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This is one of the nine wide worlds, and the creatures that inhabit it lull

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First of all, it isn’t tenderhearted. Boys are as small as their fathers’ fingers, their tongues stained with wild plum, their faces vapid little things all the way from West Texas, a place even wilder than this wind where the river appears only an inch deep. If you look near the surface, the boys might betray light that leans in from backwoods for a can of snuff or stick of black-jack if that’s all you have. They’ll tell you about the calf cut last December from the ice, but in the case of their own lives, they’ll grow quiet, and the quiet will grow like nails from the tips of their fingers, and the stillness will scratch at anything.