

- By: Liam Withey
- Grade: 11
- School: Petoskey High School

One Big Jump

The air was cool, the trees bent before the opposing wind as the sun burned through the cracks between their leaves. I gazed upon the chasm and the bank which awaited my feet. I contemplated the power required to make the jump and attempted to take control of the adrenaline rushing through my veins. Finally, all that remained was to make the leap. With a deep breath and a sharp exhale, I took my mark and leapt.

I was five years old, and my family had just moved from Michigan to North Carolina as my father was offered a position at Nascar Technical Institute. Eventually, we found ourselves renting out a beautiful house on a fifty acre farm from people who soon became family to us. They showed us around and introduced us to the donkeys and chickens with which my sister and I spent most of our days. Aside from feeding and petting the animals, one of our favorite pastimes was exploring the property. In our front yard, all that could be seen was a plain of green grass and a large magnolia tree. To the left side of the house, one could see an extensive chain of pine trees covering the perimeter of our back yard.

Finally, to the back of the house, there was a labyrinth of reaching wood trails that, if followed, led miles in any direction. The main attraction of these trails, which was discovered by my older brother, was a creek with a vast chasm stretching across the expanse. In terms of dimensions, this creek was a good twelve feet wide and eight feet deep with a bank on the bottom left end which was slowly dissipating as a result of the rushing water brought on by a waterfall that flowed throughout my future foe. Upon discovery, I gazed at its beauty and then looked to my brother and exclaimed, “we should name it!” Earlier we had uncovered a smaller yet deeper chasm aptly named, “The Little Wonga.” Confidently my brother proclaimed that we shall name this one, “The Big Wonga.” this being the larger of the two. Naturally, the larger variant had to follow suit.

I am the youngest of us four. We are all two years apart. There is my sister Lauren, my brother Daniel, and the oldest of us is my sister Anna. Eventually, my brother proposed a test of bravery saying, “You will have to jump from the top bank down to the little sand bar on the bottom.” Effortlessly, and with help from his long legs, he made the jump.

“It’s no big deal Liam, come on down here!” he called up from the bottom. One strong attribute that I came to know my brother by was his bravery. He never refused a challenge and occasionally made his own, The Big Wonga being one of them. As the younger brother, I had an irrational desire to prove my worth to him. And so, with little hesitation, I gathered all the bravery I could muster and made my way to the “runway.” Lauren had been looking for us and had just shown up as I was about to make the bound.

With a rather concerned tone she exclaimed, “What are you doing?” I had been building myself up mentally as this was quite the jump for a five year old, so I didn’t respond and started running. I planted my feet on the edge temporarily so as to spring off. With a shout from my sister and a grin upon my brother’s face, I launched off the side. It felt like time had slowed down as I thought to myself, “Am I really doing this?” I felt the rush of adrenaline and the wind blowing against the sweat upon my face as I descended, until finally, my feet planted firmly on the bank. I was shocked. My five year old legs granted

me the strength to overcome the divide not only in the land, but in my mind as well, this mental divide being the periphery of what I previously thought possible for myself.

I dedicate this memory to the overcoming of previous fears and to the gaining of newfound bravery. I found this memory significant as it was, quite literally, the greatest bound in terms of bravery I made at my young age.