

The Oval

Volume 9 | Issue 1

Article 22

4-2016

'94 Ford F-250

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Recommended Citation

Murphy, Colter (2016) "'94 Ford F-250," *The Oval*: Vol. 9 : Iss. 1 , Article 22.

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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.