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A SUPERIOR PLACE TO BE

Dauvan Mulally

Lake Superior cast her magical spell over me several years ago when at the tender age of seven I was uprooted from the cornfields of Nebraska to the wilderness of the Upper Peninsula.

Adopting Michigan as my new home was not an easy task for me after having spent four of my seven years in a place I had felt at the time was the center of my universe.

As the plane swiftly whisked us up into the clouds and I peered out the window, my beloved Nebraska appeared to be nothing more than a mere patchwork quilt of land and scattered farms. I made a pact right then and there to hate Michigan the second my feet were planted on solid ground.

That all changed the day my father took me into Marquette, and I walked along the beach. The beauty of the place spoke for itself; the ebbing tide, low-lying clouds, the brilliant red lighthouse, and the white sand beneath my feet will always remind me of the day Lake Superior came into my life, and I accepted Michigan as my new home.

What were my first thoughts as I peered across this vast expanse of blue water? I thought I was seeing the ocean for the first time in my short life. I remember holding my breath and taking it all in; every wave, every ripple, and movement she created captivated me. I sat in breathless anticipation of what she would do for the next hour and a half to entertain me.

As far as the eye could see was this crystal clear blue water that touched the horizon and just kept on going for what seemed from my youthful perspective to be an eternity. Since the day I first laid eyes on her I have become a loyal follower of Lake Superior and go pay homage to her whenever I can find the time.

Like an old friend she is there for me whenever I am troubled and need someone to listen. She answers my questions and fears about life with the pounding of her surf. As I walk along her water's edge feeling the coolness of her on my feet and peer overhead at the sunset that blazes above her, I am at peace with the world.

This lake has given me lessons in life as well as in death. She has claimed many lives in her time. Some have even been people I have known. Three college students decided to challenge her power one night by walking on the break wall during a particularly nasty storm. They were all swept off the wall by a major swell and plunged into her frigid depths.

All three young men perished that night in her waters and continue to serve as a reminder of her many changing faces. A warning sign now stands at the entrance of the break wall, entreating visitors to take necessary precautions for their own safety and, ultimately, their own lives.

She has become an integral part of my memories of childhood. I have watched freighters travel across her fluid surface, listened to gulls cry out above her, collected polished rocks from her shores, and dived into her depths for as long as I can remember. I have traveled up her coast with her following me the whole way until we reach the Mackinac Bridge. Here, we once more say goodbye until we meet again next summer, and I fall in love with her all over again.

About the Author

Dauvan Mulally teaches freshman composition at GVSU. She received a Masters in Education with an emphasis in College Student Affairs Leadership in April of 2000.