

Into the Wild Blue Yonder

by Doug Bond

I'd been counting the time between mile markers when he grabbed it from her. Ma had been folding and refolding the map, trying to answer his question about the Skyway and the Dan Ryan. The car swerved, just a bit, not much, not the way she reacted. I knew he was really a good driver. He'd flown jets in Vietnam, back for good now, just as things getting bigger there too.

Then it got quiet again, the kind of quiet that fills a car even with the radio on and the highway ticking away and the corn flying past regimented and silk tasseled.

I remember Ma telling me they just needed some time to get used to each other again.

News came on the radio. Dad fiddled the dial then turned it up, "*Third boxcar midnight train, destination Bangor, Maine.*" I relaxed, looked out at the clouds rising in columns way to the south. He caught my eye in the mirror, smiled, "Thunder coming Billy. Big rollers."

I stretched out sideways and tilted my head back so all I could see was blue sky and clouds, my chin sticking straight up. I tried not to blink. The clouds became mountains and long curvy beards and canoes skiffing through icebergs.

When we stopped for gas somewhere outside Portage, Dad went in to talk to the attendant. Ma handed me the bottle of soap bubbles from the glove compartment. I kept dipping and dipping and waved my arm into the warm air.