

For Those Who Love Fast, Loud Things

This poem is for the track folk who just love the smell of Ethanol.

For the Carb Day cut sleeve sporters, the Snake Pit dancers,
and Coke Lot campers with bald eagle bandanas.

This is an anthem for the hearts that've surged at the scope of the Pagoda.
For the hands that know the feeling of slapping the North Vista tunnel ceiling.
For the lips that whisper along with Florence Henderson when she sings,
yes. This poem is for the 500 fans who love fast, loud things.

The hot dog chompers and buttermilk sippers, and
granddads with ledger pads in suede cases and locked zippers.

This is for every kid that's stood along the stretch—with toes
on top of a cooler and their fingers gripping the fence.

For the open-wheel gear heads, parade wavers, and Legends Day fans.
For the moms smeared with baby sunscreen changing diapers in the stands.

This poem is for the Brickyard pickers, marching band
clappers, the bucket drummers and gasoline alley cats.
This is for the pit crews, the announcers, the flyby pilots in the sky.
For the girl who'd never seen her dad cry until the day Dan Wheldon died.

This poem is for the *Andy Griffith* neighbors, the binocular
watchers, and the concession yellers hawking cold brews.
This poem is for every shoulder with a Memorial Day tattoo.

This is for the drivers willing to go bumper to bumper, for the flag
flappers, and the earbud-in-clutched palm fist pumpers.

This is your poem Indianapolis, taking the turn with direct injection. Race fans,
thank you for being the sparks that start the engines.

Dedicated to Evan, and all IndyCar fans, 2016

—Adam Henze, Bloomington, IN

From the author: My goal was to write an engaging poem that race fans could really relate to, while employing vivid images and sound devices the arts community could appreciate as well. I believe an energetic performance of this poem has the potential to capture the attention of thousands of audience members who might not know how much poetry can relate to them. Ultimately, the goal of my submission was to create a 500 anthem that all Indy Car fans would be proud to identify with.

Adam Henze is an educator and Ph.D. student living in Bloomington. He is an internationally-touring performance poet, and is the director of an academic summer camp for high school writers.