

SEEING MERCER, MAINE

Beyond the meadow
on Route 2, the semis
go right on by,
hauling their long
echoes into the trees.
They want nothing to do
with this road buckling downhill
toward the Grange and Shaw
Library, Open 1-5 P.M. SAT,
and you may wonder
why I've brought you here,
too. It's not SAT,
and apart from summer, the big
event in town's the bog
water staggering down the falls.
Would it matter if I told you
people live here—the old
man from the coast who built
the lobster shack
in a hayfield;
the couple with the sign
that says Cosmetics
and Landfill; the woman
so shy about her enlarged leg
she hangs her clothes
outdoors at night? Walk down this road
awhile. What you see here in daytime—
a kind of darkness that comes
from too much light—
you'll need to adjust
your eyes for. The outsized
hominess of that TV dish,
for instance, leaning
against its cupboard
of clapboard. The rightness
of the lobsterman's shack—
do you find it, tilted
there on the sidehill,
the whitecaps of daisies
just creating beside it
in the light wind?

WESLEY MCNAIR