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Only Men Go to Garnet

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Only Men Go to Garnet

One is handsome, a young Indian,
black braid splitting his back. Three whites
in a Biscayne have a case of beer
for their passenger. Another man drives a red truck
and looks lean, grim and stupid. An empty gun rack
means he had to hock his rifle
or it's across his lap.

Twelve miles back when the pavement dropped off
I knew this was a man's road. I've been fooled
by other roads that start off wide
and wide open like something
in Dorothy's dream, riding the curve
of a grassland till without apology
the pavement leaves you to gravel
and soon not even that. Just hard pack
and ruts for twenty miles.

Pick your tragedy.

It could happen on this road. Slow violence
or sick too far from help. A drive off the edge
to be one of Montana's white crosses.
But so far from town, it wouldn't make
much of a warning. Just a sign that someone didn't reach
the ghost town or never got very far away.