

2003

Canoeing on the Kalamazoo

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Recommended Citation

Vesper, Meghan (2003) "Canoeing on the Kalamazoo," *Exile*: Vol. 50 : No. 1 , Article 13.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.denison.edu/exile/vol50/iss1/13>

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Canoeing on the Kalamazoo

Perfect day, you said, staring at the sky.
We dipped our paddles into the water,
it was fast and smelled like the chemical plant.
Mosquitoes hung around my face.

I pushed my paddle deeper into the water
and the blade brushed the rocks.
The mosquitoes clustered around my face,
you gave me the backpack with the bug spray.

Near the sandbar, we bumped against the rocks.
The paddle rested on my legs. I climbed out,
and you tossed me the backpack with our lunch.
I poured bottled water down my neck.

The paddle rested on my legs as you pushed us
off the bank. The sun stung my shoulders
and I poured water down my neck.
Our strokes settled into an easy rhythm.

The fast water carried beer cans alongside us.
I wrinkled my nose, then rubbed my shoulders.
Perfect day, you said, looking back at the sky
while shading your face with one hand.

--Meghan Vesper '05