

the garment was occupied

In the chapter, the protagonist grapples with a critical decision after a night of reflection. He considers sailing southwest to Duluth, where familiar faces and potential aid await him, particularly his companion Lark, who has her own connections from her time at the library. However, he also weighs the risks of involving others in his troubles. With the morning calm and beautiful weather, he feels a surge of hope, believing he can reach the Slates and perhaps reunite with Lark, invoking thoughts of their shared past and the safe harbor they once navigated together.

As he sails, hard-earned experience leads him to make instinctual choices, guided by the landscape. The journey proceeds smoothly, presenting a stark contrast to his dire expectations while reflecting on his trusty boat, Flower. The surroundings evoke nostalgia and connection, and he begins to feel sentimental about Flower's steadfastness. Each mile unveils the beauty and danger of the lake, as memories of Lark haunt him with longing. Yet, moments of loss seep in, particularly when he perceives Lark's face in the landscape, an ephemeral vision that vanishes as quickly as it appears.

Anchored for the night near Thunder Bay, the protagonist's hunger pricks at him, but he fights it off with thoughts of past hardships and the absurd rituals of those seeking belonging. Strumming his bass guitar provides temporary solace under the moonlight until a series of knocks against the hull shock him into alertness. Initially thinking it to be his seagull friends, he emerges to find a corpse drifting nearby, an unsettling reminder of mortality and the macabre history that haunts the Great Lakes.

As the night unfolds, the figure embodies both dread and a terrifying curiosity. His past encounters with the dead give way to mixed emotions. Instead of succumbing to panic, he pushes the corpse away, symbolizing his attempt to distance himself from the horrors of the past. Yet the presence of the drowned weighs heavily on his mind as sleep eludes him. Eventually, he greets dawn with a new resolve, casting off from the chilling encounter, leaving the haunting figure behind as he steers towards whatever awaits him further along the journey.