

THE ROARING MUSE



A literary arts magazine

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The Roaring Muse

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Forward

The focus of "The Roaring Muse" is to showcase works of artistic merit from the UMD and Twin Ports community that otherwise would not have an accessible platform. We hope to provide a space for emerging young artists to show their work to their peers and begin to understand the editorial process. To create a space where readers are introduced to diverse works of art they otherwise would not have explored. In this edition you will see poetry, visual art, flash fiction, and a one-act play. There are connecting themes of time, nature, and the vastness of the universe.

-The Editors

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Stream of Consciousness

By:Tom Rawlyk

For the mind is a cage and so the thoughts are a bird, one of many colors and
vibrance
And so the light may enter the cage, creeping amongst the air of the sky unto
the room
Here so touches the hand of light, of inspiration to the encaged one
A mind of brilliance, in total silence waiting for a key to release the imprison-
ment set upon
The owner of the creature, one of the colors of the earth, waits on a stool, just
sitting, for he
waits
It is by the birds fear of the owners own thoughts, that he does not fight to sail
in the free
skies
For on the day that the bird is willing to leave behind his owner and the cage,
so he will fly
But as many lights rise and darkness falls, the encaged one learns that the
only shackles are
one of the mind, a cell to keep the many thinkings that are the seed to a bright-
er day
For one day the key to the iron bars, caged thoughts and ideas of the mind in
fear may be
free to roam, to soar with the others in the sky and only then shall one's cre-
ativity be free.

Where The Spirits Dance and The River Flows

By:Tom Rawlyk

As the whispering current rushes onward, so dance the little spirits in its many
pools.
The water is of crystal, like fine glass, a work of art by the Great Maker and so
it shows.
Down the slopes and past deep forests of slumber lays my land, a land of
beauty.
This land is known to many but truly experienced by few who braved its path
and rushing
waters.
I have seen many of its kind along the great shore yet having a different face
to its own.
The little spirits that dwell in these rivers of glass are of perfection.
Long ago, these spirits were carved by hand and painted with the leftover
colors from the
heavens at first light.
Any who have seen these creatures have seen both the Creator and so a liv-
ing reflection of
the skies.
During the day they dwell in the deeps, cold and pure pools of crystal, while
at night they
splash and dance by the light of darkness.
For these are the streams of the great Northern Shore, and their roads of silk,
rivers of glass,
that flow ever on into the Great Pool.
So look upon the flows for a moment in time while under the blanket of a calm
darkness and
you may just see the spirits dance and sing splashes in the night...

The Raging Flows and The Giants Who Brave

By: Tom Rawlyk

The crystal flows, frozen in time, begins to wake and so the season of the giants has arrived
Ice cracks and breaks off amongst the many streams, floating down as a ship upon the waves
of a great storm
The trees now wake, towers of the stream, from the great cedars of Amity to the towering
pines of the Manitou
The once calm flows of glass now become raging with the spirit of spring's breath
The many cedars, pines, and old hardwoods dig their roots into the earth further
trying to
hold on
Waves upon waves come crashing down the slopes, they run as chariots of horses
upon the
stream beds
Trickling falls and dried up winter pools fill with the blood of spring, a raging current that
shows no mercy
Time moves, so the days turn to nights, and the raging spirits of the stream rush into the
Great Pool
Here they whisper to the giants in the depths, teasing them, seeing who is worthy to face
against their might
As is every season, many accept the call of the raging spirit but few will beat the odds
Now, the giants come running up the thrashing current, ripping their armor off as they go but
yet they continue onwards
The spirit messes with their minds to have them become each other's enemy, so now brothers of the Great Pool fight only for power
The giants attack each other while trying to bare the pain of the raging spirit,

Their jaws have become hooked to grab one another, their fins are blades to pierce one
another, and their armor is now weak for the current is strong
At last the many come to peace focusing on reaching the final resting place, making a final
stand together as one
Now behold, the giants of the northern shore dance in the pools of life for they have defied
the odds and have come to rest
They truly are giants, great beasts of the depths as they are the kings of the stream as long as
they stay
Now, in the highest pools, the barrier to the upstream beyond, life begins again as seeds of
hope
The raging spirit, seeing he has been defeated, runs down to the Great Pool, leaving the
flowing silk roads to be one with the springs
A few giants became one with the past life, but forever they shall be honored by man for
their bravery

These giants are of the Great Pool
They face death when the season of new life begins,
They were painted with colors of the wood, deep greens, and the face of the horizon, a band
of light
And so they, the great giants, with armor of steel, have become legend upon this land to any
who know their story
For this is the journey of the great steelhead of the northern shore and so this journey begins
very soon once again
Listen close...
The rivers echo of a raging spirit, a blood of spring
It is near
and the fight for life shall begin...

A Sensory Overload

By:Tom Rawlyk

It is a new day and so the first light has shown its face amongst the heavens
The air is gentle and soft, brushing smoothly against my face while the birds
sing with its
whistling tune
It is not a cold breeze but one that feels refreshing to the soul
The sun shines ever bright on this morn, and so shall it has for many days past
Aromas of pines and deep cedars fill the forest, a symphony of flavor mixing
with the sounds
of nature, a perfect balance in it all
The river gurgles now and then under the coffin of water frozen in time
It's shades go from a light robins egg to the whites of a fresh fallen snow
I know the spirits are down there, sleeping for now, but soon shall they wake
when the day
grows
The wood of the deep forest, one of elven tales, creaks and moans for the day
is cold
They sway to the rhythm of the stream, yet dance to the bird's song
Creatures of the wood scurry around as to live another day for the wise one is
always
watching
Now the ground is of ice, a tundra of the northern lands, a blanket soon to be
removed
For it is a new day, and so the first light has shown its face over the Great Pool
The air runs along the Northern Shore with the many pines and cedars on its
back
It runs with the moving wave and so all the song of the bird and call of the
moose is echoed
There is a symphony of wonder amongst a forest, one that has a perfect bal-
ance in it all...

My Love, The Sun, and I am the Moon

By:Tom Rawlyk

Now the light of the darkness hangs in silence over a softly breathing land
It hangs for me as so for you, to guide us unto tomorrow
Listen now, for in the silence you can hear her sing
She sings a song of sadness, of a past love she treasured so deeply, her
mighty sun
Now and then I hear this song as she echoes it with the whisper of the wind
"My love, my love, my light of the day, come back with me, come back to stay
The stars shine now in beauty above, come back, come back, I need you, my
love
So shall we dance and fly my love, and soar off together with the wings of a
dove"
It is a beautiful song, yet full of sadness as she hangs there knowing that
chance will never become a
reality
I listen to her sing, gaze up unto the cool night, and wonder if she can hear me
as I say back
"My love, my love, I hear your cries, just wait a little longer to see your sun
rise
The day is awaking, a new sleeping dawn, rising up slowly as a gentle loving
fawn
Now stay up, my love, for the light of the day, the sun is awaiting, and there
you shall stay"
So now, the light of the darkness that hangs in silence over a softly breathing
land, turns her face, and
smiles with her shining eyes.
And from above, a ladder falls as to climb unto tomorrow into her outstretched
hands
As I begin to step, rung by rung, she whispers again, with softly swaying
grasses accompanying
My love, my love, my light of the day, come back with me, come back to
stay...

The Office Window Salon

By: Glenn Maloney

From my office window
you can see the lake
Glimmershine white topped
sunlight ebb and flow.

Two trees.
One has the same leaf
as the leaf
on the Canadian flag,
(so, I assume the species of the tree
is "Canada Tree," or something.)
and once someone called the other
"Ornamental Cranberry"
but I don't think that's a thing.
And that guy had a panic disorder anyway.

There's a sidewalk and every time
someone walks by and I sit at my desk
I stop and watch them walking.
My favorites are large muscley men
walking small white dogs,
and anybody on a skateboard.

Across the street is a salon
and every day a sixty-something
year-old-man walks his dog
there around three o'clock and
the salon staff meet the man,
(who always wears a wide brimmed back felt hat with feathers and claws
around it,)

and they give him something.
I like to imagine cocaine or
samples of alien DNA but
more probably a dog biscuit.

The salon is grey and large and square
with apartments above it.
Women in black aprons sweep
the parking lot or
sit outside during the day on their breaks
and neither the building
or the women
look particularly sheik or stylish.

I knew a woman who went there for haircuts and her hair always shone
so bright
with godlight
atop her head, perfect short (pixie but not quite pixie) cut framing, along with
her smile,
the bluest blue eyes ever created blue that,
sporadically,
when she would forget her intention of boundary would shine affection at me
like one billion lightning
bugs trapped in a jar,
like my affection, trapped in her.

A Storm in Duluth

By: Glenn Maloney

Two weeks back
the winds and thunder
shook Duluth as if the city was one of those "Visit Duluth" snowglobes
that you can buy in the giftshop
of the Great Lakes Aquarium or
one of those stores in the Fitger's Building.

Old growth trees,
left here by our lumber baron forebears,
dropped massive arms onto the streets and
lawns and
cars and
houses and
lay,
green and wet and shaking.
Sometimes whole trees torn up by the roots
and massive brown
earth-and-root piles moved to curbside lawns.

When the arms fell
they lay green
in random strewn bits about
but now piled and brown lumps
and being picked up by city trucks.

On Saturday
I delivered a pizza
to a turn-of-the-century-Duluth-
built-into-the-hill-bungalow.
Predominant lawn feature
stump twisted
torn
and shattered.

On Sunday a woman,
sixties and small
and old
limp
red
sunhat
piling small limbs and
patching sod holes.

“Paradise on Earth”



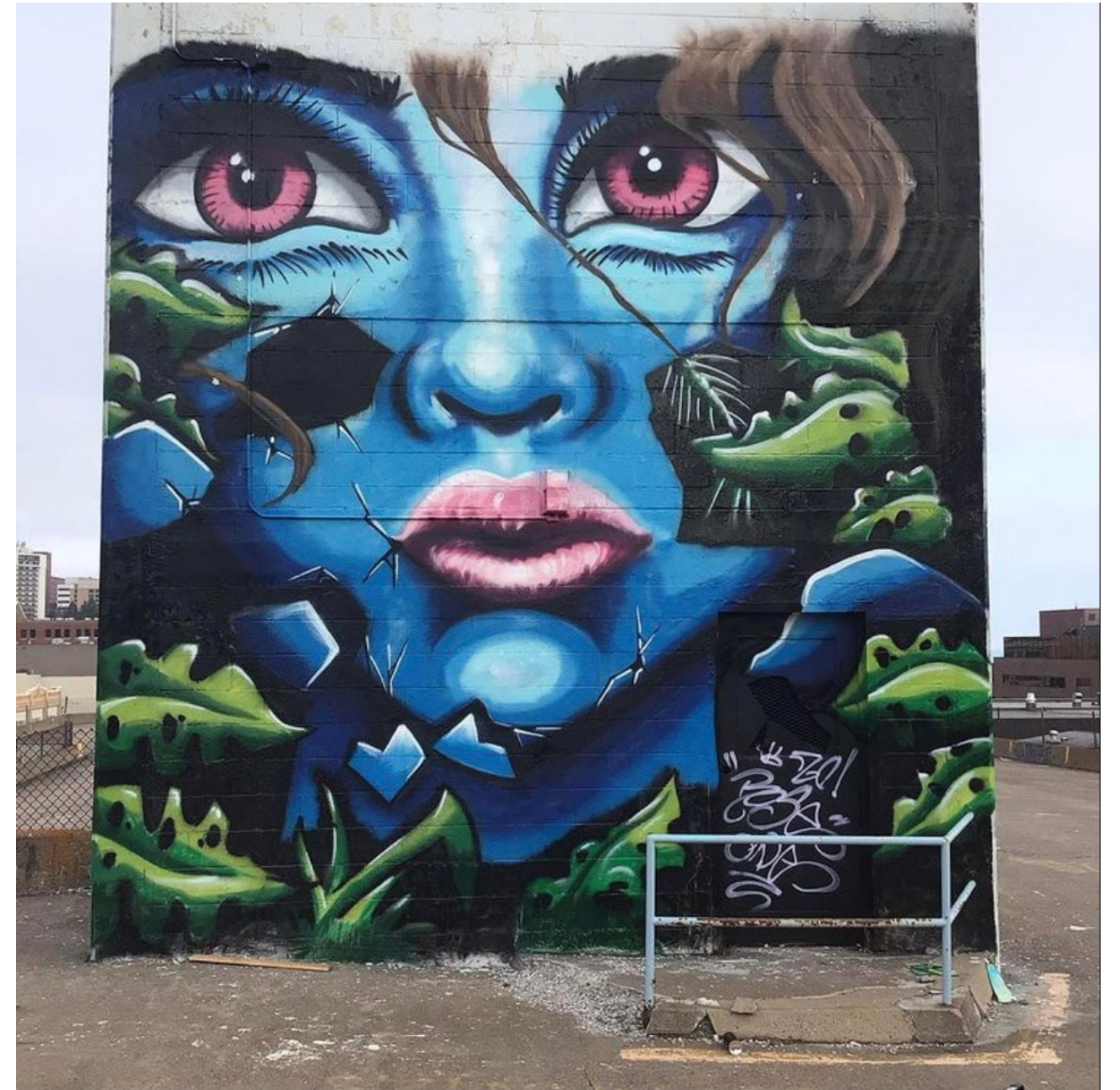
By: Taylor Rose

“Blue Jay”



By:Taylor Rose

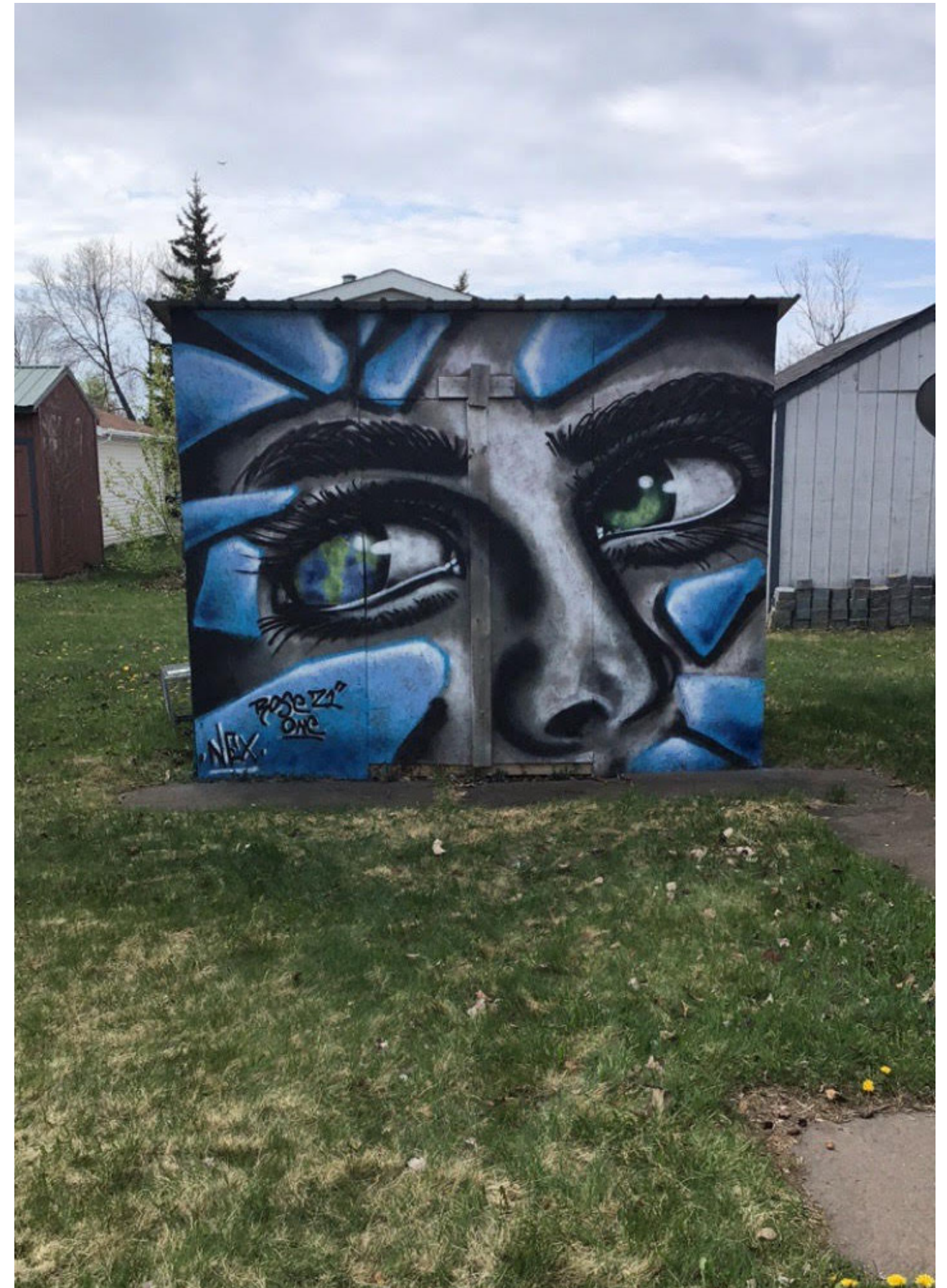
“Abandoned”



By:Taylor Rose

"Unity"

By: Taylor Rose



"Untitled Scroll #1"

By: Julia Redner



"Self Portrait #1"

By: Emma Kari



"Self Portrait #2"

By: Emma Kari



Blood

By: Ben Hanzsek-Brill

The Archmage sat, sharpening his dagger. It is known: virgin blood has many uses. A certain spell called for it.

The Archmage, being a resourceful man, went to a playground and waited for a child to skin their knee. He used his handkerchief to dab the blood as her mother came with a bandage. She thanked him as the stained cloth slipped into his pocket.

The spell failed. The scrying glass showed the fault was in the materials. The Archmage was sharpening his dagger because a man deserved to die. Besides, it is known: a deadman's heart has many uses.

New Light

By: Ben Hanzsek-Brill

When winter comes the coldest days are when the sun shines bright. The horizon fills with a million shards of glass. Sunburn and hypothermia are not distant relatives but close companions.

The final stage of freezing to death is flooding with heat. Many rip their clothes off in desperation to escape. A final statement of life, to spite death. New light pours in as the days grow longer.

It isn't summer's light, yet. It isn't happy. It isn't living. It doesn't have heat. But we do. Flooded with heat and the light will devour it all. Summer will come again.

Long Distance

By: Ben Hanzsek-Brill

Tyler and Susan love each other. They've been long-distance for four-ish years. Susan graduated after fall semester, waiting for her PHD program to start, when she met Tyler at a party. He was going to med school after the spring.

Their system worked. Every month Tyler would visit for a weekend and they would revel in each other. Their lives were busy; this suited them.

But the town where Susan is going to teach accepted Tyler for residency. They will be together; it's perfect. Except their lives are busy, and they aren't sure if they love each other so close.

We Have the Answers

By: Miles Harmelink

How naked we all are in your mother's house,
preserving ourselves in each other's words.
The pear farm faces the wind,
barn-door-jaw agape,
the long arms of the willow slatted
Like last week's crowd.

I want to talk about doilies and hammocks
because I'm afraid of crumbling under the weight
of someone else's murder—
but you press people like cuts of meat.

And when you're caught in a moment of self-reflection,
you stain your lips with wine and crash
through the parlor, trample the dog
and scale the kitchen up to the altar.

Why, oh why are your hands clasped so tight?
I want to tell you a secret with my fingers,
digging beneath ripened flesh for hollow seeds.

A Day For Elephants

By: Miles Harmelink

The Elephant sways beneath a great marula tree
flapping his tattered battle flags,
picking his dentures
with a twig grasped in his white trunk.

He is too old and too tired to reach
the leaves that

hush hush

It is a windy night in the African bush.
The alabaster of his ivory gleams
in the moonlight, like a set of sabers.

His pale eyes have sunken so deep
he does not care to gore the hyenas
in their dark suits,
or trample the camp of lions
in his front yard.

Savanna, safari, salamanca—
This is a song of salience:

He is the last.
Alone
beneath the shadow
of the distant Kilimanjaro

he remembers and then hopes for rain
to wash away the scars
on his leather.

When the ball of the moon
is balanced in the sky
he raises his trunk to trumpet and dance,
to dare the night to forget.

Wild Horses

By:Miles Harmelink

Across the river where the wild horses roam,
once there was a picket fence—
now worn, rain rotted wood
trampled under shoeless hooves

Under the orange glow of your persimmons
we lay and watch them run.
Dancing through the water—
they're so proud, you whisper,
my hands wild horses on your back.
Smooth ripples across a mirrored creek;
Your skin, a sea to rove and conquer.

Appaloosa, painted hills,
black Arabian silk—
never to be broken or branded.
Disappearing into the rain-flooded fields,
splashing southbound, with the sun behind them.

We'll never ride the wild horses
or grip their manes and scream at the wind.
We wait until darkness falls across your father's land
and ride home on his beasts you've named.

Eight Things I've Learned as a Teacher's Assistant in Kindergarten Art

By:Allison Kaiser

One: when someone's box of crayons spills across the floor, you should help clean it up- it'll only take a minute.

Two: Transformers are still cool. Draw as many as you want.

Three: If you stay up past eight o'clock on Sunday night, you won't have the energy to color in Monday morning art class.

Four: Big kids' names are hard to remember, but it's okay to call them The Helper, and when you want their attention, you'll have it, because they've learned to speak the language of confusion: wandering eyes, still hands, hidden papers- these are how you call The Helper.

Five: Art doesn't need to be hard. The Helper will realize this while you color oceans in Sky Blue Cerulean, and then abandon the painting they've been working on for weeks to join you, and it's really calming, you should try it sometime.

Six: Sometimes you need a big kid to spell big words like “mother” and “love”, but even big kids don’t know every word.

Seven: Not everyone’s idea of “mother” is the same as mine. Girls will play pretend, claiming fiercely the role of mother in order to dole out punishment, the greatest power they know, and throw towels in anger.

Eight: The kid who sits at the front of the class, screaming over the teacher and refusing to sit in his seat? He’s used to being yelled at. It’s kindness that will shock him into silence. Only then will he admit to you that he can’t draw a fish. Before you can ask why, he’ll tell you that he doesn’t know any fish, that he’s stupid, and you can’t think about what he just said because it’s not your job to convince him that he’s smart, that he’s capable, that he is a blank state of endless potential wrapped in five short years- your job is to show him how to draw a fish, and if you take it slow, in time, he will realize he can. Tiny hands will offer you a drawing, shaky lines and bright colors, a moment in time trapped on paper, and it is a fish. Hang it up in your locker, look at it, and every time, wonder how a five-year-old knows the word stupid, why he thinks it’s the adjective that applies to him, but that isn’t your job. Your job is to forget about your own problems for a moment and smile and wave when a small voice calls in the hallway “I know you from art!” Your job is to walk into the classroom every other Monday, first thing in the morning with a cart full of paint and paper and possibilities and hope they learn half as much as you do.

A Sonnet

By: Jack Hartford

The trees outside my window bear no leaves,
But in the dead of winter I can see,
A hope for springtime’s warm and pleasant breeze.
Ah, how soft and warm summer’s sun can be.

Yet out my window another hand holds
A stern grasp over the life breaking through
The boot of winter so harsh and so cold
Crushes all that wants to begin anew.

Your love feels like spring’s perfect caress,
As fresh as new flowers in the ground.
And your beauty, to my eyes it does bless
Causing my heart to beat in rhythmic sound.

But for all the springtime beauty you possess,
The deathly cold of winter hides in recess.

Like Father, Like Son

By:Emerson Jay

Forward

Ever heard of a flashlight child? Of course, you haven't. I (the author) made it up. A flashlight child is one who spends their time in the garage with their father, learning the things in life that are useful such as fixing a car, electrical, and other tricks. Although it's not so much learning, more like watching their father do it while they hold the flashlight just right or hand screws and nails when needed. So, what happens when that flashlight child grows up, and has to use what they "learned", but this time they are alone. Like Father, Like Son by Emerson Jay.

To my father. No one I would rather be a flashlight child for. Thank you for all the life lessons and teaching me to work smarter, not harder. Even when I wasn't listening.

Dramatis Personae

Grandad: Stern middle-aged man
Jim: Dad character in his teenage years, little distracted
Dad: Jim but grown up, Mr. Bright side
Chip: fifteen/sixteen aged independent

Apparel

Grandad: Grubby Jeans and sweatshirt with stocking cap. Has oil rag and grime on face
Jim: Athletic shorts and muscle shirt
Dad: Flannel, fishing hat, cargo pants
Chip: pants and hoodie

(Lights and curtain come up)
 (JIM and GRANDAD are working on a car. GRANDAD is bent over the open hood working and muttering, JIM is holding the flashlight in a lopsided manner, looking bored)
 GRANDAD: (giving a sense of rising annoyance) a little higher, a little higher...okay down, down...do you even have the light on? DOWN JIM DOWN!
 JIM: (hectically moving the flashlight to a better position) Sorry! (beat) So what are we doing again?
 GRANDAD: Seriously? Open your ears, kid! We're putting in a new belt for your mother's car. And it's much easier if I had a little light so could you please point that damn flashlight where I need it! (JIM moves flashlight) Thank you.
 JIM: ...So why does she need a new belt?
 GRANDAD: To keep her pants up.
 JIM: (beat) See I can never tell if you're joking or not.
 GRANDAD: Do you want your mother careening off the side of the road next time she takes this thing out? (slaps car) No? Didn't think so. Now just watch and learn alright? This could very easily be something you'll need to do one day. And hopefully, you'll have a son who keeps the light in one spot.
 JIM: (sigh) Couldn't I just hire someone to do it for me?
 GRANDAD: (steps away from the car and speaks directly to JIM) See that's the problem with your generation. Everyone thinks money fixes everything. Life is just handed to them on a silver platter, so they never do any hard work. They just jut around in those skimpy outfits not giving a care about anything or anyone.
 JIM: They're called athletic shorts dad.
 GRANDAD: The more you know how to do, the more you can save. I'm just showing you how to get ahead in life alright? These skills can save your life. Remember, work smarter...
 JIM: Not harder.
 GRANDAD: (ruffles JIM's hair) That a kid. Now, (going back under the hood) hand me the socket wrench.
 (JIM hesitates, then hands GRANDAD a screwdriver)
 GRANDAD: (annoyed sigh) Really?

(Lights fade to show a passage of time of 25 years. Scene change to a young

boy sleeping in his bed with the lights still turned low)

(DAD knocks and walks in, flicking on the lights, lights come up)
 DAD: Rise and shine slugger! Boundary Waters time!
 CHIP: (grumbling in bed and checks alarm clock) Dad, it's 4:30 in the morning.
 DAD: Oh, c'mon this way we'll beat the traffic! Like grandpa always says, work smarter not harder.
 CHIP: This seems harder to me.
 DAD: (chuckles) I'm almost done loading up the car so pack up that bag and let's go! And don't forget wool socks! I did that my first time up there. Yikes.
 CHIP: (long beat then CHIP sighs) Fine dad. What happened when you forgot?
 DAD: Well you know how I have 4 toes on one foot?
 CHIP: (sitting up more, concerned and interested) Yeah?
 DAD: Yeah that happened way later. But it did make my foot really cold.
 (CHIP groans) So, chop chop!

(DAD walks out of the room; CHIP throws the pillow over his face as the lights fade away.)
 (Lights come back up on DAD and CHIP sitting in the car, CHIP is on his phone while DAD drives)

DAD: So, first time to Boundary Waters! How ya feeling?
 CHIP: (texting) Fine.
 DAD: Yeah, I thought that my first time too but boy was I in for a world of surprises. Thank God I had grandpa there with me otherwise who knows if I would have made it! (CHIP glances over concerned) But don't worry, the old man taught me well. (DAD laughs awkwardly) (beat) So, feeling strong?
 CHIP: I guess.
 DAD: Great, because those portages will really whip you into shape, hot dang. I remember one time, there was this huge trunk of a tree that had fallen down in the middle of one of the paths. Now that didn't stop ole daddio, your grandpa. With a canoe over his shoulders he did a full lunge underneath the

brambles and branches, didn't even look like he broke a sweat.

CHIP: How about you dad?

DAD: Oh, I sunk up to my waist in mud. Almost lost my croc but I got it back. Stuck my arm in all the way up to my armpit, just caked in the stuff. At least I think it was mud. Did not smell all that great. But hey, it keeps the bears away right?

CHIP: Bears?

DAD: Oh yeah! Boundary Waters are full of amazing animals. Moose, Martins,

CHIP: Mosquitos?

DAD: Ha! Funny. And true. But also bears. That's why we keep the food sealed up tight. Don't worry though little man, I've never seen one there so we'll be fine.

(beat of awkward silence, CHIP is looking out the window and does a quick double take behind him)

CHIP: Uh dad, wasn't that our exit?

DAD: Hmm? Oh, not to worry Chip! My old man knew a shortcut we took every time. (gesturing to CHIP's phone) You can probably put that electronic map away. Men like us just know the roads like the back of our hands (holds up hand and mocks surprise) oh that's new. (Beat) Relax I'm joking. Just take a right and two lefts and we'll be there.

(hazy spotlight appears stage left of DAD and CHIP to show GRANDAD and JIM in a car)

CHIP: Starting from where?

DAD: Well from...um...I'll know it when I see it. Just relax Chipmyster.

(GRANDAD and JIM turn off stage while DAD and CHIP continue to go forward.)

(Hazy lights cut out and regular lights begin to fade in and out three times, each time DAD is still driving while CHIP is sitting in a different position each time) (Lights fade up with CHIP speaking to DAD)

CHIP: Dad, can you just admit we're lost.

DAD: We're not lost. This is just an extended adventure.

CHIP: Okay well this extended adventure has been about 3 hours of coun-

tryside. Google maps said we would get there at 10 am. It's one. Can we at least stop somewhere for lunch?

DAD: Alright alright. (thinking, then memory hits) Oh (snaps) there was this great restaurant on the way up there. I remember dad ordered some weird meatloaf and I got these chicken tenders that came out more like burnt nuggets and dad just laughed (beat) ya know I guess it wasn't really that good. Burger King?

CHIP: That's fine with me. (takes out phone) I'm gonna look up directions while you order.

DAD: (scoffs) Alright, if you want to take the easy way out so be it.

CHIP: (snarkily) Working smarter. (Siri directional voice with Starting Route)

(The car is rotated to face away from the audience as the scenery changes to show a more wooded area. DAD and CHIP improv as the scene changes.)

(Once scene change is complete, SIRI says "Arrived")

DAD: Welcome to the Boundary Waters!

(DAD and CHIP step out of the car and slam their doors, shaking the car. CHIP tries to find a signal on his phone while DAD takes in the surroundings)

DAD: (Deep breath in) Wow it's just like I remember it. (gestures to each area) Except that tree is new, and that one, don't remember that bush...oh that's new too...

CHIP: Yeah dad I get it! Funny stuff. (gives up on phone and puts it in pocket) So should I grab the canoe or...? (hazy spotlight appears on the far side of the stage, see GRANDAD and JIM getting out of the car, GRANDAD properly takes down the canoe from the roof, JIM takes the bags out of the car, and loads them into the middle of the canoe by himself. GRANDAD gives JIM a pat on the back and a smile, and they both put on life jackets, get in the canoe, and GRANDAD pushes the canoe off and they paddle off stage left) (spotlight fades out)

DAD: Oh, I'll get that. Why don't you get the bags? (CHIP begins taking bags out of the trunk while DAD unstraps the canoe from the roof) And get that life jacket on! (throws life jacket to CHIP) Did you know that drowning is the number one cause of water related deaths? Got that from Wikipedia.

CHIP: (moving bags away from the car and buckling life jacket on) Yeah dad

I'm gonna drown right here on the dirt. (beat, looks concerned at DAD) You sure you got that? Looks heavy.

DAD: (struggling to take canoe off the roof) Hey if my old man could do it, so can I. (lifts canoe up with a grunt and holds) Plus it looks a lot worse than it actually...is...(can see DAD struggling to hold it alone) ya know you should probably move because this thing is gonna fall.

(CHIP jumps out of the way; DAD drops the canoe with a groan. Canoe hits the front end of the car and dents the hood. CHIP and DAD approach front of car with pained expressions)

DAD: Ah that's... (bends behind the car to rub the dent and then straightens away) ya know what? Not gonna worry about it. This is a stress-free weekend with my son, so not gonna let something like that ruin it. Plus, this car is so old that the dent just blends right in. I think your mother actually passed her driver's test in this rust bucket back in the day.

CHIP: (walks over to the downed canoe, bending down to grab the handle at the end) Here dad, I'll grab one end you grab the other. So, then the bags...

DAD: I got this one buddy boy. (moving the nearby bags into the middle of the canoe) If we put them all in the middle, it equals out the mass of the boat. Pretty smart eh?

CHIP: That's what I was gonna do. We learned that stuff in sixth grade, not too difficult. (DAD and CHIP begin dragging the canoe towards the lake) So is there a motor or something...

DAD: Ah no motorboats up here Chip. Disturbs the peace and quiet. We are gonna use manpower and row this sucker across the vast lake.

CHIP: But you didn't pack any oars.

DAD: Of course I (stops walking) (beat) nuts. Let me think for a bit. (pondering and sets down the canoe) Well I suppose we could rip up a couple of saplings and trim them down until it looks like they can move us, or we could go by hand, although that might take a while longer and I've always had a fear a pike or something would think my fingers were worms, or..

CHIP: Or, there was a department store in that town we drove through so we could just go and see if they had some.

DAD: (beat) Guess that works too. Hope this pile of junk still starts up. Not sure how much life is left in her. (lights begin to fade as CHIP and DAD pile into the van)

(Lights come up on DAD and CHIP struggling to row the canoe across the lake. It is afternoon lighting)

CHIP: (straining and grunting while paddling) Dad, why aren't we moving?

DAD: (straining) of course we are! Slow and steady wins the race, right?

CHIP: (pointing) Even that leaf is moving faster than we are.

DAD: Well that leaf doesn't have to row your fat butt around does it?

(CHIP gives a look then does a large smack against the "water" causing a small wave to soak DAD)

CHIP: (sheepishly grinning) whoops.

DAD: (wiping off the water and chuckling) I'll give you that one as a freebee. But remember, I know where you sleep. Now push Chip, push! (groaning) Ugh dad made this look SO easy.

CHIP: (setting his oar down) Hey dad, do you think I could try piloting this sucker for a little bit?

DAD: Really? Alright (CHIP and DAD switch places in the canoe without tipping) but I have to warn you it's tougher than it looks.

(CHIP starts off with a strong stroke knocking DAD onto his butt in the front)

DAD: Woah! (lights fade from the daylight to an evening glow)

(DAD and CHIP reached the campsite)

DAD: (looking around) Wow, I didn't think we would reach this place before nightfall. (to CHIP) Nice paddling son. You're a real natural at that.

CHIP: (climbing out of the canoe) Thanks. So now what?

DAD: Well why don't you go clear a space for the tent, and I'll unload everything.

(CHIP leaves the canoe, the light follows to CHIP clearing brush, and libbing until a large splash is heard. Curious, CHIP returns to DAD where lights are on both now. DAD is sitting behind the canoe in the water with bags floating)

CHIP: I think I cleared a big enough (beat at seeing DAD) what happened??

DAD: (beat) I dropped the tent. And my clothes.

CHIP: (running down to the water to help) Why didn't you take more than one trip?

DAD: (getting up) Well I started doing that but then the current started pulling

the canoe away so I figured it would be smarter to take them all at once and I guess it was just a little too heavy for me.

CHIP: (grabbing the canoe handle) Dad, just pull the canoe farther up on the shore! Alright I'll set up the tent so it can air dry, why don't you get started on that fire and warm up a bit. (beat) Did you at least save my phone?

(lights fade to nighttime)

(hazy spotlight on GRANDAD and JIM sitting by a fire pit, GRANDAD hitting two rocks together. Mouths something to JIM, who walks over to the tent to grab something. GRANDAD puts index finger up to the audience to make sure they don't tell, and GRANDAD pulls a lighter out from his pocket, lights the fire, and then hides the lighter, making whooping noises he got the fire started with flint and steel. JIM runs over looking impressed and the hazy spotlight fades)

(regular spotlight for night sky opens on CHIP who starts walking towards DAD who is bent over the firepit)

CHIP: Tent should be dry soon; I don't think we should put anything in there until (beat) what are you doing?

DAD: (banging two rocks together) My dad showed me once and it worked pretty amazing for him. I just have to figure out how these rocks make a spark...

CHIP: Dad it's flint and STEEL. You can't just use random beach rocks. (rummage in bag, pulls out a lighter)

DAD: (suddenly stern) Why do you have a lighter.

CHIP: I'm sixteen, dad. Everyone has a lighter. So, you got any small scraps I can light?

DAD: Yeah, they're at the bottom. At least I remember how to set up the fire right? (the two sit in silence as CHIP begins the fire, a small glow appears) (beat) You did a nice job with the tent bud. Where'd you learn to do that?

CHIP: (stoking the fire) Mom used to take me out in the backyard a lot while you worked late. Was pretty cool staring at the couple of stars that would make it through the city lights. (beat thinking of happy times) I remember we would count how many we could see, and mom would help me count past... twelve because apparently, I was a little slow with math. It was a good time.

DAD: (smiling) I bet. Your mother was pretty amazing. (beat) I want to show you something else that's pretty amazing. (CHIP and DAD walk down to the shore. DAD points to the sky) think you can count all of those?

CHIP: (awestruck staring upwards at thousands of stars) Woah.

DAD: If we're really lucky, my old man would say this is the perfect place to watch the Northern Lights. I haven't seen them yet but I'm still hopeful. (long beat)

CHIP: I think the tent should be dry by now, so I'm gonna get some sleep. Good night dad, (CHIP begins walking towards the tent and looks back) I had fun today.

DAD: Night buddy. (beat as keeps staring at the sky) I'll make sure he sees them, don't you worry.

(Lights fade as night falls, Lights come up with the morning)

(open on CHIP sleeping in the tent, shouting in background wakes him)

DAD: Ah damn that's hot!

(CHIP leaves the tent, DAD is hunched over the fire pit with a frying pan)

CHIP: Dad?

DAD: Morning Chipster! Just making a little breakfast.

CHIP: (gesturing to the pan) What...is that.

DAD: What does it look like? Bacon and eggs! Just like my old man used to make.

CHIP: Why are the eggs black?

DAD: No that's the bacon. Just adds more flavor. (scrapes "food" onto plates) Nothing like a cast iron skillet for some good camping food. Then there's some water here too for ya. I boiled it so should be clean. (hands CHIP a cup)

CHIP: (staring at the water) There's still stuff floating in it.

DAD: But it's been purified so it's fine. Here watch. (drinks) tasty. (DAD eats while CHIP quietly takes a granola bar out of the food pack)

DAD: (Chewing and coughing) Not quite how I remember dad making it but still fills you up! (both finish eating and DAD sets plate aside) So today is your day bud what sounds good? Fishing, little joyride, maybe a hike, maybe whit-tling...

CHIP: Hike sounds good. Not sure how much I trust you around water right now after last night.

DAD: Yeah guess I saw that coming. (stands up) Well let's get going then. Beautiful weather for a hike.

(the two exit stage right, lights shift for time passage as set is removed and replaced with wilderness scene, CHIP enters stage left. DAD off stage)

CHIP: (concerned) Dad you okay?

DAD: Oof breakfast is NOT agreeing with me. I might be back here a while. (groans) Can you run back to camp and grab the tums out of my bag?

CHIP: (pulling out a packet of Tums) I brought them with me. (throws packet offstage towards DAD) I know how you cook.

DAD: Smart boy. Smart mouth too but still, smart boy. (beat, dad comes out) well on the bright side I just marked our territory for those bears or wild animals in the area.

CHIP: (Gagging and walking away) yeah that would scare anything away. (beat as they continue hiking) Hey dad can we head back soon? Getting hungry.

DAD: Yeah, we should probably make our way to the next portage anyway.

CHIP: But I thought you said we were gonna relax.

DAD: Oh, of course! But there is just so much more to see and I just want you to experience everything before the weekend is over. So, let's get going! (grabs stomach in pain) After I make one more pit stop. (running off stage) What was in that water.

(CHIP follows shaking his head)

(Lights dim to afternoon with DAD strapping bags to CHIP)

(side by side with hazy spotlight on JIM and GRANDAD, GRANDAD strapping bags to JIM same as DAD to CHIP. GRANDAD puts on shoulder pads, places canoe on shoulders and the two walk off stage, hazy light fades)

CHIP: (groaning) So why can't we make more than one trip? This is pretty heavy already (DAD loads third bag onto CHIP who grunts) okay NOW it's heavy.

DAD: (getting final straps in place and working on the canoe) Well this is a

two-mile hike. So, I wouldn't want to walk two miles, come back two miles, and walk it again. I mean you can if you want, it is a beautiful view on this mountainside.

CHIP: Nope I'm fine with this. You sure you got the canoe? Last time that didn't work out so well for you.

DAD: This time I've got these. (pulls out two homemade looking shoulder pads)

CHIP: Oh my...what the heck are those? They look like a bloated carcass.

DAD: This bad boy has been in the family since my grandfather made it from...I think deer. But it helps ease the canoe on your shoulders. And someday it will help you too.

CHIP: Yeah definitely gonna sanitize that. Don't need three generations of sweat on my shoulders.

DAD: Alright well, let's get going (DAD picks up canoe and puts on his shoulders)

(long beat as DAD and CHIP walk along the trail, grunting and struggling)

(both stop as a downed tree in the way. The neighboring background shows a steep hill in the back)

DAD: Oh the trail looks a little blocked off.

CHIP: Think you can get around dad? Sorta like grandpa did?

DAD: Um I can try to (DAD tries to lunge under the branch, loses balance)

WOAH. (smacks CHIP who stumbles off the trail towards the hill) Chip are you okay? I'm sorry let's just try going around. (beat) Chip?

CHIP: Dad...I'm stuck.

DAD: What?

CHIP: The mud. Dad can you help pull me out.

DAD: Sure I (branch snaps, beat) what was that.

CHIP: What was what.

DAD: Listen. (shuffling off stage) Did you leave any food out?

CHIP: Yeah, I didn't really eat this morning so brought some jerky out. Was I not supposed to? Dad what...

DAD: (silencing CHIP) Shh. Chip, we have to leave now alright? I'm going to pull you out of here and we'll get to the lake really quick, okay? (DAD grabs CHIP) 3,2,1 pull! (both struggle, DAD shuffles behind CHIP for better grip.

CHIP pops out and both DAD and CHIP stumble off the edge of the hill off

stage with canoe and gear following)

(fade to black, lights come up in dimmer fashion to show nearly nightfall)

DAD: (frantic) Chip! Are you there? Say something Chip!

CHIP: (groaning and coughing) My arm, dad I think I broke my arm!

DAD: Don't worry Chip. (looking around) I'll get us out of here.

CHIP: (hyperventilating) We're gonna die, we're gonna die, we're gonna die (grabs arm) it hurts so much.

DAD: We aren't going to die buddy, okay? We're gonna be just fine. Here let me help (DAD tries to help CHIP up)

CHIP: (screaming) AHHH

DAD: (backing away) Okay okay not touching it. (thinking and pacing) Umm broken arm, a broken arm, we could try...no that wouldn't work. Oh...no. (frantic thinking) okay I don't remember much about this, (hazy spotlight fades in just grandad) but I do remember grandad would say...

CHIP: (yelling in pain and anger) JUST. STOP! OKAY DAD? GRANDPA ISN'T HERE! (hazy spotlight cuts out) This whole trip has been Grandpa this and Grandpa that and you TRYING to be like grandpa and where is he now? Dead! Where are we? Basically dead! So congrats, you're FINALLY starting to act like he is! Why is it so frickin important we do this the way he did huh? Why? (DAD sits in stunned silence) (CHIP getting mad) WHY DAD WHY

DAD: (yelling back) Because I can't DO anything Chip! You wanna know what I really remember from working with pop? I remember I was the one who would hold the flashlight or hand him the screws, but I never actually learned how to do any of the things he did! I don't know how to fix a car; I don't know how to work with wood (scoff) I can't even start a stupid fire. And now I can't even teach my own son how to survive. That's why I had your mother! She knew all that stuff but now grandpa's gone, your mom is gone, and I don't know what to do. (beat, tears)

CHIP: (long beat) Dad I'm...I'm sorry...

DAD: (defeated tone, just talking for something to do) Your mother wanted me to bring you here. She wanted you to see the Northern Lights, even if she wasn't the one to bring you. I thought if I could pull off this trip, I could prove to myself that I did learn something from my dad. I always believed he could

do anything, and your mother was the same. And me? I got us stuck down here. No way out, no food, no lights. So, I'm the one who's sorry son. I'm sorry your father is such a failure. (long beat. Night sounds creeping in)

CHIP: Dad, I didn't mean it. I'm just a little scared right now.

DAD: I know son. (looks at CHIP's arm, takes a towel out of the bag) (hesitantly) Here, we can build a sling for your arm really quick. Thinking a little more clearly so let's try to ease the pain a little. (tying it on) Ya know, I learned this from...

CHIP: (interrupting) Grandad...yeah. He was pretty awesome.

DAD: (smirking) Actually I got this one from your mother. (beat of confidence, finishes tying the sling) She also taught me that when you're between a rock and a hard place you can't sit there feeling sorry for yourself. So, here's what we are going to do. Now kiddo, I know you're in pain, but I need your help alright? Can we do this?

CHIP: (deep breathe) Okay.

DAD: That's my boy. (beat) A real chip off the old block.

CHIP: (small groan/laugh) Not really the time for dad jokes.

DAD: Alright, alright, here's the plan. One, there's always time for a dad joke. (beat) Two, we load everything we need into the canoe and drag that through the woods back to the water. Load it more towards the front so the weight is on my side. That way you can still do it one handed. Alright? (CHIP nods) Let's move.

(Small change in dimmer lighting after everything is thrown in the canoe and both pick up an end)

(DAD and CHIP are dragging the canoe groaning and struggling)

CHIP: Can we have another break dad? I can't really switch arms here.

DAD: We just took one five minutes ago Chip, keep pushing! We're almost back to our first lake. (beat) See, it's right there!

(off stage rustling noise)

CHIP: (looks back quickly) Dad, it's that noise again.

(hazy spotlight fades in next to DAD, GRANDAD standing alone)

GRANDAD: When you hear a strange noise in the woods, don't panic. You want to keep your wits about you.

DAD: Shh, it's okay buddy we left the food back in that... (black bear emerges or shown off stage, grunting aggressively)

CHIP: (stage whisper) Dad...it's a black bear.

GRANDAD: There are bears up here, Jim. If you ever come across a black bear, this is what I want you to do... (hazy light fades)

DAD: Chip (slowly removing the skillet and an oar from canoe) can you drag this canoe to the lake by yourself.

CHIP: (stuttering) I think I can. What are you going to do?

DAD: Just trust me buddy, I know what I'm doing...I think. Ready? (dramatic beat, GRANDAD's voice on top of DAD's simultaneously say...) go. (CHIP begins struggling to drag canoe to the lake, DAD bangs skillet and oar while yelling top of his lungs, making a lot of noise and throwing rocks at the bear. There is a muffled roar which DAD challenges and the bear retreats. DAD runs to the canoe) Let's go!

CHIP: Dad, that was incredible!

DAD: Less talk more paddle he might come back!

(DAD begins paddling with ferocity with CHIP trying to help, lights fade)

(fade up to Night Lights, CHIP and DAD arrive back at the car, CHIP out of breath, DAD still paddling crazily)

CHIP: Dad I see the car; you can stop paddling! (DAD stops and is out of breath) Dad, you knew EVERYTHING what to do. That was incredible.

DAD: I really did, didn't I? Thank you, Chip, that means a lot. (beat) You know, our camping permit doesn't expire for another day, would you want to...

CHIP: (holding up his sling) Hospital dad. Hospital.

DAD: Oh, right, right, my bad, forgot about that. Hop in, let's go.

(car doesn't start) Oh what now. (pops hood, serpentine belt is off)

CHIP: What's wrong?

DAD: (Holds up the belt) The canoe must've jiggled the serpentine belt loose and then us driving to the market knocked it off. Plus, this is a really old car.

CHIP: Well what do we do now? I still don't have any service to call anyone for help and it's the middle of the night...

DAD: Chip, relax. I know how to do this. Could you bring a flashlight over here? Little dark. And grab that emergency toolbox. Always have one of these

in your car. (CHIP gets out of the car and brings a flashlight over to DAD) Perfect hold it right there bud. (Hazy light comes back on scene 1 of GRANDAD and JIM working on the car)

JIM: Hey dad, do you think you could tell me what you're doing? Not learning much here.

GRANDAD: Oh, sure son. So, I already replaced the idler pulley, so all we have to do is put the belt back on. Come over here, give me that flashlight. (JIM and GRANDAD switch places, JIM and DAD in same position, moving at the same time and doing GRANDAD's instructions synchronized)

GRANDAD: So first loosen the tensioner right there. Gonna have to use your muscles. (DAD and JIM pulling and grunting)

GRANDAD: Nice! Now you see that little diagram next to the engine? That's how the belt wraps around the pulleys so just copy that.

(DAD and JIM wrap the belt)

GRANDAD: Then all we have to do is reapply the tension. To make sure we have the specific tension needed, you're gonna take that long part of the belt and twist it. If it moves more than about 90 degrees, it needs more tension.

Think you got it, son? C'mon you can do it!

(DAD and JIM give one final shout, hazy light cuts out so just DAD who takes a step back in surprise, CHIP sees something in the water and starts to meander towards the lake) Wow that actually worked. (Pats the hood of the car) (Whispers to SELF) Thank you dad. We did it. (louder to CHIP) Hey Chip, it's ready! (beat) Chip? (DAD walks around the car to see that CHIP is now standing by the water again)

CHIP: Dad, look. (CHIP points to the sky where the northern lights are shining. DAD comes over and puts an arm over CHIP's shoulder, looking into the night sky) Mom was right. They are beautiful.

(DAD and CHIP stare at the sky for a bit, then walk back to the car which starts, and the night sky fades to black)

(End)



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