

J.D. Mathes

The Long Road to Fresno

After breakfast, I hike up a one lane road to the top of the bluff above the dorms of the prison camp. I've been assigned to work at the electrician shop. Zee, who I met yesterday after I arrived, walks with me as far as the double Quonset hut where he assembles parts all day for heavy equipment. He picks his hair with a plastic fork and tells me to keep it light and laughs at his pun. The road splits to circle the summit and encompasses maintenance buildings, a warehouse, and a radar dome run by the Air Force since the days this place was one of their Cold War posts. I continue up the right side. At the top, I stand a moment and look out over the desert. All the empty space stretching away makes me a little dizzy. It's only an illusion that the land slopes down toward the bluff, but even though I've experienced it hundreds of times since I was a kid hiking, it still gives me a sinking feeling.

I look back and see the barracks, offices, and staff housing built into the base of the bluff and beyond that more miles of desert. On the yards at all the other prisons, I looked through chain-link and concertina wire, but at this camp there isn't even a three-strand barbed wire fence around. The only wall is around the staff houses are like their own West Berlin. I laugh.

At the shop I meet the supervisor. He has a five o'clock shadow at 8am and his feathered and flaked out hair looks as if he's been in a windstorm.

"Hey, man," he says. "Call me Flash. Like Flash Gordon and not flash of electricity. Get it? Always some dumbass has to make the comment about it."

The Allman Brothers' guitar jam "Jessica" plays over box speakers mounted in the corners of the high shop walls. A work bench runs along a wall and there's a tool board and rack.

“All right, so, man, here.” He hands me a metal shower ring with a dozen red metal tags with the number 5 stamped on it. “You take a tool; you leave a tag, so we know who has what. You fuck up and they’ll send you back to a place with razor wire. Get it?”

I’d just been transferred from the Coast and briefly think of the women on the decks of motor-yachts lifting their tops for the inmates lining the fence. Is it so bad to be there or in a place with no fences, surrounded by hundreds of square miles of desert? “I got it, Flash.”

“What the fuck with your hands? It looks like you got hit by lightning on one side and it came out the other.”

I hold my palms out showing the burn scars on my palms. “I burned them on a motorcycle header.”

He looks at me a second. “That sucks.”

“It did.”

“You and I will be partners. I’ll show you around and you can get a handle on the electric layout of the camp. I been here about six months and hoping for parole in two, so you got a little time before I leave. Sledge, he got more time, but he’s kind a slow. Mumbles a lot and has that Thorazine shuffle, though he ain’t on Thorazine. Get it, the shuffle?”

“I get it. I seen it at county lock up.” I’d also seen it in a psych ward, but I didn’t know what it was back then.

“Too much crack back in the Hood most likely.”

I ask. “Where’s the guard?”

“What guard?”

“The one who’s supposed to supervise us and make sure we’re not porking the pooch?”

“This ain’t that kind of prison, New Guy.”

Flash takes me out to run the power grid. Our feed comes off the high-tension wires. He tells me the voltage, which I promptly forget, except for the fact it's a terrifyingly large fucking number. The job we need to do, he explains, is to splice a new main power line into the mega voltage line to run the camp because the old one has been pulling amps since the late 40s. It'll be me and him in the bucket and Sledge down below making sure no one gets in the way and does something stupid.

"How many times have you done something like this?" I ask.

"Never. I read up on it when they told me what they wanted done."

"I mean you must've done something similar in your career."

"Career? I was a dope smuggler with a cigarette boat."

"Oh."

"Don't worry. It'll be fun. At least I'm not sending you up with Sledge."

Flash takes me around the camp with our tool-belts hanging on our hips like building supers on a sitcom. I need to learn the lay-out of the camp's power-grid. He'd learned it from his predecessor because there are no schematics showing how the buildings are wired, where the breaker boxes are, and how to get power back up in the event it goes down. I also learn where inmates sneak to do drugs or drink homemade booze or have sex - the nooks and crannies out of sight, in the shade at high noon, and unlit at night. I follow him out a back trail that skirts a rise out of sight of the camp and technically out of the camp, but the only way to reach a junction box behind the admin building.

I look out into the empty desert. I thought about being in AZ and the desert through the double chain link fence and razor wire. Two bozos thought if they took off their clothes, they could slip through the concertina wire unscathed. They'd gotten the idea from the John Wayne

movie where a Vietnamese soldier shows the new soldiers how the Viet Cong can slip into their perimeter without clothes on. If you could slip in, then you could slip out the dumbasses reasoned. How fucking embarrassing was it to be found entangled naked in the triple rows and stacks of wire because a razor hook had impaled your ball sack? Sometimes the Feds didn't need a snitch to catch the criminal.

"This, New Guy, keeps all this side in power." He points toward the admin building. The Air Force blue knee-high box has a brass lock on it. Flash produces a key and unlocks it. We hinge the awkward lid back. A black widow's web is woven between heavy gauge wires and relays. She hovers over a heavy ball of eggs.

I say, "Somewhere down in there is the corpse of her mate."

Flash looks at me. "You don't say?"

"I do."

He stares for a long moment as if looking to catch sight of a ship on the horizon. "Lucky bastard."

After he explains the ways the wires run, we hinge the lid over and lock the black widow, her brood, and her dead lover in the dark.

Flash says, "We better get back before Sledge thinks we run off."

*

That afternoon, Flash and I go into the admin building. A fluorescent light is blinking, driving the admin people crazy. I learn we need to change the ballast. We walk through the desks. Flash says hi to everyone like he's your average maintenance guy. All the office people smile and ask how his family is doing. He jokes, "Living the high life on the money I send home."

The light is by a round woman's desk. She looks up and smiles big. "Hi, boys," she says.

I say, "Hi." Her desk has a photo of her and a girl in a volleyball uniform with a teammate. I recognize her as the younger sister of a guy in my high school class. She'd been a freshman the year I graduated, so she'd be a senior now. I wonder if she lives in staff housing and takes the school bus like we did from the mine our fathers worked at an hour away from the school. I think of her languishing away her teenage years like a legionnaire in North Africa. It's funny to me how the staff housing looks like mining camp housing just like it's funny we both ended up here and we were both in the National Honor Society. I think about telling the woman to say hi to her and her brother for me, but I don't.

I set up the folding ladder. Flash climbs up and removes the cover. He starts to unscrew the ballast.

"Do you want me to turn off the lights?" I ask.

"Nah. If you connect the wires in the right order, it's not a problem."

The ballast hangs by its wires when he unwinds the wire nuts. They spark a little. Flash reaches down, and I hand him the new ballast. He screws it into place. The first wires he twists together spark and smoke a little. He's handling them with his fingertips as if they're scorpions. He winds the wire nut onto them. The last wires spark as he hurriedly twists the wire nut to connect them. He replaces the cover and climbs down.

Flash smiles. "See, no worries."

*

BOOM BOOM!

The ground shakes. Windows all over the camp rattle. The bucket Flash and I stand in bounces and waves back and forth so close to the high-tension wires that my guts clench. The B-

1 bomber followed by two fighter planes had passed about a hundred yards on the other side of the radar dome. Sledge calls up, “You all, okay?”

I’d seen the aircraft as dots on the eastern horizon. Flash had just used a fiberglass rod to pull a link and break a connection to deenergize a power line. The wind had come up, and I wondered why I was hearing whale songs undulating over the desert. I looked around. Mirages wetted the ancient seabed stretching away from us in all directions. The aircraft at 50 feet off the deck looked like marine animals swimming in the currents of heat wavering above the desert. Was I out of time, hanging in prehistoric space where the extinct songs still echo in the dried-out arroyos reverberating rock to rock like a choir in a cathedral? I watched the aircraft get bigger, their long fuselages, swept back wings, and sloped noses cutting through a continent of air. In the army I’d seen ground attack aircraft emerge over ridges and rip targets apart with cannon fire in a fury of steel and flame. Flash was saying something about bolt cutters as the bomber and fighters sailed by us through blue sky and whale songs.

The sonic booms washed a tsunami of air over us. Our breathing and hearts stopped us dead and restarted in the split second as if getting hit with the defib paddles.

The warplanes follow the slope of the bluff and fly below the limb of the earth, swirling dust off the desert floor. We watch the jets push for the far horizon as we hold on to the swaying basket. They arc up climbing the face of the mountains. The aircraft accelerate and clear the horizon and gain altitude before darkening into silhouettes against the sky. In what seems like many minutes, they glint silver in sunlight before vanishing into the blue. The noise fades away. The world seems empty. The whale songs have disappeared.

“Whoa.” Flash says. “That was crazy.”

I nod. “What’s next?”

“They’ll probably land at the airbase.

“No, here.”

He looks a little stunned. “Right. I’m going to cut this line so we can pull up the new one and splice it in.” He pauses and then points down the line. “Then we go to that power pole and do the same.”

“The power’s legit off, right?”

“That’s what I was doing when the bomber bombed us.” He chuckles at his pun. He leans over and yells down to Sledge. “We’re getting ready to cut! Look out below!”

Sledge gives him a wave and moves next to the building where he can watch the truck’s lift controls and the line fall at the same time.

Flash positions the bolt cutter jaws on the line and starts to squeeze the handles. He struggles. He tries twisting and squeezing and causes the bucket to bounce.

“This is tough. I thought these cutters would go right through this cable.” He angles the jaws and squeezes the handles again. “Come on, New Guy. Help me.”

I take the bottom handle and brace it in my arms as he bears all his weight to push down. The cutters start to bite into the metal.

“Oh, yeah,” he says. “We got some headway now.”

We struggle, pushing and pulling. I sweat and wonder how much longer it’s going to take. We’re three-quarters through the cable, but a braid of strands hang on. The bucket bobs and the horizon appears to jump up and down as the boom creaks and flexes on the hydraulic arms. The uncut strands on the powerline start stretching like two kids pulling taffy.

“Flash. The line is coming apart,” I say.

He stops pushing. “Oh, hell.”

He turns away as the cable snaps. The bolt cutters jerk from our hands. They hit the end of the tether attached to them and snap back. I put my arms up as they hit me, knocking the breath out of me. The powerline shoots out from all the stored energy of being strung taut. When it reaches the end of its flight, it cracks and shoots back. I watch as it whips. Sledge dances about because it's coming for him, but he's not sure which side. He tries to skip over it, but it cuts his legs out from under him, flipping him on his ass.

Flash starts lowering the basket and by the time we get it to the ground, Sledge is inspecting his legs. "I'm good. We don't got to tell the guards."

Flash looks at me. "We all good. Right, New Guy?"

Sledge's pants are torn and a vicious looking welt on his leg shows through. He isn't the fastest guy anyway and this'll slow him up. But worse. What if he's fucked up and needs medical help? I learned clots from blunt force trauma wounds can travel up and cause a stroke. Besides the last time I agreed 'we all good,' I got arrested.

"That wound looks pretty bad. You should see a doctor," I say.

Flash shakes his head. "What? No! He said he was fine."

"I just take it easy, and it'll be all good like Flash say. I can't let them take me out of here. My girl coming to visit in a week. Come on, New Guy."

They both stare at me with that intensity of men who'd beat the shit out of others for pudding. I start to feel that heat of fight or flight. I just want to do my time and get home, hopefully early. "I'm just concerned about Sledge's leg. I don't want to see him crippled up. I mean, if you can promise me if your leg starts acting weird just go to the infirmary."

Their gazes soften. Flash says, “Hell yeah. We all concerned about that.” He turns to Sledge. “Listen. You take the next couple of weeks in the shop organizing and shit. Just take it easy in there. You get what I’m saying?”

He nods to Flash. “Don’t worry, New Guy. I want to keep my leg more than I want to see my girl. I promise you that.”

“All right. Let’s get this job finished,” Flash says. “Sledge, go on and sit in the truck. Lay on the horn if you see anyone getting into the line of fire.” Sledge limps to the cab of the truck.

Flash walks over to a big spool of cable. I follow him. He says without looking at me, “Listen. I know you’re new here, but you should know I ain’t losing my parole on account of a man who don’t know when to get the fuck out of the way. And then to tell him he needs to go to the infirmary. Are you stupid?”

“Stupid is not going to the infirmary.”

“You are stupid. He’s Black.”

“So?”

“Everyone knows a Black guy goes to the infirmary he gets dinged. He either dies from bad meds or he ends up riding the van back to the Coast. Get it? That’s why he’s so uptight.”

“That can’t be true.”

“All right, genius. Riddle me this. When you were in the county jail how many Black guys were on your block?”

“What the fuck? A lot. I don’t remember.”

“How many brothers to white guys or semi-white guys you see around here?”

I hold up, because I’m not sure. This is the most white dudes I’ve been around in a long time, and it’s nothing like being in county lock up.

“Here’s the thing. This camp is like winning the fucking lottery for a spook like Sledge and you want to take that away from him. Seriously. Get with it, New Guy. Don’t jam a brother up just when he got it going on.”

“I just don’t want to see him lose a leg or something.”

“That guy’s been down since ’Nam. He smuggled heroin in coffins from Saigon. Now, he’s this close to being free.” He holds up his finger and thumb an inch apart.

My mind sticks for a second. “He has a girlfriend from that far back?”

“Jesus, New Guy. Yeah. Believe it or not.”

He turns to the spool and grabs the end of the cable. “Drag this over to the bucket. We got to get the power flowing before *People’s Court* comes on and pisses off the warden. He loves his *People’s Court* the way Oak and Stacks love *Dynasty*.”

I grab the end of the new power line and start dragging it. What else could I do?

*

My name gets called and I go down to the visiting area. It used to be a recreation room for the Air Force guys stationed here back in the day. Tables and chairs and a desk where a guard sits and checks people in and out after they’ve gone through whatever searches and checks the visitors go through. We are so far out. What a pain in the ass to travel hours to see someone then pass through the weary measures of the State.

Some of the inmates who get regular visits gather at a lookout spot where they can see the road leading to the entrance. After breakfast on Saturday they stand, chat, and smoke, waiting to see a familiar car roll over a rise, out of a mirage.

Lynne has driven over three hours one way in her old Toyota without air-conditioning. This woman who has thrown her body against riot police and private security on the protest line for nuclear disarmament now subjects herself to the searches of the same system she fights

against. She does it to see me even though we're getting a divorce because I'm a fuckup. I'm not worthy of her sacrifice.

Other people too have traveled the long sweaty miles. Passed through the guards' hands and into the waiting arms of inmates. Some women wear designer labels, and some women wear the same thrift shop clothes every time. Some dads and some brothers, some kids, but mostly women file in. Some guys never receive a visit. Their families not able to afford the time-off work to make the expedition to this outpost, and if they could take time off, then not the gas and if the gas, then the terror of breaking down along the highway, stranded miles from anywhere and even further from home. Sledge still waits on the lookout spot. His girlfriend's car still hasn't rolled up the long two-lane road.

Lynne wears the sundress she had on when a motorcycle cop had pulled me over when we were moving apartments. Her smile breaks over me like a shot of whipped cream in the mouth on Sunday morning.

She caresses the scars on my palms. "It still looks so painful."

"I quit smoking."

"I guess that'll keep you from putting out cigarettes in your hand."

My nerves must be noticeable. Lynne says, "After your release and you get situated, you can come to an encounter group. It might help balance your spirit and get you back on track." Lynne's offer touches me, but I want nothing to do with being locked up for a weekend in a community center with a bunch of people trying to find themselves.

Lynne asks how I am.

“Your mom is suing me.” I’d received a big envelope from Lynne’s mom’s attorney the week before. I laughed and threw them away. What were they going to do? Garnish my sixteen cents a fucking hour or confiscate my transistor radio?

“She’s just mad at you.”

“I’m mad at me too, but that don’t mean I have a dime to spend about it. Everybody loves to kick a body when it’s down”

“I’ll tell her to let it go. No use spending the money to sue someone who can’t make amends anyways.”

“I am making amends.”

Lynne’s visit passes like a dash on the night highway. I remember all the ways of Lynne. Her in a dashiki and strands of beads and shells, a headband, and fringed moccasins, smelling of sandalwood she burned in the car ashtray with that stoned smile to melt a patrolman’s heart. Her with her No Nukes t-shirt, no bra, and tight jeans. But now in her yellow sun dress over her summer at the lake tanned skin making other inmates forget their ladies across their table.

A smile, and she’s gone. I walk back up the road. The sun is in the west. I think I might go up the bluff and listen to a couple of guys playing blues before dinner. I love listening to them and they’ve been teaching me a couple of songs to sing and encouraging me to make up some songs. At first, I wasn’t sure what troubles I could sing about, but as one guy said, “Dude, you’re in prison in the middle of the desert.”

I walk through the labor camp. I need to mark the day. In my room, I write the date down with a little star next to it on my cardboard calendar, meaning Lynne came to visit for the first time since I’ve left county lock up – so many days. I look at the numbers tightly squeezed in columns, a ledger of lost time and the long expanse of time since I’d last seen her or anyone from

the free world. I hope one day Lynne will drive the long miles out here and take me away. I hope I lose the urge to mark time.

*

Sledge limps into the shop before quitting time. “Man, Sledge, you need to get your leg checked out.” He looks at me as if I’m speaking a foreign language.

“I’m getting better. My girl’s car broke down last week and is coming in two weeks. All the way out from Fresno.”

“You don’t want to be laid up without a leg either,” I say.

“You never mind my business. I be fine.”

The next morning Sledge looks stiffer. I go to Flash. “Sledge ain’t getting better. You all promised he’d go to the infirmary if he got worse.”

“I thought he’d get better. Maybe he just needs more time.”

“Fuck, Flash, he’s getting worse. He needs treated. What you going to do if he ends up not being able to walk and they find out you let it slide after he got hurt?”

Flash walks over to Sledge. “New Guy’s worrying about your leg. Maybe you should go to the infirmary. I can’t have you getting worse.”

“Nah, man. They just send me to the Coast. My girl’s coming.”

“Look, if your leg festers up, it’ll look bad on me here.”

“You let that cable snap.”

“Now, goddamn it, Sledge. You was standing in the way. I told you to get your sorry ass clear and you didn’t.”

Sledge looks defiant.

“Now, I can’t have you fucking up my parole because you ain’t got the sense to get out of the line of fire and…” Flash points at me. “He sure don’t need to get shipped back to the Coast because you refuse to get treated. That’s unfair to him.”

I say, “I didn’t do jack but try to get him help.”

Flash looks like he was talking to a little kid. “Jesus fuck, New Guy. You think the warden gives two fucks about what you didn’t do or do? He don’t. He don’t care about trying to sort out who to blame, so he’ll just can us all into the van back to inside the wire.”

Sledge says, “I’ll be fine.”

“I’ll write your ignorant ass up for a safety violation and refusing to follow directions to prevent an accident.”

Sledge stands not sure if he heard Flash right. “What?”

“You heard me,” Flash says. “Get on now.”

Sledge begins limping out of the shop. “You motherfuckers can go straight to hell.”

*

In one of the dorm’s common rooms, Flash and I spread our tools out. We need to run some new wires and install some new outlets and switches throughout the dorms. The warden is afraid the old wires are a fire hazard and sure as hell doesn’t want to have the place burn down on his watch. What a sight it would be though. The top of the bluff blazing like a man with his head on fire with the radar dome in the background, visible for a hundred miles or more. I can imagine transformers and whatever is in the dome exploding and all the embers raining downwind like Revelation patching the desert with fire.

Flash turns on the television as I start measuring from the corner of the room to find the wall studs. Every sixteen inches, I mark with a pencil. Flash says, “I don’t know why you want

to go over to the fire crew. Just sit around in their little assed garage just waiting. Here you'll be in charge in a couple of months, and you get to walk around and not be cooped up."

"I'll get to rotate out to the airbase. That'll be cool." Two muscle heads, Oak and Stacks, asked if I wanted to transfer over because one of their guys was being released. I said sure about a second after they asked.

Flash nods and says, "Well, you could get hurt on a fire or an accident. I've seen cars roll and spray gas all over."

"I don't care," I say.

He shrugs and chops the drywall next to one of my marks with a roofing hammer and exposes one side of the stud. "Sure. I can see that. Maybe you get some Air Force pussy."

I put the inch wood bit on the drill so I can punch a hole through the stud where we are going to run the wires. It's a big drill with a handle off the left side to help control it.

Flash marks an X with his pencil on the 2x4. "Here."

"It's good? Why don't you tear out the drywall on the other side of the stud so I can see where we're drilling?"

"We need to leave the drywall intact, so the carpenters don't have as much to replace. They whine if they have to do too much work. They start in on, 'save money on materials,' you know. Just punch a hole and we'll feed the wire from the end."

I run the extension cord across the room and plug the drill into it.

"Check it out." Flash points at the television. The space shuttle sitting on the launch pad fills the screen. "Maybe you'll see it land when you're slumming it at the airbase."

"That'd be cool." I watch the astronauts give thumbs up and Mission Control staring into monitors like crystal balls. I still like watching the launches, but they also depress me. It's like

you're told your whole life you can be anything you want if you set your mind to it, and if you don't it was your fault because you're a lazy ass and don't want it bad enough or a moron. I bet if I had had help with math from someone who really knew what they were doing when I was young, I could have made the grade. But when you come from a sink or swim culture littered with mediocrity, that's what you succeed or fail by.

I give the drill trigger a couple quick squeezes and the motor whirs, spinning the bit. "I'm going in."

The bit slices away the wood as I lean in and hold the drill steady. It starts smoking from the friction, but it's about to push through. I lean a little harder into it when blue and yellow sparks fly from the hole and flames leap out.

I'm jolted and fall back on my ass as I hear Flash yell, "Holy fucking shit."

My vision flutters dark and light as if trapped in a flock of birds lifting off. When I shake my head and my sight clears, I look up and see the space shuttle exploding against the blue sky.

Flash beats the flames with his gloves.

"Holy shit," I say.

Flash says, "You hit a live wire. I'm going to chop out the drywall on the other side. The carpenters can deal with it."

I say, "No, man. The shuttle." I point to the television screen.

He looks over at the debris falling from the sky and the smoke drifting on the wind.

"Fucking hell."

Monday, I transfer over to the fire crew.

*

Lynne looks radiant. She's wearing jeans with knee high boots and a v neck t-shirt with Led Zeppelin across her chest. "Fucking pigs," she says when she sits down. "Asshole copped a feel of my boob. Hey, pig, that's not a fucking hand grenade."

The guard they call Flier eyes her and she glares at him, her eyes like glacial icicles falling from a great distance. "What?" Lynne says. He looks away.

She touches my hand. "If they fuck with you later because of me, I'm sorry, but you know, I have a problem with authority."

I smile at her. "This ain't the Coast. I'll be okay."

"Fucking fascist pigs."

I smile at her. "Thanks for coming."

She says, "At the check in there was this Black woman and they kept saying her boyfriend isn't here anymore. They didn't say where, just he had a femur fracture and had to be sent to a facility where they could care for him. Girl had driven all the way out from Fresno too. Like they couldn't have given her a call or something. A fucking bullshit fascist move."

"That's fucked up."

"Anyway, tell me how you are."

"I'm going to the fire crew. They rotate out to the airbase, so that'll be a change."

"Nice. Put some of that training to use."

"It'll be mostly an exercise in waiting around, but a different kind of waiting around."

"It can't be worse than that stint in ER."

I'd taken a semester long course in emergency medicine. My friend Wendy had taken it with me. We and another guy at the end of class had to do three days in an emergency room. We were learning how to use a rectal thermometer when all sorts of yelling and screaming broke out.

The paramedics pushed a gurney in carrying a woman with horrible gashes all over her. The gauze wrapped around her dripped with blood.

Right behind her a man was wheeled in. Cops clattered around him with the paramedics. His chest bandages bled like crazy. The man and woman yelled back and forth at each other. He: I love you, baby. I'm sorry I'm sorry I'm sorry. Let me fucking go. Let me go to my woman! She: You my man, I'm sorry I made you so mad! I love you too! I love you too!

I went to see if I could help, but the nurse in charge of us redirected me back to the rectal thermometer. Turned out they'd had an argument and he chased her with an axe down their street and whacked her a few times. When the cops arrived, they just shot him outright and cuffed him after he went down. It made me think what an awful place a battlefield full of axe and sword victims must have been.

"Crazy love," I say.

"Some people." Lynne smiles. "My mom dropped her lawsuit."

After Lynne leaves and I mark my calendar, I walk to the top of the bluff and stare to the west and the mountains. The bluesmen are riffing on their acoustics and ask if I got a song. I say not today. The sun slivers light between the peaks before dropping below the horizon. On the edge of the bluff, it feels as the earth is swallowing us. Across the dry lake, a two-lane highway cuts up into the Tehachapi Mountains to the Central Valley. In the dusk we can see the lights of distant cars traveling the empty miles. Right now, a woman I never met travels into the night with her lover's absence riding shotgun. Maybe I shouldn't have insisted Sledge go to the infirmary of last resort. A fractured femur, so they say. Headlights climb toward the summit, and I imagine her trip to a home she's been alone in for decades. I wonder how far the drive to Fresno is from here. How far to Fresno with a broken heart is a song she could sing.