

## THE CLOSED SEA

*CHARLES MCLEOD*

Even the doomed have their hobbies.  
All day my heart waits  
for night. Or some other  
failure. Here the crows  
hunch on sun-brightened  
wires; there are oak trees,  
both hills and valleys. The land  
is uneven. All the pools clean  
themselves now—such loss  
of industry! The men with their  
nets and their potions! What became  
of their pickups, their cutoffs and  
moustaches? Their faded tattoos purchased  
while midshipmen? What sicknesses  
did they own, and what remedies?

## TUESDAY

Additionally flotsam, form of a turreted room, broken  
to splinters and floating. The sea? He-man slime,  
bright green and viscous. All of the figures  
are drowning. The sun's rays look wet in  
the dumb August heat. The Hot Wheels  
he lost are not decomposing. Some nights  
they roll from their spots in the ivy. Their  
engines are monstrous, their headlights  
high-beamed. They gather to phalanx. They  
are angry to have been forgotten. They are  
angry to have been given personalities  
that were later deemed unimportant.  
Someone has cleaned the gunk from their pistons.  
Who he is now is not who he once  
was. The engines are white-hot.  
The engines are revving.

## WALK

Down the road  
Is Rosie's Cracker Barrel.  
Rosie was blind. It's said that  
he once met Merv Griffin.

I have never met anyone famous.  
I don't want to. They would take  
something from me and I wouldn't  
know what that thing was.

The shop is long shuttered,  
the marquee rain-washed.  
One day this place  
will be a casino, and one day  
that casino will  
burn to the ground.

I want to go home now. There's  
no one to meet here. All of these  
strangers' eyes are like milk.

## WEDNESDAY

In which the crows don't care and caw as before  
he arrived here. The stonework ringing the pool  
is breaking. Shards of quartz—he's cut the pads of  
his feet. Leaves from the dry oaks drown in the  
chlorine. They will bob until brown and then  
sink. Last night he almost walked through the  
glass of a door; the chandelier, lit, cast light  
on the smooth, tall pane and he saw himself,  
inches away. Evisceration has a nice ring to it.

Everyone weds themselves to something,  
eventually.