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## Too Far From Home

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# Too Far From Home

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*Mary Dengler*

Vacations far from home, escapes from winter  
Work's routine, after a day or two turn quickly into  
Summer work's routine and welcomed as the point. What  
Luxury to turn to summer reading, denser than repeated,  
Sectioned, planned-for-question reads; to summer walking,  
Not a sandy stretch of beach at first, but half a mile  
Of hotel carpet, long enough for guests to quench their thirst  
For color, dodge the desert heat, burn off winter pounds,  
Exhaust their restless children, check their phones;  
To summer eating--leafy greens, light wines, sour dough--  
Instead of lentil soup, dark wines, and nutty grains;  
To summer friends, whose faiths and works diverge  
As widely as the desert, coast, and plain. At first,  
The contrast shocks my brain, like stem-cells from a just-born  
Child; but soon the brain adapts to 10-lane interstates,  
To coffee shops for study, hotel rooms for family life, five-hour  
Drives for conversation, ocean dives for punctuation, screams  
For winning slot machines, beggars on the street too far from home  
For explanation. Once, while waiting in a line at Golden Nugget's  
Paper shop, I saw nearby a youngish man who stood there statue like; his eyes  
Stared straight ahead. He said, "Don't mind me" at no one in particular.  
I said, "I don't. How are you doing?" Stunned, he focused, silently, then  
said, "Could I talk to you?" and barely touched my arm. But husband Ed,  
Without alarm, replied, "We have to go. We'll miss our plane," and  
Touched my other arm. So there we left that little more than boy,  
Confused and lost, too far from home to know which way to go. By  
Providence, we're made adaptable. For who of us  
Would otherwise survive more than a day or two?

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