

## Wilderness House Literary Review 4/4

*Joe MacLean*

### **The Saga of Aron Ralston**

(Based on Aron Ralston's own account of his ordeal)

Aron Ralston canyoneering  
without telling friends his route  
made good time until a boulder  
shifted down a pinching chute  
catching his right arm in a vise  
"Between a Rock and a Hard Place"  
- blue Utah sky, thinly sliced.

"Geologic time includes now"  
words he scored into the canyon  
but may as well have tried to fly  
as hack to dust one half a ton.  
Since he often noticed desert bones  
and four days squeezed his water gone  
the fifth he engraved his own tombstone..

Oh he didn't wait for a miracle and he didn't wait to die,  
Aron Ralston did the bravest thing, choosing to survive.

Realizing that living meant  
leaving this piece of him behind  
under that Blue John Canyon rock  
he made a tourniquet to bind  
his arm as he cut flesh and nerve,  
but found his knock-off Leatherman  
foiled by bones it couldn't carve.

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So Aron levered his bleeding limb  
with all his weight until it snapped,  
the magma pain felt beautiful  
severing that thing to the trap.  
He rappelled sixty feet below  
and hiked out seven miles for help,  
alive because he made it so.

Oh he didn't wait for a miracle and he didn't wait to die,  
Aron Ralston did the bravest thing, choosing to survive.

*Three men tried to salvage Aron's arm  
but their attempts were futile.  
Later, 13 men and equipment  
were needed to recover it.  
Family cremated it for Aron  
who took those ashes back,  
and left them there,  
in Blue John Canyon rock.*

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### Kathy and Francis

I recall those long evenings  
that night seemed hesitant to seize  
when Kathy would come down the beach  
I combed and picked of skipping stones.  
We would sit on a drift log, close  
spaced like a ripple's lap and wash  
as she spoke of the Russian writers  
while I read her. Francis always  
joined us soon and the words would shift  
like breeze beyond the tombolo.  
As night made up its mind she would  
leave the shore while we would linger  
and he'd speak of how he liked her.  
I always took the long way home.