

Appalachia

Volume 67
Number 2 *Summer/Fall 2016: Living with the
Consequences*

Article 24

2016

Moose Gives Birth

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Recommended Citation

Stephan, Max L. (2016) "Moose Gives Birth," *Appalachia*: Vol. 67: No. 2, Article 24.
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Moose Gives Birth

Back beside the jack pine, beneath
its boughs on cradled brush
she waits and waits, endures until
she feels the unfettered flow

freeing the masked, muddled shape:
steaming folds of wrinkled fur
tender to her nudge —
an innocent thrust

into the unfamiliar world.
Baggage removed, her burden
now fused into fresh, fragile flesh,
a few weighted blinks remind her

of life's decisive tasks just begun:
nurture and nourish, guard and guide,
forage, trek, scent—each breath
gauging devotion and danger.

Max L. Stephan

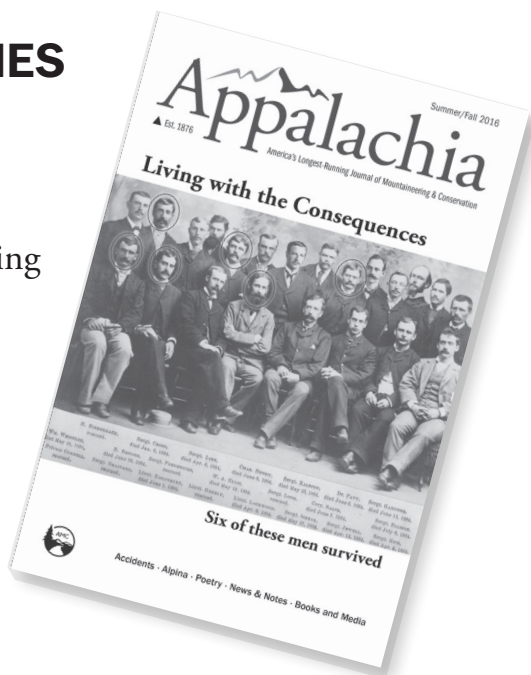
MAX STEPHAN'S work has appeared in the *Christian Science Monitor*, *Cimarron Review*, the *Louisiana Review*, *Potomac Review*, *Blueline*, and *Slipstream*. He is an assistant professor at Erie Community College in Buffalo, New York.

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