

## American Motors

By James Harmon Clinton

If you want to see it, watch “Trouble in Mind;” watch it bleed down wet, black Rain City streets. Fading red, black on the roof and the minute trunk set amid the fastest fastback: a sixty-five Rambler Marlin,

automatic on the floor, and black cloth buckets deeper, better than anything else American Motors ever built. One photo remains, my ex-wife sitting on the hood, wind in her face as she squinted across Caddo Lake.

I drove it up America’s spine, crossed the Mississippi River bridge at Cairo, bisected Illinois to Madison, bypassed the Dells and Baraboo, traced river valleys into the bumps, pools, and flows of northern Wisconsin.

I drove it on the fresh asphalt of paintbox subdivisions, got it up to a hundred and ten on the gravel road leaving the Red Brick Tavern in scarlet dudgeon—a minor fault of composure, a little breakdown, a brief engagement

of unquellable, beer-stoked fury. I drove it home. Later, I used the transmission-smoking, rattling hulk as down payment on my next car: a metallic green, first edition Javelin, a somewhat less operatic medium of transport.