

1992

Waterhole

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Waterhole

He skipped the flat stone across the quiet water,
I counted eight rings and looked at James with awe.
The rope hung from a dead branch of our great oak,
threads of fiber danced in the wind.

James will do anything, so I dared him to swing.
His eyes narrowed until only the blue pierced mine
own, his lips were tightened around a whole lemon,
the cords in his neck a child could play.

He knew dangling from the limp line was foolish.
He grasped the weathered board with one rusty
nail that couldn't penetrate the rings of the oak.
I saw his right leg jerk, hand over hand he moved.

His silhouette climbed through the patterns of the
leaves, the sun blinding all detail. Searching for
his freckled nose, his skin of dark, red berry full
of the juice, his wheat hair long from the summer.

He reminds me of a wild weed that you pull from
between the bricks in a long path. He's covering
the dead branch with his overgrown feet. I can picture
the white knuckles wrapped around the swing.

I feel that last breath he takes before the plunge,
I can see the white of his eyes. He swoops low over
the water and is pulled to the other side, away from me.
I hear the snap and see his fall, his head framed by rings.

– Heidi Mahoney '93



– Keith Chapman '95