

### **Coda: Road Side Attractions**

What I love about us clumsy, silly, raw, unsophisticated, goofy Americans is our fondness for all things Americana. Not to mention the fact that we are absolutely nuts. We are goofy. Americana sums us up best. You want to see the real America – go visit a minor league ball game. Watch the contestants spin their foreheads on a bat or race the mascot. Or give us a long lonely stretch of road and somebody will create nearby a Cadillac Grave Yard. Or build a café in the shape of a teapot. Or a giant hot dog with windows and wheels.

I do pity the poor Dust Bowl Refugees. Not just because they had to travel with a sack of water hanging on the front grill. Not just because they suffered inner tubes that would frequently pop and require patching. Not just because gas stations were few to come by, gravity fed fueling pumps. Not just because I have had the advantage of all those brawny John Henry's paving a road for me whereas they had dirt, mud, gravel, and no guard rails.

I pity the poor Dust Bowl Refugees mostly because they had no giant statues of Paul Bunyon and Blue to admire along the way. Or a giant concrete bass advertising a fish restaurant. Or the Lakenland Sculpture park in Michigan filled with bizarre animal constructions and junk art. Or odd looking Triceratops standing along the shoulder of the road on guard for predators.

I regret having failed to visit the Wild Cat Park. I should have, because feeling tired and goofy what I instantly envisioned when I saw the billboard was a park filled not with cougar or lion or puma but dozens of meowing Siamese and howling grey tabbies sauntering about the house looking down at you.