

# The Oval

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## '94 Ford F-250

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## '94 FORD F-250

COLTER MURPHY

blue dawn the entire  
drive down the interstate,  
truck stereo playing a Hank Williams  
tape at three quarters volume  
because the truck tires make  
so much god damn noise.  
brought my own coffee mug,  
but all that's in it is free  
coffee from work yesterday.  
(i don't tell my father about  
the cold, free coffee, and he  
doesn't ask about what's in the mug.)

talked his ear off the whole way there  
(about some pretty random shit too),  
but he smiled and laughed  
at all the right parts so i  
could tell he was actually  
enjoying what i was saying,  
even if the stories were half-assed.

that's how it is if you ever have to  
talk like you're local in small town,  
western montana: everything in a story.  
story of my cousin.  
story of my grandmother.  
story about the elk herd.  
story about the wolves.  
story about the local 6-man football quarterback,  
and how he might walk-on for the Griz.  
story of the cafe waitress:

*And remember that little Chase Reynolds?  
used to walk in here all the time and order  
a slice of chocolate cream pie with his  
brother. I never made him  
pay more than a dollar.*

drove pretty quick  
this morning because  
he showed up 5 minutes late  
and i was ready to go 5  
minutes after that.  
forgave each other,  
but he would never forgive  
himself if he drove anything  
below 80.

pulled off I-90 at  
the two-gas-station town  
of St. Regis.  
he made the same damn joke  
about prowling old women  
as we passed the Cougar Meadows  
subdivision.

he can't let go of that macho,  
crack a crude joke every once  
in a while stuff.

symptom of a lifelong Montanan,  
i guess.

cruised fast down the dirt road.  
i could tell the speed by the rhythm  
of the tires bouncing  
over the first cattle guard.

parked the truck.  
he already had his boots on  
and i didn't. he was patient  
about waiting around.

cows gave us a leery eye  
as we walked past.  
i stopped to take a picture  
of the three pink sunrise clouds.  
he was patient  
about waiting around.

brushed through a thicket of Douglas Fir  
on to a well-established, forking game trail.  
i take the left.

*phones on at 11.*  
*call at noon.*  
*back at the truck by 3.*

we split ways.

i crush fir needles between my fingers  
and breathe in.