## MARK HALLIDAY

## 240 Sneakers

An old man sits in a car beside a road in Illinois near a five-way intersection at the edge of a town there's a Dairy Queen a hundred yards away but it probably hasn't opened yet; the old man is a little confused about directions about whether this is south or west but everything will clear up soon. He sits in the car looking at his shoes. If his daughter were here she would be impatient but she is in Montgomery Alabama at her job and there is no question about that, that is clear. His shoes are sneakers because he knows he is really still a boy though people don't see it; he estimates this pair is his 120th pair of sneakers how many of those 240 sneakers still exist the oldest ones might be utterly atomized in an Indiana landfill—Indiana landfill— Indiana landfill

a few birds start to twitter or they just resume it there was a rainstorm earlier and now the birds have to start up their day again there is a question he has to ask and the old man watches the Dairy Queen very carefully not wanting to go too far in a mistake

he can walk softly to the ice cream window if the person there seems impatient he can order one scoop of peach then ask about south or west and wait, sometimes the first answer is not the one and rushing just gets you somewhere too soon—so the plan is to ask (and not say anything about sneakers or "atomized") and then wait for an answer that is clear.

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