

Swimming Lessons

by Jake Barnes

We're sharing a cabin on the north shore of the lake. It costs a buck to get into the beach across the street. That's okay; it keeps the riffraff out.

We spend our days on the beach, working on our tans. My pale wife hides under a big floppy hat. The water is crystal clear. It drops off gradually to about five feet, then levels off. The view is, well, spectacular. I'm talking about Lake Tahoe. The most beautiful lake in these United States. Maybe in the world.

Jody is wearing a bikini. Her husband Ken is wearing trunks. I wonder if after a few beers he will remove them. He did last night at the cabin. Took all his clothes off and tried to ride his bicycle upstairs.

I'm the only one who goes swimming. I'm from the Land of Sky Blue Waters. I grew up in a lake. I think I'm half fish.

Later I'm just lying there on my belly. Somebody tweaks my toe. It's Jody, that naughty girl. I rise up on my elbows and look back. Jody's lying on her tummy, her head resting on her crossed arms. She mouths the words "I love you." I grin and rest my head.

As the sun dips low, we pack up and leave. It's the last day of our vacation. No more fun in sun. Tomorrow we will drive back down the hill. Monday school starts and it's back to work for all four of us.

We all teach school. I teach English at a junior college. The women teach French and Spanish at a local high school. Ken teaches something or other out on the coast. Ken is enterprising. He tells me he makes the students in one of his classes read by themselves for

the entire class period. I ask him if he means from time to time. No, he says. Every day. For the whole year.

