

KENDRA NUTTALL

Willie

Past the automatic doors
that aren't so automatic
and the cashier with cigarette skin and
communist-red fingernails,

past the toddler screaming for candy
and the teenager checking out long legs
in short shorts – all wide-eyed and gawky,

past the spilled salsa in aisle seven,
in the middle of Saturday rush, you'll see him.
Black apron, blond mustache bouncing over
a wrinkled mouth shouting out to the crowd. If you let him,

he'll tell you about summers spent in Santa Barbara, about
owning a restaurant and bar there, about
leaving because California was too loud, about
his son having the cutest baby ever, about
his Mormon wife rounding out his lapsed Episcopalian, about
getting his first wife pregnant at 17, about
marrying her because that's what good people do, about
his first divorce (and second and third), about
how women used to put effort into their appearance, about
how men used to have the balls to marry a woman, about
how men used to be strong (none of this cry-baby crap), about
the horrendous traffic on State Street, about
the orchard he owns on 700 North, about

WILLIE

how this valley used to be just orchards, about
how this valley used to be so quiet, and
now it's getting so loud,

all while he hands you a sample of microwaved
quiche. You can find it in the freezer section
on sale today for \$2.99.

Thank you for shopping at WinCo.