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Eternal Woodland

Brendan Rowland

Cedarville University, brendanrowland@cedarville.edu

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Description

"Eternal Woodland" is a brief piece of creative nonfiction, decidedly impressionistic, a set of unique yet universal snapshots from the author's childhood.

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About the Contributor

Brendan is an English major from near historic Concord, Massachusetts. His deep passion for the written word extends to sundry disciplines. He is constantly inspired by authors such as Emily Dickinson, George Orwell, C.S. Lewis, and Sylvia Plath.

Nonfiction

ETERNAL WOODLAND

BRENDAN ROWLAND

The woods back home seem small to me now. Back then they were self-sufficient, whole, take anything away or add anything to them and they would become less perfect.

Trees and shadows. The gloaming, the waxing moon obscured partially by the naked branches, an angel through dungeon bars. The barred owl with the pretty baby mouse locked eternally in its talons. Beauty through death.

I hopped from log to soft rotten log over the swamp. My landing pad crumbled under my ten-year-old frame, sending one sneaker plunging into the stagnant mud with a splut. Momentum carried me on, God's dark glue holding my sneaker behind. Mum yelled at me this time, but I hosed off my brand new black shoe and returned to my world, *the* world.

The bullfrog I startled at high noon. I tried to find it again and again but never did—only the green tree frogs. Then I didn't need a book to know God.

I skinned my knee pretty bad when I hopped the freshwater creek and misjudged how slick the rocks would be. My blood mingling with the creek. It looked like diluted tomato juice.

I laughed at that. It was good pain. I stepped back in the creek and let the frigid purity of nature's built-in hospital do its job. Mum never found out about this one. I drank the water once—Dad said I would get sick from bacteria, but that was rubbish.

When the bombs fall on the outside world, what will it matter?

I found an old plastic toy once. Some forgotten action figure that never caught on. I picked it up from its bed of decaying leaves; little red ants swarmed up my arm. Groups of little chaotic clockwork, circles within circles.

Somehow I was so happy then.

It was always winter wonderland when three feet of snow fell from heaven. My brother and sister and I sledded into the valley, dodging trees. Adrenaline with no thought of cost. We used New England's trademark stone walls as a jump.

The blighted elm and ash. The pine needles' slickness as I climbed the steepest hill I could find on all fours. *Tom Sawyer* on a rock precipice over the valley. Home.