

## [Karen Schubert: Poem \[1\]](#)

October 1, 2013 [Featured Poetry](#) [2]

### **Summer of the Blue Cast**

Lee broke his arm in the north woods  
of Wisconsin. Copper Falls.  
I was circling back  
to our campsite with my toothbrush,  
lingering on the path  
lit with fireflies, sounds  
of everything close.

When we say the woods are quiet,  
we mean a kind of spatial silence,  
nothing moving  
faster than the red squirrel  
shimmying up a tree with a stolen peach.

Slung up to their fires, campers  
speak softly, mix their sounds  
with the night. I came around  
the bend and saw Lee curled  
in a canvas chair, holding his arm,  
making noises in his throat  
like a bird.

Al Capone was Wisconsin's kind  
of criminal – made a mint bringing  
liquor to the drink-starved, gave  
money to charity, to boot.  
His hideaway wasn't far from those  
woods where we drove fast,  
away from our campsite,  
Lee shrinking into the seat, strapped  
to keep from jostling.

His sister the whistleblower whispered  
he'd been rollerblading backwards,  
down a hill, on a curve, when he  
flipped. He insisted  
his buckle opened on its own –  
even after I threatened to sue  
the company. True to his lies.

The nurse held his arm down hard  
and Lee screamed but the x-ray  
was silent. The doctor told him  
when it heals, it will be the strongest  
bone in his body. That night  
he slept without moving.

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Published on Talking Writing (<https://talkingwriting.com>)

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After a few days we went  
to the Flambeau River.  
Lee's dad told him he'd always  
wanted to see that river, since  
he was a kid and heard stories  
of Al Capone, his hideaway,  
and now here they were.

They took off their shoes and stepped in.  
Lee put his unbroken arm  
around his dad, who wrapped  
an arm around Lee. We have a picture  
of that, too, Lee's shoulders slender  
and limber. We called him Lemur.  
There were lots of nicknames, each  
one a little truth.



[3]

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### Art Information

- ["By the Campfire \[3\]"](#) @ Drew Bryden

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Karen Schubert is the recipient of a 2012 Ohio Arts Council Individual Excellence Award and a 2013 residency at Headlands Center for the Arts. Her third chapbook *I Left My Wings on a Chair* (Kent State Press 2014) is a Wick Poetry Center selection.

Her work appears or is forthcoming in *terrain.org*, *Best American Poetry* blog, *MiPOesias*, *Quickly*, and *Ohio Poetry Anthology*.

**Source URL:** <https://talkingwriting.com/karen-schubert-poem>

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