

## **Looper** **"Columbo's Car"**

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We kept seeing Columbo's car around  
First of all we saw it outside Burger King on Byres Road  
Badly parked, about five feet away from the kerb  
And at the craziest angle, as if he'd stopped there in a  
hurry

Then my brother saw it outside the place  
Where the swimming pool and the badminton courts  
are  
And later again I saw it parked outside the off-license  
Closer to the pavement this time, and parallel too

We only ever saw the car parked  
But it always seemed to be outside somewhere I liked  
to go  
And then, when we went out for dinner on wee Karn's  
birthday  
And we were hanging our coats up on the coat-rack

We saw Columbo's old mac already hanging there  
In amongst all the expensive fur and leather and things  
I had a quick look around while we were being taken to  
our table  
To see if he was there, but I couldn't see him anywhere

But then one night  
While I was sitting outside on the steps  
Playing my Gameboy  
I heard a car stopping on the gravel in front of me

And while I tried to decide  
Which way 'round to put the L-shaped Tetras piece  
That was falling, I felt someone sit down on the steps  
beside me  
And I heard them scratching their head  
And then, on the reflection on the screen, I saw that it  
was him

"Those really are the most fascinating little machines",  
he said  
But I'd built up a whole high pile, which needed a single  
line

For down the side, and I couldn't look up in case it  
came

"It certainly is nice around here", Columbo said  
And I heard his mac moving as he looked around  
The single line I'd been waiting for didn't come though  
And soon my screen was filled all the way to the top

So I put it down and asked Columbo  
If someone from around here had been murdered  
"Not murdered, sir, no", he said, "I don't think you  
could call it murder"  
"Well, what are you investigating?", I asked him

"Well, sir, it's a case of counterfeit notes  
Perhaps you'd call it theft, but I'm not rightly sure  
It's new for me, I'll tell you that"  
Then he picked up the Gameboy and stared at it, all  
fascinated

"Could I? Would you mind?", he said  
And I showed him how to start up a game  
But pretty soon the screen was full and he shook his  
head  
"Well, well", he said

"You know, Mrs. Columbo, she's great at these sorts of  
things  
But me, I just can't seem to get the hang of them"  
And he stood up and handed it back to me  
"I'm sorry to have troubled you, sir", he said

"I'll let you get back to your game  
You know, this really is a lovely area"  
And as he walked off down the steps  
I watched until he opened the door of his car  
And I went to start up another game

But then he stopped, "Oh, I'm sorry", he said  
Holding one hand up in the air, with a cigar between his  
fingers  
And looking down at the ground, "Just a little thing", he  
said  
And he scratched the back of his head  
With the hand that had been up in the air

"With something like that, sir, that little machine you  
have there  
Would someone be able to make samples with that  
From records and stuff?", I laughed and shook my  
head

"That's fine, sir", he said, "I was just curious"  
Then he got into the car and drove away

I didn't think I'd see him again after that, but I was very  
wrong  
I began to see his car around a lot more  
Quite often outside the houses of people I knew  
And not only that, but just lately he's started turning up  
Wherever I might be

Asking me all kinds of crazy questions  
About technology and sampling and stuff  
Pretending he's trying to learn all about it  
It got me quite worried for a while, but I think I'll be  
alright  
I think I've got him foxed, I think I've been way too  
clever for him

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