



Coast Range Chronicles 29: “Winter at Noon”

by

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We monitor the buoys all morning from the dank misery of our cubicles. The numbers are epic. The tide should be perfect in a few hours. We start laying the groundwork for escape, muttering to skeptical colleagues about an ambiguous offsite “meeting” we have at noon. We’re cagey and defensive when questioned on it and slip away when nobody is looking.

At the car, strategically parked around the corner, we pull the boards from the reclined seats, strap them to the racks, and drive north. The hills are green from recent rains, the valleys brown with leafless willow, maple, poison oak. The sky is blue and speckled with cumulus.

We reach the point. Three guys out. The swell is clean and massive. We suit up and scramble down the bluff and tiptoe across the mudstone shelf.

During a lull we hop in the water, scratch for the channel, and duck under three monsters jacking from the west. The cold water forces air from our lungs. We reach the lineup, straddle our boards, and inhale the crisp winter air.

A set arrives. We each catch a wave, air-drop down the face, and race down the line through section after beautiful section into the cove. We prone the whitewash to shore, run up the beach, hop back in the water, get pummeled on the paddle-out, and catch another wave.

And repeat.

Our "meeting" lasts all afternoon. We surf until our arms are flaccid, heads spinning. We never make it back to work. We'll catch hell from the boss tomorrow. But tomorrow may never come.

Today did.