caused pain.

So giving in and standing tall, he approached the seething line,
at the head of which was a little girl, who looked no more than nine.
She looked at him, and made a fist, and punched him in the arm
and Harry gasped at the thought of it – *had I ever done her harm?*

But then she spoke and Harry knew, his punishment was right.
Punch Bug! she yelled, and laughed a bit, and then went out of sight.
So Harry stood for hours on end as each one passed him by,
slugged him in the arm and then went off into the sky.

Then Peter swung the gate behind, and bade him come on through.
"I think you'll find," he said with a grin, "a friend inside for you."
Then there it was, with rainbow paint, his bug all shined and tuned.
He climbed inside, turned the key, and into heaven vroomed.