

Memaloose by Chris Spence

You pull to the shoulder to take a call.

Bold as brass, the eagle flies across the hood

Flash of white, the tail spreads, slows,

The bird settles on a mailbox. Looks around.

Good hunting, likely. Voles, a rabbit.

You watch, thinking how those large birds are always here around
Memaloose.

And you think, those birds have always been here

Where the slow water holds fish and the brush holds game,

This one the child of thousands of thousands of generations.

When the first people came a few hundred generations ago, they
respected the bird elders.

The people even chose these hunting grounds for their Memaloose.

Sitting in the truck, you think how that would be, aside from the
sacrilege part,

To return to the earth in that manner.

You'd have to build the canoe, and get it done on time.

And your record of on time completion is pretty poor these days.

And convince everyone in the community to pitch in when the time
came.

And convince the county to issue a conditional use permit.

"It's a traditional use, relax."

And convince yourself it's somehow OK for an old White guy

To appropriate this place, this ritual.

Bad enough we park our boats on this sacred ground.

Better to search "Green Burial". Go that route.

It's Monday. That raptor sitting there on the mailbox

Knows the trash goes out today.

Everything is different, but nothing has changed.

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