

"They're going to pay for their backward ways!"
An adamant leader rallied warriors at a fireside,
Pointing to the enemy's camp behind the old oak hill.
A young boy listening among the brave fighters,
Devotedly put his hand on his heart -
The name of his forward tribe embroidered on his helm.
"Tomorrow is the day to prove our forward way!"
When the roar subsided, they sent the boy for water
To the lake, which laid beneath the hill.
When the boy had filled the second bucket,
His eye caught a glimpse of something strange
In his reflection in the water: his own helm
Read the backward name of his enemy's tribe!
As the lake became still, looking into the eyes
Of his own reflection, the boy became so angry
That he swung his fist to punch the water,
When a distant sound stopped him short:
On the lake's other side, not far from the enemy's camp,
Someone had punched the water's surface!
Taken aback, the boy darted and tripped, breaking a branch.
When he picked up his buckets, he took one last look
Across the lake: On the other side a backward boy
With water buckets stood and looked at him intently.
As the night drew closer, the boy could not sleep -
What he had read in the reflection in the water,
The backward boy on the other side of the lake
Left him restless. The boy wandered up the hill -
Feeling beneath his feet the grass, which tomorrow
Will be soaked with blood - toward the old oak.
When the boy reached the top, he heard a fireside rally
At the enemy's camp. From the other side of the hill
The backward boy - the same boy from the lake -

Approached the oak and stopped. Black hair, dark skin,
Brown eyes - the boys looked at each other speechless -
They looked so much alike, they could be brothers.
Meanwhile, the same adamant voice rallied the warriors
On the other side of the old oak hill:
"They're going to pay for their backward ways!"

- Aleksey Vays, June 2018