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And there I am on a rubber raft, saltwater washing through my mouth, giggling at seven in the knowledge of parents: a father with coarse, black hair and a mother like a crow, strong with flight feathers. Jewish boy on the beach, pail and shovel, drenching sun, roar of the surf, Portuguese men-o-war washed on shore, like marbled dirigibles, and strong fishermen guiding my life through the variables—Irving with dark speckles, Shep with boulder thighs, Harold no less influential for his florid skin and feminine side which wedged through him, like a fin. It was jubilance and resonance and sand grit and gutted trout and sexy wives with lacquered nails who bitched and loved and donated and slathered their dumb children with Solarcain. Women with that kind of leg skin which exudes sexuality: smooth, freckled, white, pliable, like the underside of fish. And their children, little vessels of innocence filled with immortality and egoism bucking in the sun-pound. It was Rome before the fall, solid curves of toughness in the parents like walls, gold flowing through scotch and blended whiskey necks, and Texas Longhorn football bursting like concussion bombs. Nothing crumbled no matter how brittle it became because there was money, guts, kids, wives, glory, and the whole great God damned Gulf of Mexico glittering with gamefish. And there I am floating on my rubber raft where the ocean floods the shore, laughing, breast full of glee, stuffed like a turkey
with sweetness and deflected rage, no more the carrier of the clear blue flame of poetry than the carrier of bubonic plague. It was that textured storm in the brain, blurry happiness which thrives and throws off sparks of luxury in the veins. It was fish-scaling knives and bellowing men and Port Aransas, Texas, and God’s diamond jewelry broken and spilled over the horizon, like a sea. It was semen and fertility and seed flung in the flesh of wives, like meteor showers in the infinite sky. And children folded into the prayer of two hands before bedtime in the hearing of seaways, sailed into their dreams, like schooners, flawless and streaming with praise.