

Vulture

Light really burning now, sun got up all sudden spilling over everything. Dousing it. Noise of the cars playing pizzicato on my nerves. Bead of sweat springs up on Macy's temple, I can see it throb throb throb through her hair.

Slip of metal clasped tight. Calloused old vices sprouting curls, white in places where they bust up and healed and bust again. That bird at it again in the roof of the world. None too many back here, but that one always shrieking. Macy looks up, I do too, but it's too dizzy and the heat starts up again like a motor. I had the same car since before Macy-O, bowing down in the shade there, trying to escape the press.

Fucker roars into life and Macy climbs up rides shotgun when I open the door for her. House gone in the rear-view, all needs paint but been thinking that for years, it'll be dust before. Pass on down past Brer and Peter, who waves with one stump because the other got took.

We stop out the shop and I say to Macy 'wait there.' I done need say it anymore, because she always stays put. Shop-girl rolls her eyes at me. 'Going see shore again, Farley?' I go to the far wall and choose my water-grade. I choose an eight because Macy been awful dry late and needs it. I'd drink ten to get by, nine on Friday. I eye the 1s and 2s, but I can feel they eyes from behind the rack.

Glance through the winder where the hot sun still cuts through the layers the girl got hung. It burns right through the glass. Poor Macy, I think, with no shield. Empties my wallet right out and just have enough, thanks oh thanks. Kids walking past looking real dry, looking at Macy, bug eyes and red skin. Back in the car she is all pinned up one wall in the shade, and I cap the water and pour a bit for her.

Sailing out of town, cutting through the still and the wind feels good against our faces. It's like before the heat come on and the green withered up. Feels like we headed out the coast, for pineapple and to play all day in the waves. Just like real wind come whipping down through the canyons and clusters, fanning the sea. And I think of my buddies, hooting and hollering, side-slipping down the waves. Then we eat up the miles, cutting through the dust on the road and sending it all pluming out behind us. All that curmudgeoning forgot, and even Macy has a smile on.

Now you can clear see where the land end and the sea starts, like a great big column where the dry meets the wet. You'd think it'd be real angry and tense up there in the air, those great differences between the two, but it's like all their energy for a fight just left. This is where they mine water grades 2 to 5, since the rain stopped. It still pisses a bit here, an it leaks a bit from the mills, so they fenced off five miles from the sea to keep people away. We get closer. Thing is, Macy don't know why we are here and she is up all happy at the winder. Eyes find it hard to see the green now, but suddenly we are right up in it and the dust drops away from the tyres. The signs start up, one every hundred or so. I count em, I know where we gone.

It was lucky that Macy found the narrow crack in the wire. The car was giving me trouble or we'da never seen it. Seen her scramble through and come back dripping wet was the happiest day. She shook herself off and I caught the drops on my tongue. Near Pure it was, I swear to you. Macy felt good then for a while but that was then.

We crest the last hill before the slip down to the road where the green is so thick through the fences it feels like you hid from the world. Then there it is, that great jewel of ocean. It looks smaller though, acres of blue stretch and stretch. This is damn near close as you can see it. Pull over then and get out, do a big stretch as if sore from the road. Macy looks excited, cause she been there before. I let open the side door and she comes out like a shot.

She knows where we gone and slopes off down the side of the road where little bits of green are trying to seed in the dirt. Macy runs ahead, and then she wriggles under the wire and beyond, in the natural shade. I want to go under with her, but they'd see the car and we'd have no chance then. I can't keep her you see, can't afford the grades of water she needs, and I know they'll take her soon. I stamp the wire down where it was come up, and give Macy one last look through it. Then she goes.

— Dan Crockett