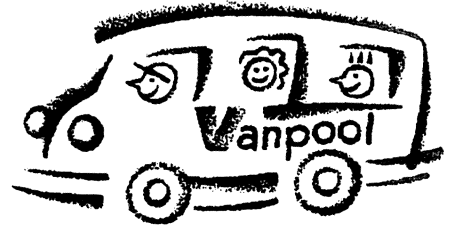


'Twas the Night Before Monday

'Twas the night before Monday and all through the house,
Every creature was stirring, 'specially me and my spouse.
My wife did the dishes while I tubbed the kids.
I was taut as a bowstring, a fact I well hid.
My commute starts tomorrow, I thought with a sigh,
A long commute because this new house was a buy.

I had joined a vanpool, but I still had my fears.
I'd been a lone commuter, solo driving for years.
What if the vanpool was unfriendly or cold?
What if they thought me too shy or too bold?
What if they hated my cologne or my hair?
'Twas my fear they might toss me right out on my rear!



In the gray light of morning I stood on the curb.
Some others stood near reading Dear Ann in the Blurb.
The purring van engine could be heard down the way
Its bright headlights heralded the start of the day.
With a flourish it stopped and we all climbed aboard.
Though only fifteen, to me seemed a horde.

The driver called Tom led the round of intros,
Naming Sue, John, and Michael before they could doze.
Harry Hunter kept books and collected my money.
Joan and Betty told stories I thought were quite funny.
Pam, in the front seat, was Tom's driver back-up.
It was Sal's turn for coffee; she gave me a cup.

Helen read a law brief. Jane worked an afghan.
Anita was chatty; she talked recipes with Stan.
A vanpool is certainly made up of all sorts.
Dave shared his paper... I settled to "Sports."



"Vanpooling's the answer," popped into my head.
I was silly to feel I had something to dread.

My vanpool offers comfort, friendship, and thrift,
And a ride to my work that is pleasant and swift.
If you asked me about it, I know what I'd say,
"Happy vanpooling to all. It will start a good day!"