


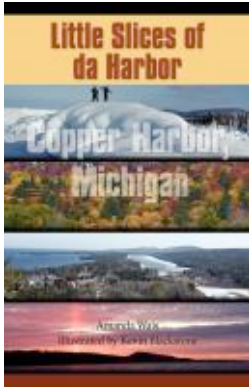
Little Slices of da Harbor



Copper Harbor,
Michigan



Amanda Wais
Illustrated by Kevin Blackstone



Surrounded by Lake Superior, Copper Harbor is quite literally at the end of the earth. Pristine lakes, unique landscapes, distinct flora and unforgettable residents keep visitors coming back...for a few months of the year. Then they all leave. Little Slices personifies the Harbor as it talks to the reader and amongst itself about the distinctions of each season. Humorous dialects and charming illustrations highlight the quirks of this magical place.

Little Slices of da Harbor

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Copper Harbor, Michigan

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Disclaimer: The characters in this book have been left quite generic, so you can pick the faces behind the words. No names are used except those of specific places. Though some of these events may not have happened exactly as stated (because I made them up), they are certainly instances that can occur in everyday life in da Harbor.

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First Edition

Winter

Way up here winter can last six months. During these months you will often see snow, blowing wind, gray skies, snowmobilers, people shoveling and cars in the snow banks.

Since Copper Harbor is in the middle of Lake Superior, which seldom freezes all the way across, temperatures remain pleasantly mild, averaging 15 degrees Fahrenheit. Snowfall averages 270 inches a season.

People mainly come to snowmobile, ice fish, snowshoe, ski and snowboard.

Brockway Nose Lookout

Oh, my. I can hardly see my little town down there. At least the wind blew some of that snow out of my eyes. The little plow trucks are moving snow off the parking lots... and driveways... and roads. Such a helpful community.

Lots of snowmobilers are at The Mariner and The Pines. I guess that's where they go before or after they zoom over me. I hope they stay safe. I get so nervous when they speed around my corner.

Look at those colorful lights in the park. I tell you, those folks get more creative every year. I wish they'd hang some lights on my boughs!

Ah, but the snow is beautiful tonight. It makes everything sparkle. And the nostalgic smell of wood smoke fills the air. I think this is my favorite time of year to look upon the town. It looks quaint, yet pristine. Definitely magic. Even the blinking light looks merry! And the waves make the neatest ice sculptures on the shore -- and the wildest sounds! I wonder if she'll freeze over this year...

Here come some sledders. Gosh, they sure are going fast! Slow down! Slow down, now! I wouldn't want anyone rolling off the corner. They'd spoil my view!

Ice Floats on the Harbor

This time yesterday we were one big sheet of ice. I seriously thought this was going to be the Big Freeze -- the time we freeze so thick we last through the winter. But nope. Last night the winds picked up something fierce, and by morning, we were separated into pieces. Now we slosh and bump into each other with every undulation of the water.

Luckily today is calm, so we can at least hang out with each other a little longer. I tend to get attached to the other floats I was, well, attached to. Though we're all broken up, we still love each other.

If the wind picks back up, though, we could all ship out to the Big Lake and never see each other again! However, my edges are chipping away, and I could use a break from smashing into my brothers.

My grandpa told me that one year all the pieces got washed out of the Harbor one day. He said they were all floating around at sea, thinking they'd melt in loneliness at spring time. But soon the winds were just right, and they all (well, mostly all) blew right back into the bay! They were all in a different order by that time, but it was a pretty neat reunion.

You know, if it stays calm like this, we could all freeze back together and not slosh into each other anymore. We'd be one big freeze over the Harbor, just like we ought to be -- only like a giant jigsaw puzzle!

All it takes is one windy day to tear us all apart. We can't worry about that, though. The waves may break us physically, but we were made as one, and we'll feel that bond forever!

Red Sled at Recess

Hi. I'm the red sled at the Copper Harbor one room schoolhouse. I'm not just cool because I'm red. I'm cool because I'm the fastest sled on the sled pile.

Good thing there's four of me because all the big kids know I'm the fastest, and the little kids still pick their favorite color. They make my eight months of sitting in the garage piled between the other sleds all worth it when they run in and shout, "I want the red sled! I want the red sled!" It just gives me that warm, fuzzy feeling, you know?

Then we'll slide down the hill together as many times as we can before the bell rings. They'll go down on their bellies and shout, "I'm a penguin!" Or they'll stand up in me and yell, "Snowboarding! Oh, yeah!" Sometimes the little ones will pile in three at a time, but they usually tip over before they get to the bottom of the hill. And sometimes, they'll get in backwards, and yell, "Everybody get out of my way! I can't see!" Don't tell their parents all this, please.

But hey, kids are built to have fun. And every year they bring me out for the first and last time with barely enough snow on the ground to make it to the bottom. But all the grass and rocks that scrape my belly are a small price to pay to hear them laugh and scream, having the time of their lives.

Copper Harbor, Michigan

Silence

Psst. Do you hear that?

Listen.

No. *Listen.*

Ahh, you hear it, don't you?

The bare trees bear no leaves to rustle. The snowmobile trails are empty. The Harbor itself is frozen solid. Even the wind is missing today.

Just listen, and take it in. This may be the only time you will ever hear nothing at all. No birds, no cars, no voices, no waves, no wind...

Ahhhh.

Oh, but wait. Now there's a sound. A gentle pat-a-pat-pat of snowflakes landing on our jackets.

Only the sounds of the snow and our gentle breath which melts a few snowflakes before they will ever land on our coats.

This, my friend, this is silence.

Little Slices of da Harbor



Copper Harbor, Michigan

Ocha Potter Terrain Park

Flat Rail: How's the snow down there, Log Canon?

Log Canon: Pretty sweet.

Flat Rail: Nice. I think green-pants-guy is headed your way.

Log Canon: Awesome! 360 off my backside!

Launch Rail: Nice, LC! Way to hold it steady for him.

Log Canon: Cha.

Down Flat Down: Yo, Flat Rail! Did you see plaid-pants-guy pop over my first down? He was flyin!

Flat Rail: No, I missed it, dude. I was watching black-pants-guy spin a 180 down my rail.

Log Canon: Dudes! Did you see black-pants-guy shoot of Launch Rail? He got like twenty feet of air!

Launch Rail: That was so sick.

Down Flat Down: Oh! Neon-pants-guy just biffed it on the ramp up Flat Down Box. Somebody call the groomer!

Flat Down Box: I think the groomer's coming tonight. I'm outta commission until my snow ramp is fixed.

Down Flat Down: Bummer. I think neon-pants-guy is hiking back up to try Flat Rail.

Flat Rail: I hope he doesn't chicken out on me.

Log Canon: Hey, it looks like green-pants and plaid-pants are hiking back up. You guys ready for another round?

Flat Rail: I could go all night!

Snowmobilers at the Bar

A woman walks into a bar. She sees fourteen men -- all snowmobilers -- bellied up. Twenty-eight eyes look her up and down. Fourteen tongues lick their lips or whisper to the guy next to him. She pretends not to notice, but the air is thick. Thick from the one thing all these men have excess of after they get off their machines and pound a couple cocktails: testosterone.

Their postures straighten. Their laughs bellow throughout the rafters. They order another round, "and one for the lady down there." Wink wink.

She's used to this. She lives here. "How about a pint, then?" she asks the bartender. "You know what I like." Wink wink.

A couple of the boys make their way to the men's room so they can get the full 360 of the only woman in the bar.

Another guy tries to ruffle a buddy's feathers to get her attention, but he gets no response. She just drinks her beer and chats with her bartender friend. "Thanks, I better go," she tells him. "It's a little stuffy in here, don't you think?"

Copper Harbor, Michigan

Lake Fanny Hooe

Brrr. Won't somebody warm me up? My whole body is frozen thick with ice. These west winds give me goose bumps that could cut glass.

Most of the action I get these days is from the ice fishermen. They've got their big tools out just drilling me and peering into my holes. Once in a while, if they treat me right, I'll give them a reward: a walleye or a small mouth bass. I let it slip from my depths; they're seldom disappointed when I deliver the goods. But, you know, I aim to please.

The snowmobilers love me too. They accelerate across me just to see how fast they can go. I love it when they rev their engines. Their rubber tracks send vibrations down my body that I've never experienced before. Sometimes they just whip around and around in circles... wooh! That'll make a lady blush!

You should come visit me sometime with your skis or fishing hooks or snowmobile.... I guarantee I can show you a good time. Bring a friend, and make sure you wear layers.

Porter's Island

Hello, young one. Come sit on one of my ice shelves for a bit. I'm glad to see you wore snow pants.

Wait! Not so far back. The waves will splash over your head. Plus, that ice is practically hanging in midair over the lake. I can't be responsible for casualties.

When the ice shelves and frozen sea start to sprawl around me, I feel like my body and spirit are growing too. A few times in history, I have actually reached Canada by ice. You don't want to be around to see how the wind blows then. Gale forces bring every snowflake to my pines. Just look at the tops of my trees. Some of them permanently point southeast!

I sure hope the townsfolk appreciate all the wind I block for them. Without me here, the streets would be drifted over constantly; the plow trucks wouldn't be able to keep up. Sometimes the wind blows so hard, the waves splash over my trees!

Every winter I reach Copper Harbor by ice. Then Copper Harbor comes to me! I get visits from snowshoers and ice fishermen. They sure love that they can walk to an island. I like it too. It keeps me company in the cold months.

I even get visitors on foot in the early spring. Fishermen often wade over my way. Rock hounds cross the gap from Hunter's Point too. It's kind of embarrassing that I'm an island people can sometimes walk to. But there are worse things in life. I could have to shovel.

Copper Harbor, Michigan

Stuck in the Snow

Local: There's another scoop for ya, snow bank. And another. And another. And another.

Groan. Who would have thought that a fourteen foot path from my driveway to the door would be such a chore? What is this, the fifth time I shoveled this week? And the second time today! That lake has been a snowmaking machine.

Cripes. I always say I'm moving south this time of year. One of these days I'll --

Tourist: Excuse me. Sir?

Local: Yeah?

Tourist: Hey. Um, I put my car in the ditch by the blinking light, and my cell phone doesn't work, and, you're the first person I saw, so --

Local: Need some help?

Tourist: Yeah.

Local: Take this shovel. Let's go.

Tourist: Cool. Thanks.

Local: No problem. Going a little fast, eh?

Tourist: Well, I didn't think so. I mean, I have good tires. The road was just slipperier than I thought.

Local: Well, you should always take your time around corners.

Tourist: I thought I was going slow, but not slow enough, I guess.

Local: Yikes, is that your little red car?

Tourist: Yeah.

Local: Front wheel drive?

Tourist: Yeah.

Local: This shovel's better off as a signpost. You got the whole back end in there.

Tourist: I know....

Local: Someone in the car now?

Tourist: My girlfriend. We were on our way to Mount Bohemia.

Local: Well, go keep her warm. I'll get someone to pull you out.

Tourist: Oh, wow. Thanks, Mister.

Local: Yup. No problem. Looks like both of us are stuck in the snow.

Fish

Fish 1: See all those circles of light above us?

Fish 2: Woah, I totally do. Are we going to be abducted by aliens?

Fish 1: Only if you let us. Men drilled those in the ice to catch fish.

Fish 2: But dude, we *are* fish.

Fish 1: Exactly. Look up. See that round fellow looking down at us?

Fish 2: Yup.

Fish 1: He can see us down here. See how excited he just got?

Fish 2: Yup. Oh, nice! A little snack!

Fish 1: Get back here! This is what I'm trying to teach you. That man put that tasty snack on the end of his fishing line to try to catch us.

Fish 2: Catch us?

Fish 1: Yes. There's a hook in that snack that will rip through your jaw as he reels you up and out of the water where you will slowly suffocate to death.

Fish 2: That's heavy. I'll never eat again.

Fish 1: You can eat, but don't eat the snacks under the glowing holes.

Fish 2: Cuz they're from the aliens!

Fish 1: Sure, yeah.

Fish 2: That's an ugly alien. He's still watching us.

Fish 1: I know, and you fell for his bait.

Fish 2: Naw, I was just messin with the aliens, man.

Fish 1: Sure, buddy. Sure you were. Now look up *this* hole. Same thing: glowing circle, jiggling bait, man above the hole. Let's wave.

Fish 2: This is so cool. Look how excited he is!

Fish 1: I know. Now tell me what you learned today.

Fish 2: That the glowing holes are from big, ugly aliens who try to abduct fish with tasty snacks, so they can suffocate them on land.

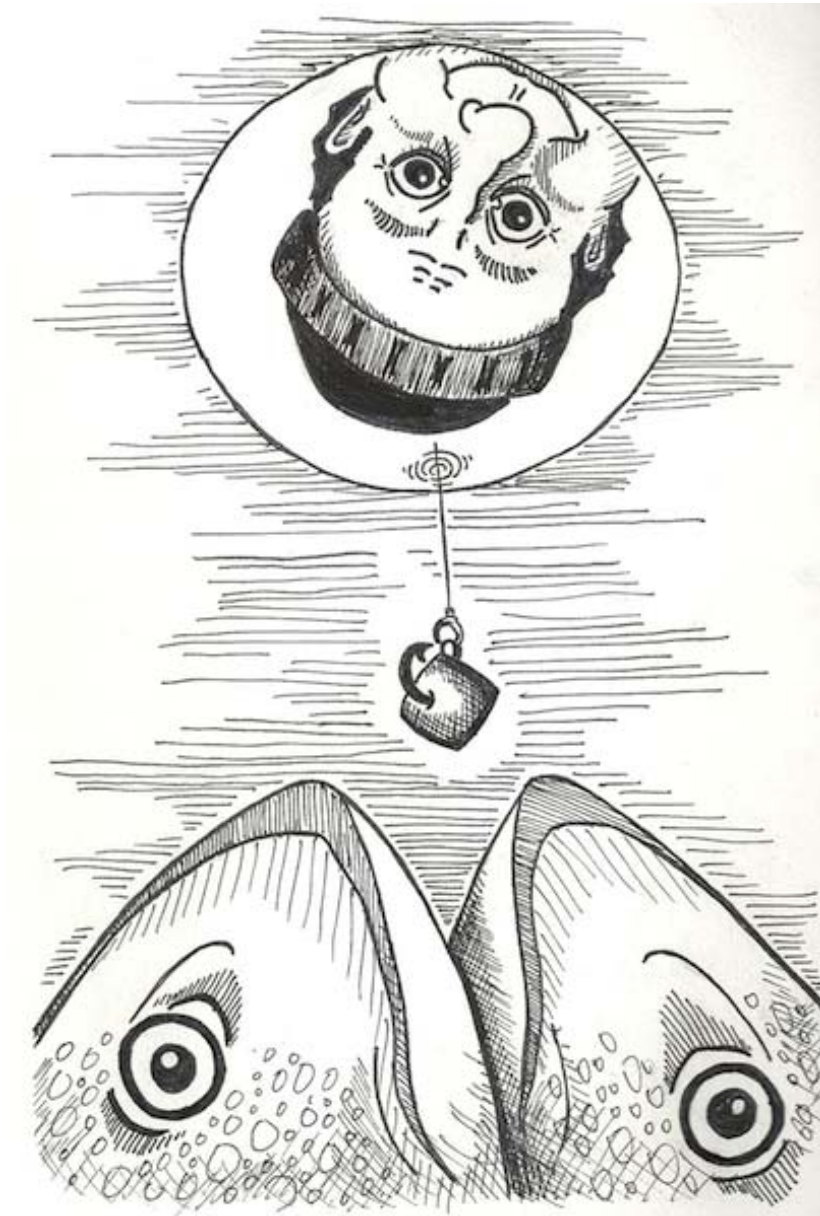
Fish 1: Wow. Well done. So what will you do next time you see a little morsel bobbing down from one of those holes?

Fish 2: Uh, don't eat it cuz it's a trick.

Fish 1: Great! Great. It seems like there's more holes up there than last year by this time. Crazy, huh? Hey! Where'd you -- No!!!!

Fish 2: What, man? I had the munchies!

Copper Harbor, Michigan



Ice Fishermen

Fisherman 1: Hey!

Fisherman 2: Yah?

Fisherman 1: Dere's a couple a splake right under my hole!

Fisherman 2: Oh, yah? How big are dey?

Fisherman 1: Good size. Da one's godda be 18 inches.

Fisherman 2: Nice.

Fisherman 1: I'll just jiggle my bait a little. Da small one's eyein it up. He's goin for it! Shoot, he turned around.

Fisherman 2: What are ya usin for bait?

Fisherman 1: One a dem chartreuse spoons. I usually have pretty good luck wit em.

Fisherman 2: Dat's what a buddy a mine uses too. I might have ta try dem sometime when I run outta minnows.

Fisherman 1: Yah, de're nice. Ack, dose fish are swimmin away now.

Fisherman 2: Hey, I see da ones you were talkin about. Da one's a nice size. What in da --

Fisherman 1: What's sat, now?

Fisherman 2: I swear deir little fins just waved at me.

Fisherman 1: Oh, yah. Have anodder beer. Den da clouds'll be wavin too!

Fisherman 2: Don't I know it! Dat little one looks hungry. Come on, little guy. Doesn't dat look like a tasty little snack? Come on.... Come on... yes! Got im!

Fisherman 1: Hey, nice little splake dere, pal.

Spirit of Christmas

Oh, hey. Spirit of Christmas here. Who could be a better spokesman for the people of Copper Harbor over the holidays? I mean, these people know how to make the season bright.

In November, a crew starts putting up Christmas lights in the park -- all volunteers! Lots of cold, wind-blown volunteers at that. One day I stopped in the park to talk to the ringleader of this colorful brigade and asked him why he endures this every year. He says that after the last Green Christmas, he got inspired to make the biggest light display in the Keweenaw -- maybe even the U.P.! He was hoping it would drum up some business for the lonely little town. Since people really took a liking to it, he does it every year. For this effort, he doesn't demand volunteers, but he's always delighted when they magically show up to help.

The one room schoolhouse puts on a Christmas program, and the whole town is invited! I mean, I don't know how they fit so many people in a one room school, but they do it. And everyone is always enchanted. The students practice for weeks ahead of time, and the teacher is so creative. She makes sure everything is perfect for their big night to shine. In fact it's so perfect, that Santa even comes bearing gifts!

Another impressive community effort is held on Christmas Eve: Christmas caroling. I know, I thought caroling only happens in movies too until I visited this place. Flocks of Harborites ban together wearing Santa hats, jingling sleigh bells and carrying their sheet music. The people who stay home make treats for the frosty carolers to enjoy. If you take part in this merry event, you will see everyone in town that night and feel the warmth of hot chocolate and family -- even if you were born 1,000 miles away! Oh, jeez, now I'm all choked up. Merry Christmas!

Little Slices of da Harbor



Copper Harbor, Michigan

Black Bear

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What did you expect?

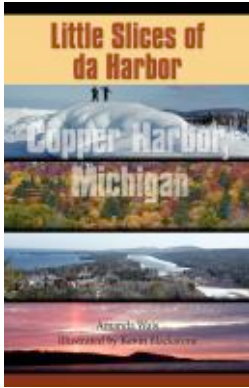
Winter Blues

Oh, it's been gray for days
The snow and sky and lake
My head is gonna break
Unless I see the sun

I've got no energy
The clouds took it away from me
Locked in this misery
Until I see the sun

Someone please give me a remedy
Is there a pill I can swallow?
I'm completely void of ecstasy
Inside I feel so hollow

Please pull the clouds apart
So I can feel my heart
I need my life to start
So please show me the sun!



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