

The Sound of Silence

Arrival at the outpost cabin by float plane causes two things to happen. One is that we are delivered to our temporary fishing home and the other, that very arrival causes a stillness so without sound that it's absence pounds in your ear. The stillness becomes a sound itself. It's the sound of silence.

Its noisy riding in the Beaver float plane, the gears grinding, as it slices the cool, Canadian air over the vast boreal forests. Landing though is the opposite, always a surprise, so quiet and smooth as the pilot shuts down the engine on approach and we glide smoothly over the clear water with not even a bump to signal touch down.

Its after we've carried our supplies to the cabin and the fishermen have left to explore the lake that the quiet descends all around me. The creatures whose home this is are still. The lack of noise deafening and complete. My head rises and I find myself listening for something, anything. What is it that's missing my brain seems to say. My head cocks and turns trying to tune in, like a ham radio operator looking for a signal. The quiet strains my ears, the silence so deep it hurts.

Gradually their silence of scrutiny fades. Slowly I hear them start back up, this orchestra of wild creatures. The treetops resonate with the birds calling back and forth. I hear the haunting call of the loon, the squirrels chatter their displeasure. It's a relief, really, to hear them again, to know that they've accepted us in their sanctuary. Their boycott, their sounds of silence ended but the memory remains.