RYAN SMITH
LUSK AT THE LAKE

For his fifth birthday Lusk was given a birthday cake, but no candles—no candles, his father said, a hand on his mother's shoulder, no force, but managing to hold her—no candles. Have you seen what hope does to a man?

Lusk did not understand.

He had not yet seen Lake Superior, grey water, not blue at all, a magnanimous periphery of shells that held no oceans, his father at the center of the long rope bridge, eyes wide, and Lusk sitting at the far end saying will you come if I meet you out there, and hold your hand?

The waves coming and coming, stealing his answer.