Somewhere in the Car

(The Spider Song)

Words & Music: Pat Drummond (5.25)

Dateline... Thredbo, NSW

Australia contains the most bewildering array of venomous 'creepy crawlies' imaginable. For overseas visitors, the mere apparition of a single Huntsman Spider is enough to inspire paroxysms of fear. Growing up in Australia, we've somewhat learned to co-exist with snakes and large spiders and many of our tall tales have focused on them. In the tradition of Banjo's Paterson's "Johnson's Snakebite Antidote" comes this somewhat blacker tale (concerning the deadly Funnel Web Spider) which I was inspired to write after a close encounter of the mobile kind in the Walcha Ranges.

It came out of the dashboard, barely two foot from her face,

when the heating fan inside the vent began to oscilate.

She could not believe her eyes.

She thought the vent had come alive,

as the probing legs came blackly through the grate.

A spiky sheet of fear flew up her back.

She fought to force her fingers to relax;

but with one eye on the grate,

she stabbed blindly at the grate

and the battered Holden skidded off the track.

It squeezed past the plastic, fell forward with a 'plop';

she screamed and watched it run back through the car.

Like a herky-jerky doll, spring-loaded in a box,

she catapulted through the door onto the tar.

The night air hit her body like a blow.

It was very nearly four degrees below.

On the back road to Khancoban, from the lights of Jindabyne,

she'd been running with the coming of the snow.

Chorus: It's somewhere in the Car! Lord, it's somewhere in the car!

The cabin light's not working and the night is deathly dark.

You know there's matches somewhere, but you don't where they are;

and the damn thing is somewhere in the Car!

She'd driven down from Sydney, where it must have got on board.

She knew it was a Funnel Web; she'd seen the things before.

But they're rarely quite as large, or as ugly and as fast,

as the thing that she'd seen running on the floor.

Now she flipped the driver's rear door open wide;

but the moon was gone, she couldn't see inside.

Under the empty biscuit packets and discarded burger wrappers,

there was far too many places it could hide.

Chorus.

(Spoken) So she walked round in front of the Holden and looked at it,

as it lay in the ditch like a wounded beast.

She knew no one else was coming up the road that night from Khancoban...

She wondered what the hell she was going to do.

Several feet of fallen tree had gone in through the grill

and the one remaining headlight glimmered dimly in the chill.

Then the first few flakes of white spun and danced along the light,

as the blizzard came in howling from the hills.

The horror of her situation dawned.

She knew she'd freeze unless she sheltered from the storm.

With every nightmare that she'd known,

she climbed back inside the Holden;

driven by the desperation to be warm.

Through the hours of the darkness she stared into the blackness.

Every muscle in her body quivering in wild alarm;

every time she thought she heard it as it skittered through the papers;

every time she thought she felt it on her arm.

The howling mountain blizzard locked it's fingers 'round their prison

and the storm clouds blotted out the stars.

"Hell, isn't hot at all", she thought, "it's colder than the grave!

And it runs on silent legs inside this car!"

Now the spider died at midnight, frozen by the alpine air,

but as it fell down from the roof... there was a scream of wild despair;

and next day they found her there, with a catatonic stare,

and the Funnel Web still tangled in her hair!

So they searched the woman's body for a bite.

Though there was none, she was dead and icy white.

The coroner said, "Probably, a stress-related coronary."

('cause he didn't want to say she'd died of fright!)

Chorus.

Now there's a scientist on the Sunday social page

who's just been married to a girl who's half his age;

while back in his laboratory at Sydney University...

there's a Funnel Web.... that's missing from it's cage.