

The first week of August hangs at the very top of summer,
like the seat at the top of a Ferris wheel when it passes in ^{to turning}
the ~~very~~ top of the line-long year, ^{Everything} ~~the~~ days
^{and weeks} that come before are only an ^{a leading-up from Spring} ~~approach~~, and those that come
follow nothing but ^{and silent} a falling away into Autumn. The first week
of August is hot, with blank white days and ~~blazing~~
glaring noons, and sunsets smeared with too much color;
hinting at storms that never seem to come, ^{often} at night there
is ~~the~~ lightning, ^{but it quiets by itself.} ~~hambling at the edge~~ ^{There is} ~~no~~
thunder, no storms. ~~Everything holds very still and~~
~~waits.~~ ^{breathless} It is a special time when special things can
happen., ~~just as they did one August not so long ago.~~

One August not so long ago, three things happened
~~that seemed at first to be~~ ^{and} there appeared to be a little
connection between them:

At dawn Mae Tuck set out on her horse for the
day-long ride to the wood at the edge of the village of
Treegap. She was going there, as she did every twenty
years, to meet her two sons, John and Jesse.

At noon Daisy Foster, whose family owned the
Treegap wood, lost her patience at last and ~~began~~ ^{decided} to
~~make plans to run away.~~

And at sunset Leonard Cipher appeared out of nowhere
and tried to buy the Treegap wood.

No connection, except for the wood. Best things can
come together in surprising ways. ^{at the center,} ~~the~~ The wood was ^{the}
hub of the wheel. All wheels must have a hub. A
Ferris wheel has one, and the sun is the hub of the wheeling
calendar. Fixed points, they ^{a good deal like a heart,} ~~are~~ ^{and best} left undisturbed,
for without them ~~things~~ nothing holds together. But
sometimes people find this out too late.