Detour Into What Cheer

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My brother nudges me.
Any minute now, something will happen.
Raymond Carver, “Drinking While Driving”

My brother and I were drinking cans of Old Style between Oskaloosa and South English. I was doing the driving, happy I still owned the old family wagon, not thinking of the student loans that kept it up. We held the beers low, between our legs. It was four miles off the highway to What Cheer, where my brother got out to snapshoot the town water tower and a grain elevator with a squat cartoon man painted on the side. I sipped warm beer and watched him in the rearview mirror. He makes it, everything look so easy, I thought. When he backpedaled up the road for a better angle, I lost sight of him and yanked at the mirror. I twisted against the belt, spilled some beer. After a while, I laid my hand on the wheel and watched birds hop along the ground. “Bird,” I told them. At some point, my brother got back in the car. He popped a couple of fresh cans and caught the overgrown sign for Route 92. “So now you drive with one hand,” he said.