12-1-1995

The Dunes

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Recommended Citation
Available at: http://commons.cu-portland.edu/promethean/vol4/iss1/8

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It was dark that night. I realized this as we walked through an invisible forest of trees that kept brushing and pulling against my shirt. If I looked up I could make out a tiny difference between the sky and the trees; the sky was the lighter gray. There was no moon that night, and the clouds blocked all the stars. I was a little nervous walking through the trees in this dark, and as I tightened my grip on the person in front of me, I pictured how we must have looked to someone who could see in this dark, like a conga line stumbling through a forest looking for a lake and some sand dunes. There were no flashlights cutting through the darkness; we had decided it would be fun that way.

I realized that we were walking up a hill, then back down. Suddenly there was a change in the grayness in front of me, in between two shadows, the trees at the end of the path, I saw a shimmering gray, somewhat brighter than the sky. Everyone gasped as we realized that we’d walked right up to the edge of the lake. I thought it was sand at first but as we got closer I could hear water lapping against the shore. I could also hear the distant sound of a dune buggy, its mosquito whine cutting through the forest sounds. I looked across the water towards the sound, but all I could see was a giant snow-white shape rising out of the water. I couldn’t figure out what it was. It was the brightest thing to look at and rolled off into the darkness.

“Is that mist?” I asked.

Someone standing in the darkness behind me replies, “No, those are the dunes.”