

How To Profit As Copper Becomes The New Gold

by Mark Reep

We have no more leaders, only rulers who live in another country. I don't ask why my cousin's hand is bandaged, what he's been burning, what's tarped in his truck. I say I don't watch the news but last night I dreamt I was Jesus Christ, and you know the worst part? My cousin stares at me. He shakes his head. I say you ever think about the pressure? Mess up once, and then what? Start over? My cousin laughs. His teeth are awful. I wouldna lasted long, he says. Got any coffee?

I cut up little squares of baloney, fry him a soft omelet he won't eat. He wants to use my phone. I say they shut it off. I know he doesn't believe me but he doesn't push it.

At the door he says better not, he needs a shower. I hug him anyway. He's heat and bones and stink but still tall enough to rest his chin on my head. He says nothing. I nod against his chest. When he pulls away his sleeve catches the latch. I say wait wait and he stops and smiles the way he does now, so you can't see his teeth, and lets me free him.

Our needs are a far smoke rising. It's eight o'clock, the scrapyards will be open. I wonder what they're paying for copper. I'm late for work but I scrape his plate. I don't want to come home to these dirty dishes.

