

Dark to Light

Three thousand miles I drove to be with you,
Through Nevada, Utah, a little bit of Idaho,
I thought of only you,
But then the mountains of Montana made me weak,
And I slept inside of Yellowstone with Cutthroat Creek.
On the North Dakota-Minnesota stretch I littered shame,
And from Fargo to Silver City I whispered just your name,
The moon was in kitchi-gami when I came to you,
I walked slow along South Boundary Road,
And I felt a love so true.

Chorus That feeling is what I came here for,
 The chemistry of The Porcupines outside Dan's Cabin door,
 Stay with me now in the blackness of your night,
 Then kiss me when you change the dark to light.

I want to forest bathe in all the colors of your green,
Among your virgin hemlocks,
By your rivers cold and clean.
I didn't want to hurt you in Montana,
It's just wild there like you,
Where Cutthroat Creek comes through.

Bridge But now I swear I'll hike your trails end to end,
 From the Little Union River,
 To Nawadaha Falls and back again,
 I will pause by your ancient copper mines,
 Stand awestruck by your hardwoods,
 Sleep on the duff under giant pines,
 And I'll make you rhymes.

I'm heading back to California now good as new,
To cars and stars and another love so true,
But I'm blue to leave the stones of Silver City,
The Vivid dreams,
The Big Quiet,
The days and nights with you.

Chorus 2 What I'm feeling now came from you,
 And my brain is telling me everything's all right,
 You kissed me once at the very last of night,
 You taught me how to change the dark to light,
 Oh I was so dark when I met you...
 Then you made me bright.

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Big Brookie

I'm at a secret fishing hole

With a can of little crawlers
I crept here keepin' low and I'll bet you a dollar
There's a brookie in that hole
And it's gonna bite
My forked stick is stuck and I'm ready to fight.

Chorus:

Big brookie big brookie show me your skin
All speckled and wormy and clear as cold gin
I don't want to hurt you I just want to look
For a moment or two then I'll snip off that hook

Big brookie big brookie I'll set at your first bite
I don't think you'll swallow but then again you might
And I don't want you bleeding cause that would make me bawl
But if you die I promise I'll hang you on the wall

My Aberdeen hook with a half of little crawler
Pierced the poor worm through the middle of its collar
A split shot at two feet there's plenty of room
For that half of night crawler to spread its perfume

Repeat 1st Chorus:

Big brookie big brookie show me your skin
All speckled and wormy and clear as cold gin
I don't want to hurt you I just want to look
For a moment or two then I'll snip off that hook

Big brookie big brookie I'll set at your first bite
I don't think you'll swallow but then again you might
And I don't want you bleeding cause that would make me bawl
But if you die I promise I'll hang you on my wall

Bridge:

The big ones live in the deep dark holes
Oh they're cautious and wary that's why they're old
The mink and the otter and the hungry black-bear
Didn't bite them and eat them, and that's why they're there

Chorus 2

Big brookie big brookie I just want your food
For my eyes and my brain and a better attitude

I don't want to eat you I just want to look
At your beauty and speckles
Then snip off that hook

Big brookie big brookie I need a lift
Cus' my spirit is lagging and my mind is adrift
I need your beauty if I can't have your love
And I'll handle you gently when I bring you above
Oh I'll handle you gently 'cuz I do it for love

Now my rod tip is shaking and it ain't from the wind
In a minute or less I'll see your skin
I won't fight you long, I'll bring you right to the net
For a pose above water that I won't forget

Chorus 3

Big brookie big brookie you made my day
And not a drop of blood did you lose today
I took your picture right after our brawl
And in a birdseye frame, I'm going to hang it on the wall
Oh the birdseyes and speckles will look good on my wall.

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I Won't Hike the North County Trail

I won't hike the North Country Trail,

I won't look at the Lake of the Clouds,
I won't sing those old love songs
Except through my tears,
And I still don't know,
Oh I still don't know,
What to do.

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Giant White Pines and Famed Mirror Lake

Hey, let me take you on a hike

The going's a little tough but it's a place you will like,
Through air that is clean on a trail that is high,
You look down on the valley at a cornflower sky

Chorus Oh it's a half a day in and a quarter day out,
 Head nets advised if the black flies are out,
 But there's a reward for the effort you make,
 You'll see giant white pines and the sky in a lake

It's a climb but it's worth it to make,
To see those old giants and famed Mirror Lake,
Its brook trout are easy, just cook 'em on a stick,
On a white birch fire,
They're done lickety-split

Repeat Chorus after each verse

The white pines stretch to the sky,
They've shaded the ground in their race to grow high,
That marathon was long but when it was done,
The shade starved the hardwoods,
Until there were none.

Van Gogh would've painted the sky in the lake,
And you know on his canvas those white pines he'd make
He'd work looking down at the cornflower sky,
Paint pine bough reflections
We'd stare at and cry

You look down at the water and it seems a mistake,
You look up to be sure that it's only the Lake
And the white pines that live there sing loud in the wind,
There is no song like it
And you can't help but grin

If you once hear their voices
You'll hike back again

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Superior is Telling us to Change

You can be as calm as an egg in a chickadee nest,

Without a wave at the wind's behest,
You sit still and give the stones a rest.

But I know your yin and yang,
An astonishing extreme,
Like wild columbine by a cold trout stream,
And a snowshoe hare in a bobcat's dream.

Superior, your drama brought you fame,
There is nothing on your shore you won't claim,
Superior, wild-eyed, never same,
Just cold like the ice from which you came.

The Ojibwa knew,
You are all bite and no chew,
A lot of days when they looked out there,
Your white caps made them well aware,
That spruce gum and birchbark were no match,
Until your water was still and laying flat,
Then they fished and paddled without fear,
But they watched the clouds afar not near.

Superior, your drama brings you fame,
There is nothing on your shore you won't tame,
Superior, wild-eyed, never same,
Just cold like the ice from which you came.

Now it is not like the early days,
When we hadn't sullied you up,
Today you're not as clean,
And know well the styrofoam cup.

But you're 16 footers still come crashing in,
And the screams they make still prickle our skin,
Yet you still lay flat some days,
Yin and yang you always amaze.

But Superior, you're telling us to change,
To stop the madness, start looking long range,
To start powering our lives,
So the planet survives,
That is the fairest exchange.

Green power for our lives,
So the planet survives,
It's not radical at all,

It's a good change

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Safe From the Saw and Drill

Your rivers sing on their way to Gitche Gumee
Their happy songs bring joy to everybody

Your waterfalls are guaranteed to put a smile on any face
And one that won't erase

Your black bear cubs wallow in the wild blueberries
Your big brown trout pick the mayflies like they're cherries
Your eagles glide above old-growth hardwood trees
Saved for you and me

Chorus

But you're no secret now
And you're vulnerable to threats
For there are some who would cut your trees and mine your copper, don't forget
The people keep The Porcupines
Safe from the saw and drill
Safe for the deer safe for the bear and the little whippoorwill

You change the seasons sometimes slow, sometimes fast
Your winter snowfall can last...and last...and last
Your mountains' silhouette won't be a thing we see and then forget
We'll remember you can bet

So I wrote this song not just for you and me
But our grandkids and their grandkids
They should get to see
The waterfalls and old growth trees
The snowfalls and the winter freeze
And the nature we hold dear
But let me make it clear

Repeat Chorus

Finally what I think from living in Dan's Cabin
This place is more than I could ever have imagined
But there are people who don't care
Who would love to cut these trees
Don't let them do it please
Don't. Let. Them. Do. It. Please.

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The Porcupines

There is a wild forest you should know,

A magic place old giants grow,
Left 10,000 years ago,
And born from ice and snow.
Rugged country saved that forest,
By steep and tough terrain,
That's why it's here forever for us,
And never should be tamed.

Chorus The Porcupines, a wild place
 Let its wilderness prevail
 The Porcupines, where waterfalls
 Cut through the Nonesuch shale
 The Porcupines, where hardwoods live in a land without the saw
 Where white pines remember the Chippewa

The hemlocks softly remark, "there can be no light without the dark."
The maples? Old as they can grow, the yellow birch in fall aglow
Every hike has its magic start, with humble head and pounding heart
We make a climb and see the art of this wild place we set apart

Bridge

A waterfall without a name in every direction,
And trails for young and old the same,
A wilderness of perfection
Yes the mountains saved this forest and saved it for us all,
For a chance to move at a slower pace,
To once again feel small

Chorus 2

The Porcupines are calling us,
Let them call forever more,
The Porcupines, our wild place of nothing to restore,
The Porcupines,
They're calling us,
Inviting us to roam,
Oh the Porcupines make us feel like we're going home
Yes the Porcupines are just like going home

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Five Little Brook Trout

I like to fish for brook trout though it causes me some pain,
They're just so beautiful, eating them's a shame,
But a trail camp needs protein,
So the circle game,
There ain't no in between,
The fry pan's ready, light the flame

- But they should not be so easy to catch,
A 10 year old can make them bite,
Like dogs that play go fetch,
And I know, the daily limit is enough,
To keep hikers in fish food,
When the trail's been so rough.

If you fish to eat a little brook trout you'll never get enough,

Better go for steelhead, that's the heavy stuff,
Those little bitty brook trout won't fulfill your hunger fast,
So save them for us trailers,
And five a day will make them last.

- 'Cause we tire of peanuts in the trail mix,
Oh the brook trout may be pretty,
But our diets need a fix,
For us the daily limit's not too tough,
Five little brook trout is enough.

The fly fishers among us release the trout they catch,
They don't need to eat them; they live to make roll casts,
And us trailers bow down to them,
For giving us a chance,
To keep the lids on our cans of beans,
And a cheaper trip to finance.

- But they should not be so easy to catch,
A 10 year old can make them bite,
Like dogs that play go fetch,
And I know the daily limit is enough,
Yep five little brook trout is enough

One day I'll leave the trails behind,
And hike up all the creeks,
With a flyrod and a tiny blue dun,
To catch and then release,
And I'll get to look them over for their art and not to eat,
I'll catch fifteen or twenty,
And the peanuts in the trail mix will taste sweet.

- And I hope they'll still be easy to catch,
When I'm old and gray but still fit,
Yet heading down the final stretch,
And I swear to the trailers I'll be right,
And they can eat the little brook trout every night.
But you trailers, on the brook trout don't be tough,
Because five little brook trout is enough.
Yes five little brook trout is enough.

Steelhead

Steelhead in the Presque Isle River!
They're here they're here at last
Steelhead in the Presque Isle River!
The news will travel fast

Naked hardwoods line the river bank
Their fallen colors are rolling by
I'm standing in fast water, like a tank
In my big boots bone dry

Split bamboo lifting slowly
Bright fly deep and sly
This ain't no game this is holy
The world from a fly fisher's eyes

Come on take my fly!

Steelhead in the Presque Isle River!
They're here they're here at last
Steelhead in the Presque Isle River!
The news will travel fast

Fifteen casts, I'm counting
Come gaudy feathers, work your con
Bamboo bend like a long neck swan
I need the fight to be on

They will dance on their tails upon white water
Twist and turn like a river otter
They jump so high to shake their heads against the fly
Their splash is a battle cry

But you can cast all day and come up empty
Wade two miles and drown your flies
And your toes get cold aplenty
Still you're gonna try!

'Cause there's steelhead in the Presque Isle River!
They're here they're here at last
Steelhead in the Presque Isle River!
The news will travel fast

Bridge

You know if I let it
This old world would get me down
Like my sinking fly I bet it
Just might cause me to drown
But I am not going to let it
At least not here not now
I'm gonna make another cast
Fish On, Fish On! Hold fast!

Final chorus and outro

Upper Michigander

I am a Michigander born and raised.
My kin came here in an ox cart,
And this is where they stayed.

I grew up in Traverse City, fished its bays.
There I learned to wield a hatchet,
For a cook fire and a blaze.

I love the Northern Lower,
But this I must admit:
That the UP life is slower
Than the one that has the mitt.

That's why I long to be a Yooper
Even only for a day
The magic there keeps calling me

To cross the Bridge and play
It's okay to be a Yooper
I'm glad it's a proper noun
To me it doesn't sound funny
And of the two it's best hands down

The winters are always cold up there.
And it could snow on the first of June,
Or be eight-one by noon.

And the black flies can hide a high full moon,
But the air is clean and the water clear,
So every time it's opportune,
I drive the straights of Mackinac I won't be back
I let off the gas till it's 55
And drive to an old two-track.

Cuz I long to be a Yooper
It just turned out that way
The wilderness keeps calling me
To cross the Bridge and play
Nothing wrong to be a Yooper
I'm glad it's a proper noun
To me it doesn't sound funny
And of the two it's best hands down

Bridge: But there's a part of me that's stingy
 I just don't share too well
 So I say, "up there it's always dark and dingy,"
 "A lot of nothing and cold as hell."

But then I see the hardwoods mixed with pine
And rivers dressed in waterfalls,
And three Great Lakes combined
And I know you will love the waterfalls and to walk along those shores,
Feeling small as a rainbow smelt,
In the great UP outdoors

So come on up and be a Yooper, even if it's just part time
Fishing beaver ponds for brook trout
Hiking rugged trails in the Porcupines
300 waterfalls, all good, take your picks
A world like no other,

Wild places without clicks
A world like no other
Wild places without clicks

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