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There
Sid Gold

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THERE

If you are thumbing West & a trooper in Oklahoma steps from his hog-nosed Plymouth, hands you a yellow warning, tells you you're alright, only half-weird, & puts you off US 40, you might begin walking the two-lane stretched long as a blue-note though Vinita, Enid, determined to keep the sun on your back. At first you won't notice—they're lost or on empty—but when someone does stop, you scramble, waving, toward the ark of a red Buick bought in good times, grinning like a Bible salesman, boots loose & clapping on the cinders as you run. The driver is cool-eyed, iron-haired, his mouth webbed with quick lines, & the woman wears a print dress closed by a pin, her hair & freckles the same muted color. They won't ask questions & your backseat companion is glad of it. He carries no ID, has the wide awake look of an ex-wino who's maybe seen a ghost, & resembles every fair-haired man who can't be certain whether sod or mud or asphalt will break his next fall. Fair-haired smiles often, half-a-face at a time, watches where he rests his hands, slips around back or into the john at every stop, & somewhere between Barstow & San Berdoo you will notice he has gone for good. But you won't know any of this, nor will it have happened, until you have dreamt it some other time & awakened, the sun level with your eyes, in a backyard along the canal in Venice Beach or under a tree in a park in Westwood, & it will seem days since you have truly rested or been anywhere but there.