***UP NORTH***

Places:

[Marquette](#marquette) |

Naniboujou, Judge Magney, Tofte, Thunder Bay, Portage, The Boundary Waters, the Quetico, Voyagers, Hibbing, Mesabi Range, Gladstone, Houghton

Characters:

The musician

“Even a dead skunk along the road gets some air play for a while.”

Stephan being played by Bill Murray, has taken to smuggling as the larger economy has gotten dicey. Canad has huge reserves and his good friend— this super rich fuck whose wife just loves my jewelry and my cock wants to sent me a load of fuel and supplies— maybe some maple syrup. We just had to sail out to Isle Royale and they would have the supplies ready for us on the east landing.

There’s a huge storm though and the supplies are all washed up on the heach and there are bodies scattered around and some supplies have washed up on shore so he makes a pot of coffee and then takes the dingy out and to the shore where he finds some gasoline drums and a duffle bag of money and another bag full of marijuana. And then some wolves come out of the forest and he backs away from them to the dingy and pulls the dingy into the water and swims it back to the boat with his dingy laden with supplies with the wolves watches him from the shore.

They sail on and let the coast guard know where the bodies were by anonymous tip using a satellite phone.

Naniboujou’s impossibly long dining room. Impossibly long, red, native American design inspired art deco.

Summer camp, ropes courses, getting over fear of heights. Feling very empowered. I have agency. Worked on staff there. Wen to college at the associated University, even though I had moved past this point in my life. Didn’t realize it, but found another path that partially melded, partially branched out and evolved.

The Paulding light

That enormous underground fungus

Da Yoopers

Annette’s under developed Yooper Girl schtick writing that cheesy plaintive song about environmentalism that doesn’t really touch on reality. Sacchrine. Sweet. Figure scatting. All of that violence and hard masculine discipline wrapped around with soft feminine panache.

But is discipline really a masculine trait-- hard physical toiling seems masculine if you are just focusing on acts of strength, but just as far as toiling and drudgery goes, that is not the privy of one sex or the other.

Georgy loved fishing. He had cooking up this whole story about being wanted by a police chief back home for dating his daughter because he was a gypsy. He needed politicaly asylum in Canada. I wonder if he every made it?

Even a dead skull along

Marquette— the bay, the iron ore dock—dark crystal gothic, monolithic, something of the sci-fi— the Yooper down— reddish exposed rock— iron country— cold by lake large like the ocean is large— no rush now – no time— all is but unfolding— unfurrowing— follow the line, abridged

Memory, dust

Mint green leisure suit ensemble

Same-same

Wiskers on her chin like mine

We take a picture together and eat cookies

At my graduation party

Dolores had a deep writing impulse. She would scrool notes on floral cards, incomprehensibly scralling out looping calligraphic lines hellbent on the mutual destruction of the line above and the lie below. The angy scribbles of a Graphomania. And what is the difference between graphomania and literary genius or literary accomplishment. Does the world need another essay? Does the world need another “Tweet” or even “Anti-tweet”. I am sorry to return to this theme again and again, but I believe this fundamental question, this WHY, this existential WHY, this spark of motivation, this snatching of the spark of inspiration out of the air and slamming it into the dock, why? What? What are you up to? Is this a mission of nostalgia? Is this business? Is this burnishing some sense of yourself as being a certain way, communicating a certain way— with your cellphone, your walkie-talkie, your two way wall of larger than life friends, your VR headset and reality augmenting lens, your book club, your subscription services… and here I am lost in my lists again…

3/24/2021

Recreate the Northwoods reflection of my grandmother—her nectar seeking hummingbirds and affectionate seed necking parakeets, my parent’s starter home on Spruce Street where I’d walk up the hill to attend first and second grade at Parkview elementary, and ramble around the town to the movie theater and party store and comic shop and further afield parks and beaches and parking lots and construction sites. With friends around and birthday invitations coming in. Bowling and Pizza Hut and Rollerskating. Hamming it up for the girls by ordering anchovies on my Pizza and willfully enjoying the super weird intense saltiness and fishiness of the topping. And then moving away from freidns and openness and good playgrounds and big loving audience of friendships built over time, everything instead fragmented, decentralized, circumscribed by greater distances and less connectivity and involvement. Having to reset just when I was getting established. Feeling anxious about this. Having pooping issues. Holding in poos until they sneak out and stain my underwear. Hiding the underwear in my drawer until my dad finds them and pulls them out, disgusted, not making the connection that this is a relatively serious psychological issue that has resulted from the stress I feel having my whole fucking world thrown up in the air and rebooted. Uprooted and condemned to a morning and afternoon commute to and from the Bay de Noc community Christian school. It s tiny school and my cohort has like 5 kids. Jeremy, Nicky, Charlie, his sister, the Godfires. Multiple grades are overseen by the same teacher. Mr. Rose.

We moved from Mt. Pleasant to the little Bay of the Bear. Mr. Rose was my teacher. He was a bear of a man and made me hyperventalte once when I couldn’t figure out some math he was getting frustrated with explaining to me. I was sounding insolent perhaps. I’ll admit that like most children, I had the ability to sound insolent even when I was not necessarily trying to be insolent. I think this is a self-preservation thing for kids, living as they do in this necessarily neutral kind of mindset—they are adaptable if they can accept orders and programs and assignments, if occasionally one bristles at being perpetually stuck in this neutral mode, can you really blame them.

As an adult I would occasionally feel this same swelling of self-preserving insolence when visiting my in-laws and idling myself into my best behavoir sort of mentality. Roll my ego under until annoyed and put upon it suddenly bubbles up to snap at someone or caustically club them with a quip or something.

My sense of ultimately floating dislocation was completed with 5 and 6th grade at Cameron and 7th and 8th grade in middle school and then finally finding some consistency in 4 years at the same high school—I left Gladstone rootless—finding some false need to performatively miss and long for my rural homeland—trees, waters, cold, clarifying and settling peacefulness and lung soothing breezes, northern lights, wild animals, Indian lore, miners, family lore winding ack into the ever darkening past, comforting and close, or alienating and close or clear or obscured, friendly or menacing, I was not longing to return. My church gone, my parents Catholic, the high school I attended leveled, building razed. What do I return to? Family meals? Samuel Adams’ seasonal multipak, the deck, the soft grassy yard, the bay and the sky, fireball sunrises, halcyon sunset, Stonington’s steady tree line and limestone cliffs and the night, the closeness of the train cars shifting north and south in the train yard over the highway, the sudden blast of the call horn, bouncing off the South Bluff and careening over the still bay like a heart-investing horn blower in the alive cricket chorus twilight.

3/23/2021

Fox Valley Mall the winter a race somewhere outside never saw where ist was. I am in the mall wandering the mall. Puked into my knit purple and white braves hat. Sense of belonging with that hat. Puked on it and left it on the garbage can, my father insists that we go back for it. Fighting the bees on the roof of the University Reform Church. Settling up the projector for the Hobbit, popping popcorn, driving the church school bus, running up spruce street to confront the kids picking on Hans. Jetting out into the snow to confront the kids that were throwing ice chunks at me, dropping my Faygo cream soda bottle and having it shatter on the concrete walk up to the church just before we were going to enjoy it. My dad is the janitor the maintenance man, the meals-on-wheels deliverer. He likely ran a meals-on-wheels meal to someone which would technically make it a meals-on-foot.

Shoes all wet from the snow dripping and pooling on the gym floor, gym all full of kids, where do you go, where do you go? I had some kind of a panic attack. Not feeling like I belonged there. A kid from that town, but I don’t belong at the school. I don’t go to that school, I go to another school, and then I was crying and my dad was angry and frustrated with me and I was embarrassed about my shoes and embarrassed and sad and scared because I didn’t belong and then later doing a lot of things in that gym- proms, varsity basketball games, speeches, receiving the best all-around boy award from the Kiwanis club, talking about winning the Model Judiciary State competition, being on the homecoming court, being the student council president. But we are not like them, we are different, we are from good families, we go to this church, this is our church family, until it is not, we reserve the right to narrow and expand our definition of otherness. And I was crying because I didn’t belong and my dad didn’t know how to help me.

My young parents and then the attention cover of my younger siblings and my general habit, talent of keeping to myself and covering my ass afforded me a remarkably long adolescence.

Zack and Jack Lapinski… one of them passed away I believe. Which one though?

He loved softball, track, going out to camp. His cats Pearl and Sushi.

12/2/2020

The kid got sick in the bell chor and then threw up all over the back of the teacher or the pastor or the parent who picked the kid up and hoisted him up on his shoulder. The janitor came in and covered the vomit with absorbant sawdust that may have had some kind of absorbing chemical substance in it.

Noxious vomit. Chucks of half processed food returned like putrid looking glass delights— that which had been wholesome and nourishing is now disgusting and corrosive. Your insides have corrupted the outside world completely.

02/13/2021

1. Moving to Gladstone Encopreis.
2. Christian School
   1. Memories of Parkview
   2. Birthday parties
   3. Playground fun
   4. Hyperventating and perhaps developing some mental catch/anxiety about not getting math or thinking of math as being something that is way more traumatic than it is.
   5. Memories of Bay de Noc
   6. Skinning knees on black top
   7. Reading *Meg and the Missing Diamonds*
   8. Writing my first story—“ red *shit*”
   9. Argument with Jeremy—“you’re pretty close to a cow.” “Yes, I am.”
   10. Mr. Gerard.
   11. Awkward, irksome commute with the Godfrey’s and the woman who didn’t think that women should run because their boobs bounce around all over the place. You shouldn’t drink and drive. You’re funny.
   12. Fighting with parents to go to public school
       1. Made friends
       2. Basketball team
       3. Principle’s award
       4. Dance drama: Secular vs. Christian. This weird paranoid, angry tension that something was going to piss them off, something was going to make them mad.
       5. Psychology film project that mom watched and called worthless. The teacher kept it for years and showed it as an example of what kids could do.
       6. Friendliest
       7. Most involved
       8. Class Leader
       9. Student Council President
       10. Homecoming Court
       11. Mock Judiciary State Champions (3rd at nationals in San Francisco)

Stacey Warner crushing on Justin, I’m crushing n Stacey, she almost gets smacked by the door when April Reese opens it. Which would have been ironic since they were rivals for Justin’s affection and while April did not know that she had cause to feel threatened by Stacy, Stacy felt threatened and thwarted by April psychologically, but was now manifesting itself as an inadvertent physical assault. The irony of April subconsciously throwing the first punch in their dust up over Justin. I end up feeling embarrassed and awkward because I tell Stacy that it was ironic that April almost smashed her with the door and Stacey doesn’t understand what I mean at all and I am put in the awkard position of coming off as I am speaking over Stacey, being interntional technical or intellectual or hard to understand or going the pedantic route and breaking down for Stacy all the ways that this middle school dance encounter with the door and Justin just alsoultely epitomizes the meaning of irony and Alanis Morsette is like 6 months behind ready to back me upon all of this, but instead I just feel embarrassed and feel unsure how I can enter the question. And I sputter out something eccentric about readfing a lot of books and liking these words and what not and it is apparent that she does not get me at all and will never get me at all. A little while later this obnoxious guy Carl tells Stacey that she kind of has a mustasche and sh is horrified and embarrassed and hides in the bathroom the rest of the night. And she does have a little bit of a mustach, She is very dark complected, dark hair, dark eyes. She is incredibly beautiful, but I don’t know how to tell her that in a way that she will understand, in a way that she won’t care what Carl says. She doesn’t care what Carl says. It doesn’t matter. She’d stay in the bathroom to show him that it didn’t matter. Mayber she was being ironic too. If April could be ironic then so could she. She’d stay in the bathroom and she wouldn’t have to come back to one of this dumb dances ever again.

You could go with it wholeheartedly if you really believed it were real. If it were not just some bashful, shameful thing—words—ironic, he embarrassedly tries to explain.

She is into Justin and Justin is dating April and April almost just crushed Stacey with the door. Aaron realizes that is going to happen just as the door bursts open and the girls are coming out and Aaron grabs the door at the last moment.

It’s April. She apologizes effusively. She’s a really nice person. Everyone knows this. Good grab, Aaron. Can you believe she almost just hit me with the door!?!

That was close— that was almost very ironic. What do you mean? Now does she want me to explain what ironic means, or should I explain specifically how it pertains to her particular love triangle in which she is the interloper. I keep a good secret and neither April or Justin are wise to your affections. I am sadly the fourth point in this Euclidean figure and none of this is going anywhere near my way. Alanis Morsette was just a few months away from uploading some impression of *ironic* into our collective middle school consciousness. And its all very disorienting, but then again maybe this is exactly what we should be doing on a Saturday nihgt when we are in middle school, frantically treading water in the ever fluctuating social dynamics, searchingly, awkwardly trying to use words that are beyond us, watching out for one another, trying to keep each other safe.

Justin—cancer.

April-- talking to him through high school on the phone. Sort of dating over the phone.

Words, meaning, vocabulary.

Leminy snicket word list

08/26/2021

Mr. McNabb, Rexal drugs. Mother going in there and ordering a Soda. Region differences. Choque, toque,

Making shakes, leaving the metal container.

Billy’s store.

Billy taking the mirror off that car in the parking lot after the ceremony with their van. Mike tall and old and rolling around in his wheel chair hard of hearing and friendly, but falling all apart before our eyes. The Pharmacist retired on medications. Lost in the mean routines of his daily haze.

Seeking ome kind of grounding in the word.

Other Aaron from high school. Way more athletic than I was. Fast. Good sprinter. But smaller. I was tall, lumbering. Good stamina. Good defensive intensity. Willing to get down on the floor. Throw elbows. Flop.

Dad died of a heart-attack. Early development kids. Lots of muscle.

Pharmacist. How’s the drug dealing going. Not friendly. Quiet. Didn’t think that was funny. Offended. Sensitive. Later one of the in town Pharmacists was held up at gun point and had a live grenade duct taped to his hand. And then the assailant took the stock of opioids back to his house down the street from my paraetns and where my old high school classmate had grown up and he ate a bunch of drugs and then fell asleep. They sent in a super sensitive microphone and could hear by the depth and regularity and maybe even the shallowness of his breathing that he was really far gone. One of my mother’s partners had a scandal involving his wife running a drug house out of their house. Another dock left a practice of addicts in his wake. The small town office had to get security to deal with angry addicts unable to get their prescriptions.

And then of course that crazy drug story out of Manistique.

08/12/2021

Lee Sanford and I

* Playing our tennis championships and writing up the winners names in puffy paint on plaques we took from my dad’s stash of running awards. Lee won all of the Majors- The French Open, Wimbelton, New York and Australia… until I started using my brother’s super fancy oversized headed, Kevlar stringed racquet and Lee was still using his racquetball racquet, also around this time I discovered that I could really use my height to my advantage if I charged the net at ket times, especially when it seemed it Lee was only going to be able to muster a weak or deflecting return. The Kevlar strings gave my net crashing slams a really satisfying thwack. I started winning everything and Lee lost interest in Tennis all together. This same pattern repeated itself when I played with betsy, Stephen, and Erik. It went from me being sub par to me being a lot better than they were in a really short period of time. I have this weird sidekick mentality. I wonder if this was shaped a little bit by being the odd kid out a little bit once we moved to Gladstone and then falling in with a really dominate and self-centered personality like Lee. Hans has a very self-centered personality. Gareth. Etc.
* Lee’s Book and the on-line pitch for his book.
* The Senior Portait-e sque quality to his self-published dusk jacket .

02/25/2021

Lee Sanford spitting luggies into his confirmation book and compsing myths for Greek Gods and making tombs for them or shrines like inspired by the oracle a delphi, and Jessie Johnson coming down to see what we were doing and we were suddenly sort of embarrassed to be middle schoolers playing imaginary games building shrines to made up gods—our imaginations suddenly a sort of liability in conformity land, difficult to explain, hard to brand, not as cool and repeatable as Jeremy Peacock’s “fuck an a, man!” Or anything that Bart Simpson said. Or Justin’s laconic, “Whatcha doin’, dummy?” The hilarity of this curmudgeonly response—this Lettermen like charismatic cantankerousness and iracibility that couldn’t completely obscure the underlying goodwill and twinkling hilarity. Justin made you laugh. You wanted to make Justin laugh. Locus of plans. Seeing what developed. Meeting up. Doing what? What? God knows what? Who cares! Let’s just do something. Play cards. Ride bikes. Throw the frisbee. Eat something. Listen to music. Drive somewhere.

And then later Lee on YouTube plugging his self-published book. Seemingly trying to codify the fragmented diatribes he had honed over years of drunken delivery from the tops of bar stools. The sum total effect bursting through the screen in a responding, though unselfaware cry for help.

11/26/2020

Shit in pants stance like Roger Shepkey who is probably some mad paperback writing sci-fi crank, surviving somewhere on Tino’s Pizza Rolls and a hoard of 80s glossy magazine porn stored in bowling bags under the basement stairs.

What does it say about our childhood that microwaveable snacks and television loomed so large.

More time at the video store than the library. Religiously perusing the backs of the VHS tapes. Take note of plots. Taking notes of which actors were in what. This museum of our most authentic cultural offering. This virtual reality. This attempt at recreating totality.

11/24/2020

MJP. Used the epigraph from my favorite book as the closing argument of my case. We won the Michigan High School Youth in Government Mock Trial Competition and then were sponsored to fly to San Francisco for the National Championship.

11/20/2020

Youth group:

Hot pockets and a microwave and a Nintendo

And tomorrow Sixflags.

So tired. Still delighted.

The games are lame and you burn the roof of your mouth and the tip of your tongue on

the too hot cheese and red sauce that squirts out when you bite through the bread too quick. It’s steams off your lip and out of your mouth and you spit the bite out in your hand and you’re embarrassed and you feel like a stupid little kid, spitting out food into your hand that you hadn’t washed before eating with your hands, so you put your plate down the round table and you go to the bathroom and you throw the chunk into the toilet and you flush it down, you flush it down and wash your hands, you look in the mirror and you forgive yourself for being a child and for spitting the food our in your hand and you calm yourself by reminding yourself that no one probably even thought it was weird and that they all would have all done the same thing if they had had a too hot bite in their mouth and if anybody picks on you about it you plan on saying, “It was hot! It was hot! What do you want me to do, burn my mouth?” He’d even swear if they really bothered him about it. But wouldn’t swear if they didn’t push him. You wash your hands and go back in. The pizza rolls were cool now. Someone had left a glass of Pepsi for you by your plate. You don’t know who left you the Pepsi, so before talking a quick gulp you should out, “Thanks for the Pepsi!”

Bobby Saunders who was just starting a new game of Caveman games called, “Don’t worry its cold!”

And uncle Danny getting pissed off when the preacher says that rich athletes like Barry Saunders aren’t going to go to heaven.

The Nutkins—painting the house on the edge of town. Mrs. Marfot came to my basketball game—why was I so blocked? Starting on the basketball team—swa this as a much more immediate self-establishing activity. Sucking wind in dry gyms—steamy shits before practice in internal ship bowel lockerooms, the steam heat boiling us in our cotton socks. Dale the janitor and his ever present broom, with his tinted glasses and easy, friendly way.

**04/03/2021**

I had messed up my shoulder trying to whack a gold ball out on to the lake while sliding towards it like I was approaching on a galloping polo stead, only to have the stead back off, just as I swung the club forward and had my feet follow its trajectory up and out from under me—twisting me around and slamming me down on my left shoulder.

07/01/2019

[Video- how stenography works](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=62l64Acfidc)

Themes:

* Relationship between people and words
* Words in different contexts, mediums
* The Defamiliarization of art

Stenographer: trained to write in shorthand methods so that they can type or write in short hand methods, enabling them to write as quickly as people speak.

Will (William, Bill, Billy, Liam) Godfrey the stenographer from Rock (Lightening Will the Hurdler)

Writing project : character - lives in the Upper Peninsula gets married very young as a child very young becomes medical stenographer among other jobs. He works at need. She works for a Funeral Home. He coaches the track team. He runs. He works as a Carpenter. A janitor. A Cemetery. A bike shop. He works for the Catholic Church . The book is about his whole life. It's about the Upper Peninsula. It's about the relationship between people and words . It's about the relationship between people in words in different mediums. Received in different mediums. Expressed through different mediums

Godfrey, running between Escanaba and Gladstone.

* Sisters are pregnant.
* He falls in love and may have gotten his girlfriend pregnant.

D & M Subs

Dan’s Tree House

The Escanaba River

Fishing

Endurance

Personalities

He was the consummate runner-- he kept the middle miles to himself.

**The Stenographer**- Reliant K

I got in a fight with a stenographer  
Afterwards she read me like a book  
I have tried to get along with her  
But my temperament was quickly overlooked

On the weekends we can  
Sneak into this courtroom  
And you'll offer me  
Some sort of bargain plea

Yeah, Smith and Weston Jr. was a son of a gun  
He pressed his nose up to my head.  
Yeah, I was sweatin' bullets but I dodged the one  
That was not as much sweat as was lead.

Oh I still love you  
Oh I still love you  
Though I know you  
Want me dead

And when I turn my other cheek  
Though I'll beg and I'll plea  
But this time  
You might just kiss it instead

This is my story  
And like the glue on the binding  
I'm sticking to it

If you want to implore me  
To change my tune  
Well I just won't do it

This is my story  
And like the glue on the binding  
I'm sticking to it

If you want to implore me  
To change my tune

Well I just won’t do it.

Marquette

Wildcats and Huskies

Play hocky with a smased can behind the stands. There were concessions. I’d get pop. I would buy it for myself in the first grade.

The Jeff story

Birthday parties

Boy scouts

Summer day club

The beach, the hot spot

Presque Isle for Ice Cream

Jim’s ofr ice cream

The water front

The circus-- acrobatic twins

Helping with clean up, getting 5 bucks

I have 9 lives I’m a cat-- after a presentation of the Heilich manuever in my second grade class. Getting sent to the hall.

Saying the pledge of allegiance. Trying to figure out which had to use to cover up my heart and being uncurse where my heart was.

The boy who had diabetes and sugarfree candy.

Regulating on the playground with that blonde haired kid who thought he was Hulk Hogan.

Cutie Catcher.

Boys chase girls

Fighting with the girls

Going to birthday parties at roller rinks or bowling alleys.

Visiting the airport with my cub scout crew. My buddy Jeff’s family being really into hocjy and having an ice skating rink in the back yard.