

Spring 1977

The Boy's Pond translated by Rich Ives

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Recommended Citation

Huchel, Peter (1977) "The Boy's Pond translated by Rich Ives," *CutBank*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 8 , Article 14.

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THE BOY'S POND

When the passionate dragonfly flashes
in the yellowing reeds among midday spray,
the still water blooming shallow
in the nymph green of the duck groats,
the boy who played on the calamus reed
raises the fishnet into the air
and snares the brood of waterfleas,
the dark cloud in the musselshell gravel.

Red blooms around the conjuring pagan;
the pond gleams fisheyed in the weeds.
The gray soul of the shore willow
grows audible over the sump and sedge
where the weak cry of the shunned prophet
resounds like a mouth of the spell . . .
The boy listens; sunk in his ear
are wind and pond and the shriek of a crow.

The noonday brightness is bewitched,
the glassy green algae-light.
The boy knows the water's place
in the different sparkle in his eyes.
He separates the reeds, the brittle yellow,
proudly strikes the frog-headed nod,
and hums and splashes and is the same
as he was once with an animal gaze.

And the pond is still the same,
like the time his mouth played the calamus reed,
your foot dangling in the yellow marsh
and your toes gripping the gravel.
When you see in the dream of the pond-green dark
the sedge, like hair, closing the circle,
this too is the boy's maturing—
for a while still your net hangs in the water.

Translated by Rich Ives