

A poem by Joseph Bruchac

Raccoons on the Shore at Paradox Lake

From the lake shore
greyed in by trails of mist
from the warm evening water
bright eyes flash at me
in the beam of the lantern
as I lift my paddle
and let the boat drift.

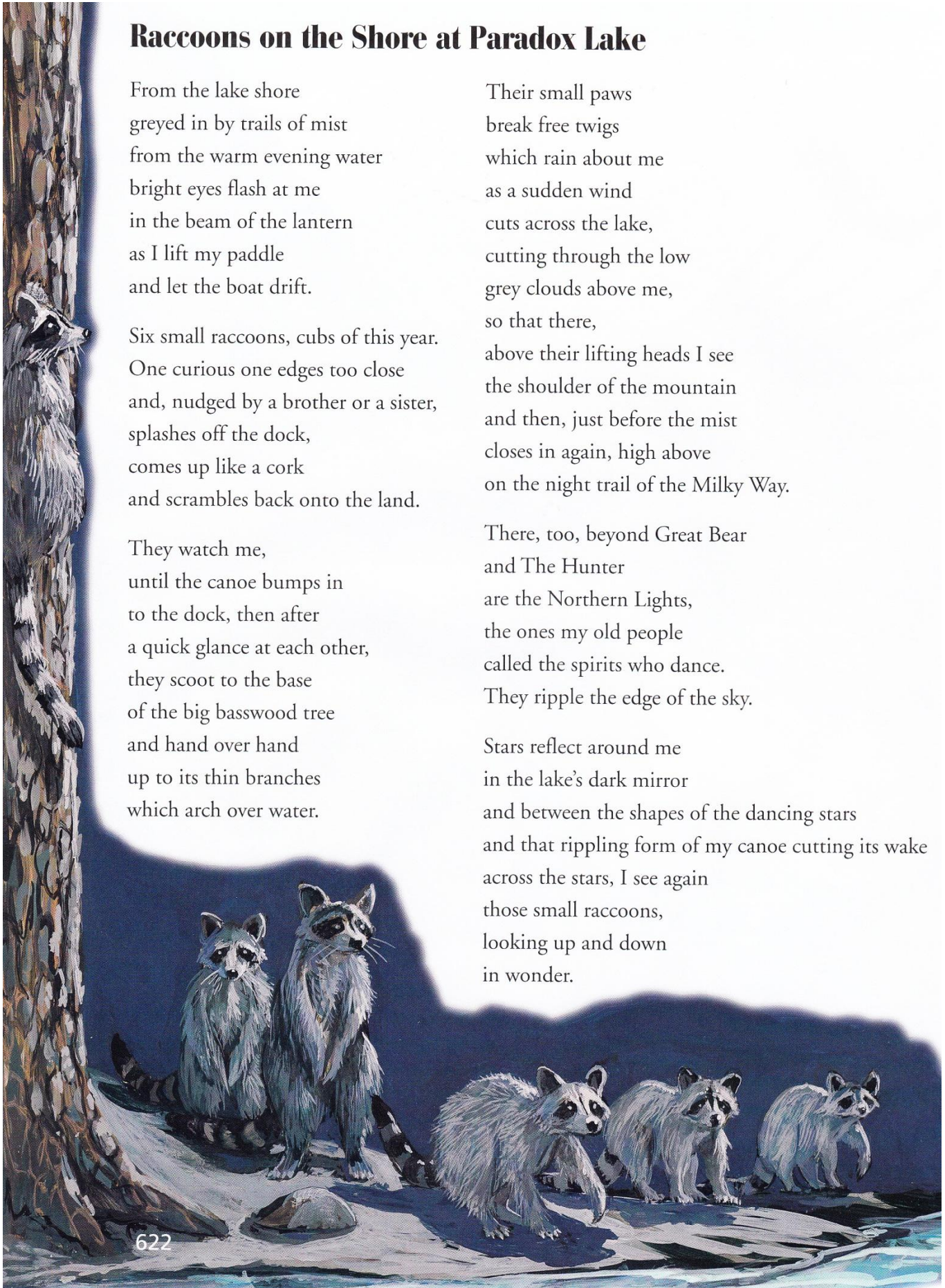
Six small raccoons, cubs of this year.
One curious one edges too close
and, nudged by a brother or a sister,
splashes off the dock,
comes up like a cork
and scrambles back onto the land.

They watch me,
until the canoe bumps in
to the dock, then after
a quick glance at each other,
they scoot to the base
of the big basswood tree
and hand over hand
up to its thin branches
which arch over water.

Their small paws
break free twigs
which rain about me
as a sudden wind
cuts across the lake,
cutting through the low
grey clouds above me,
so that there,
above their lifting heads I see
the shoulder of the mountain
and then, just before the mist
closes in again, high above
on the night trail of the Milky Way.

There, too, beyond Great Bear
and The Hunter
are the Northern Lights,
the ones my old people
called the spirits who dance.
They ripple the edge of the sky.

Stars reflect around me
in the lake's dark mirror
and between the shapes of the dancing stars
and that rippling form of my canoe cutting its wake
across the stars, I see again
those small raccoons,
looking up and down
in wonder.



In this poem, a person encounters some raccoons. Think about how the author describes the raccoons.

Write an original story describing the same experience from one of the raccoon’s point of view.

A large rectangular box with a thin black border, containing 20 horizontal black lines spaced evenly down the page, intended for writing a story.

A large rectangular area containing 22 horizontal lines, intended for writing a narrative. The lines are evenly spaced and span the width of the page.