

A JOURNAL OF WESTERN OKLAHOMA

WESTVIEW



Westview

Volume 33
Issue 2 *Westview*

Article 18

2-15-2018

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Recommended Citation

Belair, Mark (2018) "These Wants," *Westview*: Vol. 33: Iss. 2, Article 18.

Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/westview/vol33/iss2/18>

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These Wants

by Mark Belair

The bow of the wooden rowboat
scrapes the beach and you step out
into ankle-high lake water
and angle in the polished oars
and pull the peeling boat
ashore, far enough so that
it won't float back out even
if it storms
and you trudge toward the rental cabin
and dip your feet, sandy from the beach,
into a dented aluminum basin of warm tap water
and leave damp footprints
on the dark green porch steps
then your sun-tautened skin
chills in the porch shade
and clinking sounds
from the still-hidden kitchen
alert you to a thirst
you didn't really notice
out in the boat, rowing
alone, while a waft
of onions simmering
in butter reminds you it's been
hours since you ate,
then you notice that the few steps
that take you through the sitting room
feel ungainly, stiff, you need, after
all that rowing, to rest your arms and legs
(and to pause in the bathroom too)

but you're eager to tell your
loved one all about your
boating adventure
(in which not much—yet everything!—
happened) so soldier on
into the unfamiliar kitchen where
the familiar back of your loved one
(as she tries to unscrew a balky cap,
her hair casually gathered up, her
lovely swan neck pleading
for a spray of rosebud kisses)
stops you in your tracks
for it dawns on you
just then
in the dusky light
how all these simple wants
now gathered to a keen point
of feeling
are the everyday wants
(and here your jar-abstracted
loved one, hearing your approach,
turns to see your tears
suddenly well
so softens in tender perplexity
which nearly makes them spill)
you forever
and ever
want.