

# **A Gift of Glacial Proportions**

**By Nancy Jorgensen**

A blaze of sun flushes my nose and neck as I pedal Milwaukee's Lakeshore Trail. White-capped waves glitter so bright they squint my view. Lake-chilled breezes carry the scent of fish and fog and infuse every inhale. This bike ride with Joel marks an anniversary.

Our forty-five years together is one tiny drop in Lake Michigan's 1.2-billion-year history. That's how long ago two tectonic plates, traveling in opposite directions, forged a rift that was eventually filled by melting glaciers. Holding one quadrillion gallons of water, Lake Michigan is a living work of art, a changeable landscape painting. A resource for food and water. A respite with beaches for swimmers and swells for surfers. A refuge for boats and a harbor for humanity.

Waves whisper and I imagine them speaking our story: Joel and I once traveled in opposite directions too, then converged, and created a space. We filled ours with teaching and music, woodworking and golf, a home, and two daughters. We bought a house near this Great Lake, awed by its size, its impact, its power. Today, we cycle only three of its 1,640 shoreline miles, but that is enough to appreciate the gift when two forces converge.