

Things You Probably Didn't Know About Michigan

by Jason Lee Norman

I love Michigan. Michigan is my home. I love living in Michigan. There are so many things about Michigan that people don't know. People of the world don't know anything about Michigan. Our haiku festivals, quality cheeses, our love of skinny neckties and croissant sandwiches.

My grandfather was born in Michigan, my father was born in Michigan and I was born in Michigan. There is nothing that I don't like about Michigan. Well maybe there's one thing.

There is nothing that you cannot do in Michigan. The first girl I ever kissed was from Michigan and the kiss happened in Michigan.

It was a warm summer evening on the shore of lake Michigan, the only one of the Great Lakes that we don't have to share with Canada.

I was 9 years old when the Spanish invaded Michigan. They tore through the Saint Lawrence sea way like a thousand angry barracuda. In their galleons they sang Spanish songs and ate Spanish meats. The Spanish are the scariest thing I have ever seen. There is no reasoning with the Spanish. The Spanish take what they want.

As the Spanish death boats darkened the frigid waters of Lake Erie my parents were locking me inside grandfather's root cellar.

Grandfather was in the corner loading his shotgun as my parents shut the cellar door behind them. "You'll be safer here," they said, "we'll wait for you in Saginaw." Those words and the images of the last free city in Michigan stayed with me throughout my entire childhood. When I was twelve years old, pledging my undying allegiance to Carlos I with my schoolmates I was hoping my parents were still alive, still waiting for me in Saginaw. When I was eighteen, the night before I was to be shipped off to fight the Turks, I dreamed

of the Saginaw river.

When they send my body home in a box adorned with the Spanish cross I hope they send it to Saginaw and float me down the river like the baby Moses. I hope that my body comes to rest somewhere on Ojibway island. I hope, somehow, my mother is there. I hope she recognizes me.

