

Muskoka

I remember Muskoka with deep and passionate
Remembering.
I remember how it was to skim on Mary Lake
In the Swan:
Hot political arguments in the white sunshine
And the smack of spray against your face.
The island ... like a green oasis in a watery desert
Stacked with birch and evergreen marching thirstily down
To the water's edge.
The little cabin, set down
At the deck's edge:
Lamplight ... and the slim canoe butting against the timbers
And rain, and the fury of the wind and the terror of lightning,
And daylight ... white morning, walking like a young ghost
Out of the water and onto the shore.
And sunsets ... all the colours inside your heart
Dredged up and set in the sky
Just before moonlight.

Mike the spaniel, and Captain Archer, and the Religious Lady
Are all mixed up with the Mildred
And going to Bracebridge for stores
And sitting in the library and waiting for a Western picture to come on
In the little theatre across the street
And stumbling onto Oscar Wilde's "De Profundis,"
And being lifted out of time and space.

O to leave Muskoka is a perilous thing!
Some bit of you, in spite of time or life or wider new horizons
Clings to the place.
Deep roots go down
Deeper than fern in the forest ...

Still, summer nights on Browning Island
My heart goes walking.

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