

1980

The Lodge

Kathy Callaway

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Recommended Citation

Callaway, Kathy. "The Lodge." *The Iowa Review* 11.4 (1980): 68-68. Web.
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.2648>

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The Lodge · *Kathy Callaway*

He found it on Crow land,
on a lake so big it manufactured weather.
It was shored against the downhill slide
of sand, pines pitched forward
like stricken mercenaries. Brother wanted
something to make whole, something to make his
huge hands happy. He stood among
bushes heavy with blackberries,
watched a white-torqued loon unfold
over the Indian graveyard,
water choppy with pike to the opposite shore.

He threw away his accounts, took his
wife out of town, gave up everything
for that sagging building. Two old loggers
helped him jack up the corner,
drive in a forty-foot spruce. They remade the roof,
hammered the rafters for soundness—
the bats, dun-colored, fluttered at each blow,
dying in the fur of old trophies;
sparrows fell down with the chimney-soot.

He found her a photo between two logs:
Al Capone relaxing in wicker,
the woman on his left
displaying a stringer of bluegills between
perfectly manicured hands.
The old men came back with a homemade
telescope of pipefittings, so she could
“have the moon better”—
through the soda-bottle lens she saw
one wing obliterate the universe.

That winter, at fifty below—my brother
pounding and pounding at the weather—
she let something go. They became each other
the way a jay appropriates air, or falling temperature
solidifies a lake straight through to the bottom,
all one thing for miles.