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Decaying planks of wood smothered in eons of seagull droppings float in the lake's center. A single board fastened with rusted bolts from when our parents were kids is the structure's only adornment. Metal cylinders that must have been scuba tanks for dinosaurs are responsible for flotation. But more importantly, they create a fort or a cave, some shade and a place for the fish to hide.

It is here that we overcome the sticky Midwestern heat. Entertained by aggressive tag, backflip competitions and King of the Raft, it is simply each other's company we desire. In this isolated haven, endless green water stretches between us and a lopsided ring of houses and cabins at the lake's edge. It belongs to us. We do not notice the shout across the lake calling us back for dinner, and we are told later that our laughter could be heard for miles, and days.

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Waves lap at the vehicle's sleek underbelly and spill across the deck that is just wide enough for a couple pairs of feet. Our aquatic stallion is gracefully streamlined and finely crafted for speed. The handlebars bob back and forth lazily, nodding off from too long spent idle. When the lake's ripples are free of boats and swimmers, we top off the gas tank and try for a new top speed; the lake says we must, and we are ecstatic to comply. We are told this is dangerous, but we cannot let that inhibit our quest for thrill. The wind roars in ears plugged with water from being hurled several yards into the murky depths.

This is when we are alive. We know most people will never quite grasp how we thrive here; we do not notice our chilled, prickly skin or the bruises forming up and down our legs from gripping the seat. The lake is enough to block out the world and its realities for these moments, and we wish time would stand still for a while.

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It is quiet on the lake. The glassy water is free of wrinkles and the air is damp with dew and fog. We can hear a whole choir of frogs and wonder what they are saying to one another. Or maybe they are just singing. Almost silently, we wrestle squirming

worms onto kid-sized hooks, the slime coating our clumsy fingers. With assistance removing the hook, we gently place the wide-eyed and flopping sunfish back into the lake, with each catch thoroughly documented.

We are feeding the fish and teaching them not to bite floating worms but sometimes it seems like we have captured the same fish twice. We cannot decide if it is more impressive to catch the most fish or the biggest fish. A tranquil excitement resides in the misty air; the peace of the rowboat and the early morning energy keep us occupied for hours.

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A single paddle slips in and out of the waves, propelling just enough to overcome the current and avoid drifting backwards. We stand on our fiberglass stages and they wobble precariously until we find our balance. The summer sun beats down on us, slowly cooking our shoulders and backs. When we've grown tired of races and amateur yoga, paddles become lances and boards noble steeds; we find ourselves in the heat of a Medieval joust. A cloud passes over the sun, but for us it is surely a dragon for the King's bravest knights to slay.

The lake appreciates our imagination and promises to shape the settings of the tales we create. The simultaneous freedom of our minds and bodies is something we simply cannot forget; we hope that by traveling back in time we can postpone the end of our adventures.