

7-15-2006

## *A Vision of Death*

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### Recommended Citation

Sparenberg, David (2006) "A Vision of Death," *The Mythic Circle*: Vol. 2006 : Iss. 28 , Article 5.  
Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/mcircle/vol2006/iss28/5>

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she'd been willing to wait. The slow-coming for Jedidiah with its fear, enmeshing nights, and petulant gut. The awful pressure of fearing the loss of Jed.

His shoulders slumped and he turned away.

In the quiet, the floor creaked and he looked over at her. Her crooked back was turned; he knew she would vanish. But she glanced back over her shoulder. On her face a fierce light burned, purging her features like sunlight in the trees. For an instant she was strikingly transfigured and straight. Then she was gone.

Slaughter put his face to the wall, leaned into the crook of his arm and wept.

Jed was a hewer with splendid vigor; he swung his axe with pithy might. Around the woods sun rays dashed to earth, and youth's

glad shout rang in the rhythmic swoop of his strokes. It resounded in the logging area up the banks of the Flambeau River.

He left off whacking at the red pine long enough to take a swig from the canteen his uncle handed him.

"Water's good and cold," he said. He equalized a stance between his real leg and the wooden one, and began throwing in his blade again.

Together the two men, one old, one young, watched the tree fall.

"You know," said Jed, looking about them at the woodland bristling with thin tall trunks. "It seems like a long time since white pine was great in the woods. Remember how big around those trunks were?--how tall they stood?"

Ave smiled slightly and nodded. He remembered.

## A VISION OF DEATH by David Sparenberg

a raven  
black as midnight  
on a weatherworn  
dark fencepost  
the raven's eye  
the morning sun  
painting red  
the raven's dark head  
  
how much

truth of otherness  
startling or fatal  
intersects  
  
the raven catches  
blood  
of the streaming sun  
across  
outstretched  
soul-arms

golgotha  
of a pole between  
struts and barbs  
  
shadow  
of black night  
changes  
to this scream of fire:  
a raven  
in red flight