

[Karen Schubert: Poem](#) [1]

October 1, 2013 [Featured Poetry](#) [2]

Summer of the Blue Cast

Lee broke his arm in the north woods
of Wisconsin. Copper Falls.
I was circling back
to our campsite with my toothbrush,
lingering on the path
lit with fireflies, sounds
of everything close.

When we say the woods are quiet,
we mean a kind of spatial silence,
nothing moving
faster than the red squirrel
shimmying up a tree with a stolen peach.

Slung up to their fires, campers
speak softly, mix their sounds
with the night. I came around
the bend and saw Lee curled
in a canvas chair, holding his arm,
making noises in his throat
like a bird.

Al Capone was Wisconsin's kind
of criminal – made a mint bringing
liquor to the drink-starved, gave
money to charity, to boot.
His hideaway wasn't far from those
woods where we drove fast,
away from our campsite,
Lee shrinking into the seat, strapped
to keep from jostling.

His sister the whistleblower whispered
he'd been rollerblading backwards,
down a hill, on a curve, when he
flipped. He insisted
his buckle opened on its own –
even after I threatened to sue
the company. True to his lies.

The nurse held his arm down hard
and Lee screamed but the x-ray
was silent. The doctor told him
when it heals, it will be the strongest
bone in his body. That night
he slept without moving.

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Published on Talking Writing (<https://mail.talkingwriting.com>)

After a few days we went
to the Flambeau River.
Lee's dad told him he'd always
wanted to see that river, since
he was a kid and heard stories
of Al Capone, his hideaway,
and now here they were.

They took off their shoes and stepped in.
Lee put his unbroken arm
around his dad, who wrapped
an arm around Lee. We have a picture
of that, too, Lee's shoulders slender
and limber. We called him Lemur.
There were lots of nicknames, each
one a little truth.



[3]

Art Information

- "[By the Campfire](#) [3]" @ Drew Bryden

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Karen Schubert is the recipient of a 2012 Ohio Arts Council Individual Excellence Award and a 2013 residency at Headlands Center for the Arts. Her third chapbook *I Left My Wings on a Chair* (Kent State Press 2014) is a Wick Poetry Center selection.

Her work appears or is forthcoming in *terrain.org*, *Best American Poetry* blog, *MiPOesias*, *Quickly*, and *Ohio Poetry Anthology*.

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