

Not today, you crab!

by Husayn R

The shade is a blessing.

It's in the triple degrees here on the water, and I'm squaring my blades to stay as long under the bridge as possible. There is just enough of a breeze.

I feel the pressure on my wrists, forearms, and—due to lack of technique on my part—my lower back. Water clashes with wood. There is water on my bare legs, in the shell, the splash from a crab begging to be caught — Not today, you crab!

There are some noises over head. The bridge's columns are talking to each other. Or is it my stomach?

I look up, birds are flying away from the well-kept and well-hidden nests made of dirt. Who knows how many eggs they can lay in those?

More commotion beyond the bird nests. Screams, sirens, brakes.

I close my eyes to prepare for the sun. I see the red of my eyelid as I hear more brakes, a loud unmuffled engine, a loud crack, and—a crab.

My single sculling boat was not made to take the impact of a pickup. And neither was I.

I look up to see Motor Trends Truck of the Year and concrete barreling in my direction, shattering my view of the sun, then my boat, and then my body.

And I wake up.

