

Night on Gull Lake

by

Gwendolyn MacEwen

One island  
small as a wish invited us  
and the lip of our borrowed boat  
scraped it like a kiss;  
    our first thought was;  
how many travellers before us  
had claimed it, given it  
a name? Or could we be  
the first? Why  
    did it matter so much?

Feathers and feathers fell  
or so it seemed, from high  
invisible gulls; our unpiratable  
ship was moored to a twig;  
    there was nothing to steal  
from it or the island. By night  
the meagre tree held a star  
in its fingers; we searched  
for absences, and found at last  
the sinuous absence  
of a snake in the grass

It was so simple, yet  
it was not. What  
    did we want?  
we waited so long for morning  
through the night of rain  
which pinned us shivering against  
a single rock,  
and danced for joy before the dawn  
when we made a miracle of fire from  
some damp, protesting branches  
that cracked as we stole them  
    from the tree;  
it was decided victory.

When we took off over  
the shallow waves next day  
    our pockets were full  
of pebbles that we knew  
we'd throw away,  
and when we turned around  
to see the island  
one last time, it was lost  
in fog and it  
has never quite been found.

## Interpretation of Night on Gull Lake by Gwendolyn MacEwen

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Ms Peach English

The poem, Night on Gull Lake, by Gwendolyn MacEwen, is a memory poem about camping on a small island in the middle of a lake. The mood of the poem is calm and almost like a dream. The author uses many poetic techniques, such as a simile “One island / small as a wish”, alliteration “Feathers and feathers fell”. Her use of imagery and personification also help to create the mood; “By night / the meagre tree held a star / in its fingers; / . The poet leaves us with a final thought that maybe the memory would have vanished if she hadn’t captured it, just like many fleeting moments in our lives.

How to Write a Poetic Interpretation:

**Use the following format as a guideline for writing an interpretation to the poem of your choice. You must include a copy of the poem with your interpretation.**

The poem, (name of poem underlined), by (*name of poet*), is a (*what kind of poem*) about (*complete this sentence with details about the poem*). The mood of the poem is (*describe the mood*). The author uses many poetic techniques, such as (*name a technique, and provide an example from the poem*) and (*name another technique with an example*). The poet leaves us with a final thought (*describe what you are thinking after you read the poem*).

