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He's got a southern Wisconsin route planned, but Salt Box Road is no longer negotiable and we detour onto Summerville Road, a great narrow two-lane roller-coaster-barely wide enough for the farmer's combine and a single bike to pass safely on our way to Boar's Nest, W 9439 County Road X in Allen's Grove, WI. This is the place with the Dukes of Hazzard's General Lee car mounted on the roof. The tavern is crawling with bikers. It's just an endless parade. We order lunch. Once again, I get sedentary and contemplate never leaving, but Chuck gets us over to the Elkhorn Saloon at 9 E Walworth in downtown Elkhorn. The place is diabolically hot and a couple of locals gather around the floor fan, bogarting the cool air.

If you need a definition of bogart go rent Easy Rider. Anyway, the bikers that flow through are boisterous in that rollicking joyous sort of way despite the sweltering heat. I ask the bartender if I can stand in the beer cooler for a while. Air conditioning is achieved upon accelerating down the highway. Our next stop is Zenda Tap in the tiny hamlet of Zenda; isolation is part of its charm for the discerning biker. The other part is Loretta, who tends bar. She just loves the company of bikers. They apparently agree, since everyone who has been here once eventually returns.

Anyway, the point to all of this eludes me at the moment. The coffee is gone, Mike Tafoya's great guitar licks have fallen silent on the box, my story is almost done and I have time for one more midnight run. I hear a Harley off in the distance accelerating into the night. That sound calls to me, like an ancient echo that could only be felt in the heart of primitive man but not heard. What sound in nature can duplicate a singular V-twin throttled to the max, the short pipes belting out a powerful crescendo? A horde of Harleys can create a rolling thunder. It stirs my passion as I hear the lone rider now. I'm anxious to explore the dark world, "riding the night" of life's fabled highway. Fare thee well, kind friends, adieu. I can no longer stay with you.

-Kenn Hartmann

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