

Grass is always golden on the other side

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I sit on a small ledge, feet dangling a couple thousand feet above a field of golden grass. The meadow is closed, shut down by the government. I take the last bite of a melting mint chocolate bar and start getting ready to climb. I would prefer to be in that field by the river, watching rainbow trout, sipping a golden beer. I have given up on the ascent minutes ago. Tired, burnt by the golden sun, unmotivated. Walker says a few words of encouragement.

The Golden Desert pitch lies in front of me. One of the hardest sections of the Golden Gate wall. The wind picks up the moment I start climbing, pushing me up. I have nothing left in my arms, legs, heart, but I dole out that nothing like it's something. I place the final cam of the pitch, a golden camalot. I've climbed it. Walker does the same.

We climb the final section of the wall in the golden hour. I walk down the mountain barefoot. Weeks later, I am in the golden meadow, sipping a golden beer, looking up three thousand feet at that section of Golden Gate where I ate the mint chocolate bar. I remember what it is like to overcome yourself, share a moment with a good friend and partner, and complete a lifetime goal. I would prefer to be on that wall.

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