

June 2009

The Door Peninsula

Brandon Lewis

Follow this and additional works at: <https://orb.binghamton.edu/harpurpalate>

Recommended Citation

Lewis, Brandon (2009) "The Door Peninsula," *Harpur Palate: a Literary Journal*: Vol. 9: Iss. 1, Article 30.
Available at: <https://orb.binghamton.edu/harpurpalate/vol9/iss1/30>

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by The Open Repository @ Binghamton (The ORB). It has been accepted for inclusion in Harpur Palate: a Literary Journal by an authorized editor of The Open Repository @ Binghamton (The ORB). For more information, please contact ORB@binghamton.edu.

THE DOOR PENINSULA

Brandon Lewis

1

On the outskirts of the dry town Ephraim
there are clues of a further starkness

—this weird lichen-cleaved shore rock
that has scuffed so many feet, and the shapes

of a thousand slithering things, as these
bodies of brachiopod and squid, imprinting

the shallow seas of the Silurian Age.

Trout fishers shore up onto pebbles that chime their round
forms, one

against another, souging side
to side, along Porte de Mort.

2

Lake wind swells in the gullies
the snakegrass swales and dune drifts,

spinning through thimbleberry leaves and
branches of beech birch cedar maple hemlock

—a wind that lets up as I walk
the woods, occasionally carving signs of planets

into sides of trees with a splinter of flagstone.

Over sun, snow, water, and wind

HARPUR PALATE

bleached cliffs—cormorants emerge.
Dark comes. Green dragonflies
lick wildflowers a little longer.

3

Inside the cabin, bookbinding of
my grandmother's *Song of Hiawatha*

evaporates on the wooden shelf, leaving
the air a faint scent of gin berries. And so

Nokomis, upon opening the book, smells
of gin berries. Hummingbird nectar

glows the same garnet-red
as a jar of St. John's wort salve, warming

on an east-facing window sill
before lathered on the cuts on my feet.

4

There is always a more direct route
the traders seek, hauling

masses of pelts and the black
book. Grounding ashore, Nicolet

stands in the canoe and fires his musket
upward. With his Chinese robe

of bird feathers, gunpowder exhausting
grit into the air and jugs of wine

roll into his ankles, he is too occupied
to hear laughter on the banks.

5

A game of sheephead
inside the cabin—the trump runs

black before red, round
before sharp. Grandpa John sips

slowly his brandy with cherries. The chief
of the Menominee sorts his cards.

The *Ed Sullivan Show* plays low
and a child lifts the fireplace bellow.

That bellow looks like one of my black spades.
The child airs the fire.

6

It's just a melted glacier, its valley
risen, over time, with rain.

I spin on the cracking-hot tar
of an inner tube. Sand, cave,
sand, pine, sand,

horizon, horizon, horizon, horizon,
sand. I see it desolate, I see

HARPUR PALATE

grandpa waving and I beach
tired, laughing, dripping, to lie
and stare at the water

as from a school bus window. This is not
the Florida my friends return from golden.

7

After driving slow in the fog past
stone wall after stone wall sliding

into piles, I pull over to a farmer's
black cherry stand.

I say hello and peer down
his orchard row where a tree-shaker

rumbles its force into the heartwood
to avoid damage. The day done,

the farmer lifts his cherry bushels
into a blue pickup.