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## Strange Bridges

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# Strange Bridges

*Michelle DeRose*

A scratch-and-peel rose on my cheek  
emboldened a leather encased  
tattoo-covered biker to bare one.  
His eyes expressed admiration  
for a woman who placed pain and art  
above perfect pinkish blush  
(even if it did drip away my next shower).

The sag-bellied beer-slurping carnival escapee  
from the redneck woods of Michigan,  
bum barely squeezing into the canoe,  
stopped short mid-whoop to smile  
when he recognized the Bud in my hand.  
One tooth shy of a complete set,  
he welcomed me to his world.