

Spring 2000

Childhood Light

Todd Struckman

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cutbank>



Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation

Struckman, Todd (2000) "Childhood Light," *CutBank*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 53 , Article 16.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cutbank/vol1/iss53/16>

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in CutBank by an authorized editor of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.

CHILDHOOD LIGHT

Once we forget day the clearing fills
with light. No trees block the stars and the sky
blues towards Washington. Headlights stutter

along the highway, then shine a steady
moment at the bridges. From the first ridge
below this mountain top, the spring begins

in pines its sixteen mile run past thickets
of alder, past interludes of moose-loved
sedge, through culverts we explored as kids,

batting down webs and their spiders with sticks,
the random traffic coming like airplanes
overhead, infrequent and far away,

until, finally, now a creek, it spills
cold water into the sun-warmed shallows
of Luby Bay, on the northwestern shores

of Priest Lake. We are living again, Bob
and I, near the start of the water's week-
long trip, in a lookout tower we haven't

seen in twenty years, the less important
two-thirds of our lives, enough to forget
the helix of stairs between tar-coated legs.

Bob wants to play cards in the dark, so we
move the two chairs out onto the catwalk.
Once we forget the hissing, yellow light

of propane wicks, we see the wind, a down-

valley-breeze, turn up the white undersides
of aspen leaves. Balanced on the railing,

the last slice of apple glows like scrimshaw,
like a whale bone carefully scored and inked.
The radio catches an AM skip

of accordions and voices we can't
understand. We think we recognize Bush,
Yeltsin and Murmansk, and Luby Bay shines

red and white with running lights. Bob shuffles
the cards. He deals and I spread out my hand
to gather the childhood light of stars.