

By November, the rains had filled the roads with potholes, acne divots in the asphalt; the mud like puss would puddle in them. And each time we'd hit one on the way to school, specks would spew up, as the floor of our Toyota had rusted through—past the putter of its underbelly—providing a small window to the ground streaming by. We turned into teenagers and drove our own clanking rust buckets. They were scruffy, dented, with balding seats and ketchup stains and mouse shit in the glovebox. But they enabled movement and freedom and a bone-shaking baseline that could convince anyone of our self assurance. They allowed for stillness, too, somewhere that smacked slightly of danger but was private enough to sweat out our awkward fumbblings. Breath, hotboxed, settled in heavily. And we drove them past the pockmarked roads and tall, wise forests to the end of the island, barricaded from the ocean by driftwood. We'd light a fire and shotgun a beer and the night would get too cold and wander on through.