



Artwork: Blandine Broomfield

Victoria Falls

Meghan Robins

“Someone’s in the water,” Noah yelled, dusting his van to a stop. Caden tied his climbing rope to a Nalgene and ran toward the river.

“There she is!” he yelled and tossed it. But the woman was limp, unconscious, and already gone—sucked downstream under thrashing rapids. Noah took chase, running barefoot along the bank, catching sight of her popping up then disappearing again. Finally, her torso got hooked and Noah, without thinking, leapt onto a knife-edge rock, curling his toes against granite splashed by frigid water. He hoisted her by the belt and underarms, revealing a bloody gash on her forehead.

“Ready!” Caden yelled from shore, arms outstretched across a three-foot abyss. Noah flung the water-logged body. Caden clasped one forearm. Noah held fast to her ankle. For a moment, she bridged the gap. For a moment, her deadweight was rigid. For a moment, the rapids raged in slow motion.

Caden pulled her to shore and started CPR.

A bewildered man appeared, clouded by midday booze. “She fell...” he said.

The same stink wrenched involuntarily from her bloated stomach. Caden gagged between compressions.

“We were taking a selfie...” the man cried.

More people gathered. Someone took over CPR.

“An ambulance is coming,” a voice said.

No pulse.

“She fell off the falls...” The man pressed his palms hard against his eyeballs. “Just taking a selfie...” Gentle arms led him away.

Noah balanced on the rock, waiting. His adrenaline running dangerously low.

“Rope,” he called out.

But nobody was listening.