

1963

## Desert Crossing

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JACK ANDERSON

**DESERT CROSSING**

At 65 there is no motion.  
Though all day long the day has traveled  
The sky, the scene will not shake loose: smashed  
Bottles by the roadside, broken springs  
Of shrubs hissing faintly in a wind  
Of snapped wires, brown rows of hills rusted  
As old auto parts on dumps crumbling  
By swamps of light no one can drink from—  
It is running in place, the place stuck  
To the wheels like clothes stick in the heat.

And the only motion is breakdown:  
Motor dead, tire flat, jack left at home,  
The highway empty while the darkness  
Razes the hills and cements the last  
Sandy pools of sun, the light slipping  
Like a startled snake through gutters in  
The west. Breakdown: moon rises zero,  
Locking doors to clean and quiet rooms  
Where water glasses shine on shelves and  
Fresh sheets lie like first snow on a lawn.