



# The Sheriff of Catoosa County

*Or, One more last American hero, yes!*

BY DAN GERBER

• Independent truckers, protesting the skyrocketing price of diesel fuel, have just called off their blockade of truck stops along Interstate 75. Barney Creech and his Kenworth are rolling again, heading north toward Chattanooga and the Tennessee line, slightly over load limit with structural steel. He's slightly over the speed limit, edging up on 70, trying to make up some of the time he lost to the blockade. He's feeling the tension dissolve, getting back into the rhythm of the road, when he sees the flashing red light in his mirrors. His stomach tightens momentarily, then

eases as he discerns it's only an ambulance. The ambulance passes. He smiles with relief and settles back behind the wheel. Then suddenly the smile fades. A white Pontiac Trans Am, the word "Sheriff" emblazoned above its rear spoiler, blasts past him at slightly more than 100 miles per hour. Instinctively, he lifts his foot and reaches for his CB mike to warn his brother truckers ahead. But before he is able to get the

*Gerber is a poet, novelist, and freelance journalist who used to drive race cars. He's outrun the law many times, but never in Georgia.*

button down, Channel 19 is flooded.

"Jesus Christ, it must be a war. Smokeys in clusters, must be a hundred of 'em, headin' toward that carpet city."

Before he gets his mike back on the hook, another white Trans Am slips past, its pipes blating like a Grand National stocker, then another and another. Zap, zap, zap. He's fairly certain he's counted eight in all. He's feeling a little dizzy. He could have more easily adjusted to UFOs. He grabs the mike again. "County mounties in Trans Ams. Can you believe that?"

"Hell, this'd be Catoosa County,



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