

they sell the doghouses." I'd scan the road until I saw those doghouses. Squat red ones, tall, roomy ones —they lit my imagination every time, and I could just picture lazy dogs savoring the shade from the Carolina sun. The guy who sold the doghouses sat on a bowed picnic bench. He waved when I drove past, one of those slow waves where his hand is in the air a little longer than strictly necessary but now my eye is on the navigator. I watch that blue triangle follow the road. When the navigator says "turn," I turn. If someone's selling doghouses, I don't know about it.

Here's the paradox of progress. I want the technology. I'm not giving up my GPS navigator now that I know how neatly it gets me back on track. But I also recognize what is lost. Not just with the navigator, but with anything that makes our lives a little easier, distances us a bit more from what's real and concrete. I didn't grow up milking my family's own cows the way my husband did. And, really, I wouldn't choose to. I never had to go out in the rain and milk the cow. But I also never sent warm milk in a graceful white arc into the open, waiting mouth of a kitten. That's the price; that's the deal.

When I think back to that restaurant in France, I can't recall its name. I'm not sure what I ate. I'm not even completely positive that the village was Cabries. But I remember our guide pedaling furiously, leading us past houses with shutters bleached from the sun. I remember the way, twisting out of his seat, he glanced back to make sure we were still with him. What I remember most clearly is the brief connection we had with him, the kindness that we never would have found if we hadn't first gotten lost.

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