My Brother Fairfield

I was the second of five children, one girl and four boys, who grew up in a house overlooking the shore of Lake Micigan in Winnetka. My sister Nancy was the first born. Of my three younger brothers Edward, Fairfield, and John the second was the most prococious. In 1913 when I was eleven years old we began to spend our summers on an island off the coast of Maine that my father had purchased the year before. Fairfield was then six, an age too young to be a playmate and companion to me in the exploration of Great Spruce Head Island or the mysteries of the intertidal shore. For these exciting activities I was much closer in a spirit of adventure to my older sister. Edward who was an age between played with Fairfield as often as he tagged along with Nancy and me. As the years passed my sister and I were permitted to invite our own friends to the island and so inevitably my activities came more and more to exclude my younger brothers.

In Winnetka during the school year I spent much of my time making things at a workbench and with a chemistry set given me for Christmas. Because of these preoccupations there grew in me an attitude of superiority to my brothers childish activities. As a result Fairfield's and my paths diverged until I knew little of his likes and dislikes, his hopes and aspirations. My friends were boys of the neighborhood with whom I played games of our own invention in which Edward occasionally joined. But Edward and Fairfield had their own friends from whose play I was excluded. They were girls of two families next door, Barbara and Louise. With them they established an inseparable alliance for an endless game about an imaginary land they called EDFALOBA in which each had his own country.

abandoning science for photography. This was when my relationship with Fairfield changed to become ~~xxxx~~ mutually more empathetic. I was affected by his paintings of the sea and sky and the spruce trees growing right down to the water's edge, which captured the very essence of relationships in the natural world. I was as much influenced by the way he depicted scenes of our island world as by Thoreau's descriptions of his. We each in his own way with his chosen medium expressed ~~expressed~~ his emotional experience with our common environment.

During the last summers of his life I often visited him in his studio on the back porch of the Big House which had become his by right of occupancy after his sister and brothers had built their own houses. He would on these occasions show me what he was working on and the paintings he had completed, would ask for my opinions and reflectively listen to my comments that I as an inexperienced critic I expressed with hesitation. During one of these conversations I told him that he was influenced by my photography, praise that I cherished. Fairfield was the brother to whom I grew closest in my later years. His undeviating ~~artistic~~ commitment to his Art and the candor and uncompromising honesty of his opinions ~~demanded~~ received unqualified respect.