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Gerald Alexander “Chip” Gunderloy

OCEAN CITY

(September)

“No one on the road / no one on the beach / a feelin in the air / that summer’s out of reach.” – Don Henley

“Way down below the ocean / where I wanna be, she may be.”
-Donovan

I get a few days off work and make for Ocean City, Maryland because the off-season rates are cheap and the water sounds better than another pukey 48 hours in half-ass Baltimore. A girl’s been bothering me, and people keep observing that my sickly pallor is greener than usual.

The ride takes three hours. Ocean City’s Greyhound Station is a tiny shack just a few blocks off the main bridge, towards the south end of the boardwalk. This resort town was always very special to me, and I’m here to find out if there’s any trace of that wonder left, two and a half decades later. Ocean City is stretched across a narrow strip of land that runs parallel to Maryland’s Eastern Shore, separated by a mile wide channel. The three mile boardwalk has the occasional eyesore worth investigating, and like any east coast boardwalk, there is a rugged quality informed by the changing seasons and the spookiness of so much land’s end history. Ocean City was founded about 150 years ago, I’m told. Physically, it bears more resemblance to a decidedly rural area like Nantucket than to closer towns such as Atlantic City or Ocean City, New Jersey. Ocean City, Maryland has no casinos, no legal ones, anyway. Whitewashed concrete, sandstone, and weather-beaten pine staircases adorn the exteriors of over a hundred seedy motels and cottages...run down seasonal apartments and smaller vacation rental units. So excited was I by these sights, and particularly, the overpowering smell of boardwalk creosote mixed with the pungent Atlantic salt winds, that during family trips the drive from Harrisburg was always