

## *John Engels*

### At Night on the Lake, in The Eye of the Hunter

That night,  
drifting far out  
in the dark center of the lake,  
I watched the stars. Later,  
I shone my torch  
down into the eel grass  
of the perch beds,  
and saw the fish there,  
stunned into thrills  
and tremblings of fins.

I shone the torch  
onto my wet hands,  
onto the wet,  
sky-reflecting floorboards  
of the boat,  
then onto the sky itself,  
the beam widening  
into the white fabrics  
of mist. That night

I thought I rode  
the center of all the widening darknesses,  
that everything was around me  
out to the far rimstones  
of the circling earth.

Later, by blue starlight seeing  
over the whole surface of the lake  
trout feeding on mayflies,  
seeing the crossing and recrossing  
of rise rings,  
the slow spreading of ripples out  
from the bright, tiny insucks at center,  
I came to think

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how it might have been  
my boat hung there in a net of light,  
a cool, translatable fire.

However it may have been,  
my light began its long reach,  
even now, long afterward,  
still rising, widening,  
into the moving body of the sky  
into the last huge widenesses  
of the last meetings of light,  
beyond which  
I remember this, or not,  
beyond which,  
even then fearing my life,  
I wished to burn.



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