

## The Land Bridge

The sun is setting behind the trees across the water over to my left. There is a light breeze blowing through my window and playing with my hair. Birds are twittering in the trees, but they are barely audible over the hum of the engine and the scratching of gravel and rocks on the road. We hit a bump every now and again, but we are driving so slowly that it doesn't jolt us very much.

The dying light reflects off the water of the lake. A swarm of mosquitoes buzzes just above it. A lone fly gets separated from his troop and finds himself face to face with the rear window. I don't bother reaching back to swat him. The buzzing of his wings beating against the window doesn't bother me. It's almost a comforting sounds, like a summer lullaby.

My friend, who is driving, is concentrating on the road ahead. It is becoming narrower, and he wants to know if the car will make it over the bridge before someone else comes along. I tell him not to worry. Hardly anyone knows that this place even exists, except for our family, because the lake is sheltered from the view of the main road.

We are on the bridge now. Although I'm not scared, I'm tempted to hold my breath until I turn blue, the way I used to when I was little and my mom would make my stop. I smile at the memory. It's been too long since I've been here.

The land bridge was an old road, built a long time ago, even before my dad owned a cottage in this area. It used to be wide enough for a horse and plow to roll its way across the lake and over to the other side of the farm. This land is no longer a farm. I don't think it is used for anything.

The earth is packed down good and tight, but it is dusty from baking in the sun, day after day, year after year. A light cloud of dust wooshes up to meet the car. The soil on the bridge has gradually eroded away, and there is just enough room for you to stand outside your car, pressed up against it. That's if you don't want to get your feet wet. I'm tempted to make my friend stop the car, so I can take my sandals off and dip my toes in the warm water. But I don't this time.

There is a lake on either side of the bridge. I point out the pier at the edge of the right side. I tell my friend that that is where I first learned to swim. Actually, it's the same lake divided into two sections. The farmer who used to own the land thought that it would save him some time if instead of going all around the lake (it is really wide and long), he could just cut across it. Some people probably thought he was foolish, or lazy, or both.

I think it was a wonderful idea. How interesting it is that an obscure human convenience like a land bridge across a lake, and a little childhood nostalgia would make my direct my friend to the family cottage this way, instead of going along the main road.

We are over the bridge now, and we bounce among the ruts as the road widens. I turn around in my seat and look out the back window. The little, narrow land bridge gets smaller and smaller, along with the lake, the pier and the grove of trees that shields the lake from view. The fly finds his way out of the car and buzzes off into the sunset.

I focus my attention onto the tress along the side of the road and dreamily absorb the green of the leaves that threaten to change colour any second. A strong gust of wind blows through my open window, whisking my hat off the dash and out onto the road. My friend stops the car and asks me if I want to go back for it.

I think about this for a moment.

Then I tell him that it will be something to come back for, sometime. We roll along toward the cottage, soaking up the last of the day's light.

## A bridge so far

At evening  
It hangs  
Like a string of diamonds  
On the flushed neck  
Of distant western sky.

Then at dawn  
It stretches  
Spindly and grey,  
As if some giant spider  
Had begun her web  
And never finished.

But come closer now;  
View the handiwork  
Of strength, symmetry, and precision  
Fabricated in an open womb  
By Human genius.  
A bridge to link  
An island with her neighbours.

Prophets of doom  
Cry that here we have  
Progress in reverse.  
Surely a gentle way of life  
Will wither and die.  
And as in ancient rhyme  
Of London Bridge  
All will tumble down.

But seers who view  
This engineering feat  
With hope and favour  
Cry that here indeed  
Is the epitome  
Of modern Progress.

Away with trains and boats!  
Freedom now  
to come and go.  
Truck and trade  
Will prosper more  
Than those with  
Shorter sight  
Could possible envision.

Buy yet, not doubt,  
Some wary travellers  
Will view this chain  
Of concrete monoliths  
As frail and weak  
Against the power  
Of Neptune's lashing waves.

And as always,  
Relentless Master Time  
Will judge the merits  
Of a bridge so far.

- Gladys McIntyre



**Creative Writing**

