

Ford Festiva Not Actually Built Ford Tough
By Meg Thompson

Mira calls, announces her car won't start. She's in Fairmont. I give her my AAA card number, tell her to call if things don't look promising. I water my plant, she calls back. I suggest calling her boyfriend but our staunch feminism gets in the way. Mira, in a hurry to get to class, doesn't have time to give adequate directions. Meanwhile, my charmingly feminine boyfriend is at a coffeeshop mentoring a student in creative writing so I drive to Fairmont hoping I find Mira's car somewhere. I find it, am so relieved forget it doesn't work. When Mira gets out of class, somehow she gets the car to start. We go get a beer and a sandwich. Mira will later equate this happy time to the Last Supper.

Driving home we see the Festiva is, indeed, not built Ford tough. In the middle of nowhere her car dies on the road. For some reason there is a lot of traffic. I park on a sidestreet and run back down to Mira. Mira parks her car in front of an abandoned barn. We run up the hill to my car. Mira tells me to get my knees up because I run like a girl.

It's hard to run up a snowy hill in Birkenstocks.

We call AAA. Shandra tells us it would be about 90 minutes. We entertain ourselves by singing Johnny Cash and thinking about the worst possible things that could happen.

Tow Truck driver finally comes. Mira is enthralled by the WVU basketball game on the radio and, accordingly, has lost interest in our previous situation.

The next day Mira tries to drive to work but has to abandon ship and walk the rest of the way. She PRTs it home, wakes me up from my nap. Mira has devised a scheme which we like to call "Slouching toward Exxon."

We find the Festiva. It doesn't work. We need to move it to a less illegal zone, push it over a hill. Mira refuses to call a tow truck. My only job is to release the emergency brake, press the clutch, and put the car in neutral. Mira realizes she cannot push the car over the hill. Somehow we begin yelling at each other. It was only a matter of time.

Mira: Put the brake back on. I can't push it.

Lil: The brake is on.

M: Just put the brake on!

L: I did put the brake on!

M: LIL PUT THE BRAKE ON!

L: I PUT THE BRAKE ON!

Mitsubishi Eclipse and two guys arrive and ask if we need help

L&M: YES!

Guys come over and push. I steer the car into a lawn and they ask Kristin why I did that. I get out of the car and stand on a lawn somewhere trying not to look crazy. Dudes push, Kristin steers. Dudes leave, Kristin remarks on the kindness of strangers.

Speculation abounds about what is wrong with the car. Dev thinks it's the alternator. My dad thinks it's the fuel pump. I think it's the fact it's a 1993 Ford Festiva.