

Sink

by Cooper Renner

They wouldn't take me, you understand, to the whore. It was the retreat, dammit: summer, the beach, catfish in a row in the sink. The wives humped over their buckets inside the city limits, complaining of cramp. They were men, all of them, *husbands*; me the only boy. I cried myself to sleep on my father's shoulder. Waking in the middle of the night, tangled in the hotel sheets, I wanted to hear the story again: their pilot friend, the war, his specialty. "It's just a screw, son," Dad said, "nothing exotic." The stiff thrum of cards being shuffled, the cigar's orange ash, heat lightning on the other side of the lake like a strobe over the sweat on somebody's dark nipple.

