


## Eden

 For those of us who ventured into the woods convinced we could re-create Eden in an undamaged place, the years went by and the successes we celebrated were balanced, as they always are, by failures. Couples who thought they held the same values, who thought they loved each other, found that under the pressure of living hard and close and often poor, they did not, and filed for divorce. My husband and I were among them.

But Eden never failed us. We carried within us onto untilled ground the seeds of our own undoing. We also brought our capacity for accomplishment. And we planted them both.

I remember how I loved that first summer. The cabin was an open, simple place, all wood, set in second-growth hardwoods with some large pines and firs that a logger, for some reason, had left. It shared its life with the world outside. It had a red hand pump in the kitchen and an outhouse over in the trees. The land and the cabin—our days pared down to this elemental life and centered in the natural world—gave me myself, as if I had lost a part of who I was somewhere along the way and recognized the familiar rudiments here, in a place I had never been before.

When I look back, what I treasure most are the evenings of deep winter. Dusk spread across the snow as the sun flared and slanted away behind the trees. The dark came after. Around our kitchen table where we set the lanterns, we ate and read and our two children played with crayons and clay as the kettle on the woodstove steamed. We were timeless. Our lives knitted together snugly here, our voices were easy, our sense of being a part of something precious that we had made together, profound.