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184 words

Mule and Fence

We worked blister-rust control in National Forests, quiet work, chemical-free, with hand tools. I drove down to the valley every two weeks for groceries for my crew

My first time up that highway, a Cadillac back end stuck out from a parking area downhill from a house above the highway.

My second time up the mountain, someone had tied a mule to a tree in the yard of that house. You don't tie an animal to a tree unless you're there. Animal can't graze enough grass, can wrap up tight and choke, but I didn't stop. I figured they were taking care of it.

Third time, a board fence around the yard, mule loose in the yard. Good. They're watching. The mule's okay.

Next time, three boards kicked out of the fence.

Next time, those boards nailed back up, two others kicked out. Mules kick. that's one thing they do. They kick.

Next time, all the boards are nailed into the fence. The mule's gone. The fence is painted white. Looks like at least two coats of paint. Quite tidy.

The mule is gone.