

The woman turned back to me. "We got four rooms. You in number three, that's down the hall, last room on the right. Only other guest right now is Mrs. Akihiro. She a China woman in room two."

"Akihiro sounds Japanese."

"Japanese, Chinese, it's all the same to me. All I know is she come here from Texas for a few days every year to visit her husband."

"Once a year? That's what I call a long-distance relationship."

"Longer than you think. Her husband don't live here, he died here about four year ago. Used to haul chickens from Dumas to Sacramento every month. Fell asleep at the wheel one night up by the reservation and rolled his truck over a cliff."

She shook her head. "Terrible accident; body parts was everywhere—fingers, toes, wings, beaks. Ambulance people tried to scoop him all up, but apparently it ain't so easy as you might think—telling a chicken from a Chinaman, I mean. Anyways, they got his weight off his driver's license, picked up a hundred and thirty pounds of pieces and buried 'em. Now his wife come every year 'bout this time to pay her respects. We don't serve chicken while she's here. Hope you ain't got a taste for it."