

Excerpt 1

1. Soledad = a city in California
2. drops in descend
3. hillside bank flanc de la colline
4. slipped twinkling collé, maitoiant, effort
5. narrow pool bassin
6. foothill slopes versant de la colline
7. willows des saules
8. flooding crue
9. mottled tacheté tout un rafut
10. recumbent limbs feuillage tombant
11. bank rive
12. crisp sèches
13. a great skittering tout un rafut
14. brush fourrés
15. damp flats rives humides
16. 'coons = raccoons = râlons lèveurs
17. split-wedge tracks of deer les traces des sabots fendus des cerfs
18. beaten hard battu
19. tramps vagabonds
20. wearily fatigués
21. jungle-up camper
22. limb branche
23. worn smooth usée et polie
24. the shade climbed up l'ombre grimpa

A few miles south of Soledad¹, the Salinas River drops in² close to the hillside bank³ and runs deep and green. The water is warm too, for it has slipped twinkling⁴ over the yellow sands in the sunlight before reaching the narrow pool⁵. On one side of the river the golden foothill slopes⁶ curve up to the strong and rocky Gablian mountains, but on the valley side the water is lined with trees—willows⁷ fresh and green with every spring, carrying in their lower leaf junctures the debris of the winter's flooding⁸, and sycamores with mottled⁹, white, recumbent limbs¹⁰ and branches that arch over the pool. On the sandy bank¹¹ under the trees the leaves lie deep and so crisp¹² that a lizard makes a great skittering¹³ if he runs among them. Rabbits come out of the brush¹⁴ to sit on the sand in the evening, and the damp flats¹⁵ are covered with the night tracks of 'coons¹⁶, and with the spread pads of dogs from the ranches, and with the split-wedge tracks of deer¹⁷ that come to drink in the dark.

There is a path through the willows and among the sycamores, a path beaten hard¹⁸ by boys coming down from the ranches to swim in the deep pool, and beaten hard by tramps¹⁹ who come wearily²⁰ down from the highway in the evening to jungle-up²¹ near water. In front of the low horizontal limb²² of a giant sycamore there is an ash pile made by many fires; the limb is worn smooth²³ by men who have sat on it.

Evening of a hot day started the little wind to moving among the leaves. The shade climbed up²⁴ the

hills toward the top. On the sand banks the rabbits sat as quietly as little gray, sculptured stones. And then from the direction of the state highway came the sound of footsteps on crisp sycamore leaves. The rabbits hurried noiselessly for cover. A stilted¹ heron labored up into the air and pounded down river². For a moment the place was lifeless, and then two men emerged from the path and came into the opening by the green pool.

They had walked in single file³ down the path, and even in the open one stayed behind the other. Both were dressed in denim trousers and in denim coats with brass⁴ buttons. Both wore black, shapeless⁵ hats and both carried tight blanket rolls slung over⁶ their shoulders. The first man was small and quick, dark of face, with restless eyes⁷ and sharp, strong features⁸. Every part of him was defined: small, strong hands, slender arms⁹, a thin and bony¹⁰ nose. Behind him walked his opposite, a huge man, shapeless of face, with large, pale eyes, with wide, sloping¹¹ shoulders; and he walked heavily, dragging¹² his feet a little, the way a bear drags his paws¹³. His arms did not swing at his sides, but hung loosely¹⁴.

The first man stopped short¹⁵ in the clearing¹⁶, and the follower nearly ran over him¹⁷. He took off his hat and wiped the sweat-band¹⁸ with his forefinger and snapped the moisture¹⁹ off. His huge companion dropped his blankets and flung himself down²⁰ and drank from the surface of the green pool; drank with long gulps, snorting²¹ into the water like a horse. The small man stepped nervously beside him.

1. stilted guindé
2. labored up into the air and pounded down river se hissa dans les airs et survola lourdement la rivière
3. in single file en file indienne
4. brass en cuivre
5. shapeless informes
6. tight blanket rolls slung over des couvertures roulées serrées jetées par-dessus
7. with restless eyes le regard vif
8. features traits
9. slender arms bras fins
10. bony osseux
11. sloping tombantes
12. dragging traînant
13. paws pattes
14. hung loosely pendamment, ballants
15. short net
16. clearing clairière
17. ran over him le renversa
18. wiped the sweat-band essuya le bandeau inférieur
19. moisture sueur
20. flung himself down se jeta au sol
21. with long gulps, snorting à grandes gorgées; s'ébrouant

1. sharply d'un ton sec
2. for God' sakes =
for God's sake =
pour l'amour de dieu

3. you gonna = you're
going to
4. you was = you were

5. dipped plongea

6. dripped down
degoulna
7. tha's = that's

8. unslung his bindle
detacha son baluchon

9. I ain't = I'm not
10. looks kinda scummy
il a l'air d'ye avoir
de l'écume

11. dabbled rempa

12. wiggled remua

13. what I done =
what I have done

14. knelt's agenouilla

15. with quick scoops
à petits coups
16. running couler

17. oughtta = ought to =
should

18. it ain't = it isn't

19. gutter caniveau

20. rubbed it la frotta

21. drew up his knees
remonta ses genoux

"Lennie!" he said sharply.¹ "Lennie, for God' sakes² don't drink so much." Lennie continued to snort into the pool. The small man leaned over and shook him by the shoulder. "Lennie. You gonna³ be sick like you was⁴ last night."

Lennie dipped⁵ his whole head under, hat and all, and then he sat up on the bank and his hat dripped down⁶ on his blue coat and ran down his back. "That's⁷ good," he said. "You drink some, George. You take a good big drink." He smiled happily.

George unslung his bindle⁸ and dropped it gently on the bank. "I ain't⁹ sure it's good water," he said. "Looks kinda scummy¹⁰."

Lennie dabbled¹¹ his big paw in the water and wiggled¹² his fingers so the water arose in little splashes; rings widened across the pool to the other side and came back again. Lennie watched them go. "Look, George. Look what I done¹³."

George knelt¹⁴ beside the pool and drank from his hand with quick scoops¹⁵. "Tastes all right," he admitted. "Don't really seem to be running¹⁶, though. You never oughtta¹⁷ drink water when it ain't¹⁸ running, Lennie," he said hopelessly. "You'd drink out of a gutter¹⁹ if you was thirsty." He threw a scoop of water into his face and rubbed it²⁰ about with his hand, under his chin and around the back of his neck. Then he replaced his hat, pushed himself back from the river, drew up his knees²¹ and embraced them. Lennie, who had been watching, imitated George exactly. He

pushed himself back, drew up his knees, embraced them, looked over to George to see whether¹ he had it just right. He pulled his hat down a little more over his eyes, the way George's hat was. **J**

George stared² morosely at the water. The rims³ of his eyes were red with sun glare⁴. He said angrily, "We could just as well of rode clear⁵ to the ranch if that bastard bus driver knew what he was talkin' about. Yes,"⁶ a little stretch⁷ down the highway, he says. "Yes' a little stretch." God damn near four miles, that's what it was! Didn't wanta⁸ stop at the ranch gate, that's what. Too God damn lazy to pull up⁹. Wonder he isn't too damn good to stop in Soledad at all. Kicks us out and says, 'Yes' a little stretch down the road.' I bet it was more than four miles. Damn hot day."

Lennie looked timidly over to him. "George?"

"Yeah, what ya¹⁰ want?"

"Where we goin'¹¹, George?"

The little man jerked down the brim of his hat and scowled over¹² at Lennie. "So you forgot that awready¹³, did you? I gotta tell you again, do I? Jesus Christ, you're a crazy bastard!"

"I forgot," Lennie said softly. "I tried not to forget. Honest to God¹⁴ I did, George."

"OK—OK. I'll tell ya again. I ain't got nothing to do¹⁵. Might jus' as well spen'¹⁶ all my time tellin'¹⁷ you things and then you forget 'em¹⁸, and I tell you again."

"Tried and tried," said Lennie, "but it didn't do no good. I remember about the rabbits, George."

1. whether si

2. stared fixait

3. rims bords

4. sun glare les rayons
du soleil

5. of rode clear = have
rode directly

6. jes' = just

7. stretch bout de rouie

8. wanta = want to

9. pull up = stop

10. ya = do you

11. Where we goin' =
where are we going

12. jerked down the
brim of his hat
and scowled over
inclina d'un coup sec
le bord de son chapeau
et jeta un regard noir

13. awready = already

14. honest to God

15. I ain't got nothing to
do = I have nothing
else to do

16. spen' = spend

17. tellin' = telling

18. em = them