

New Mexico

In the morning after the ride over the jackrabbit hills and under the paralyzed lemonpeach sky we sat drinking coffee looking at the paned rectangle move down the wall pale and steady as summer rain contradicting the rising sun we could not see.

Lean as Pilates stars Johnnie and Carole Sue came in later one by one folding open and closed the Missouri quilts we'd slept under and opening and closing the book of Johnnie's we hadn't read *Ten Days in the Dirt* his mountain bible all four of

us wondering about time and absence and luck me remarking on the tall small shrine in the hallway holding a curved-neck Madonna with her barely outlined arm burden, saintly one, and above that a horseshoe buttoned with gray nailheads, flowers

from the sage and thorn garden spread everywhere outdoors in the place called *Arroyo de Seco* which hid the snaky stream where Carole caught trout sometimes and I could imagine her frying them up on the white stove chromed and polished like a

beloved old car. It would be time to go soon with our loud maps and Eastern shoes and promises to return but first Johnnie had to show you his book of 1950s stylish porn and we laughed about how some things never change and then they told us

how easy it was to find Albuquerque and the Monterey Motel just after the cloverleaf of 25 and 40 which Carole said was way more complicated than it needed to be and we hugged Goodbye pretending our lives weren't like bricks of luggage someone forgot to pack.