the snake-bit boy
(A Poem by Will Watson)

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not when yellow venom wells in
twin pricks on all-too-naked
toe, nor his pale, averted
face when father
twists

the strap and begs be brave
be still--for how to tell
a ten-years-boy what
anguish hours will
be?

not then, but soon, when agony
floods his limbs and perfect
world; when succored
solely by the
hum

of the surging hull, he sinks
into a pain-dazed dream,
the boat swung sharp
around snags and
bars... 

yes, then give me the snake-bit boy, his
pain and the deep-drawn sweep
by which he counts
his father's love
and dread.

yes, give me that, then, but where's that perfect
horror now? the dad? the son? where
the wound, the dread,
the deep drive and
love?

down what strange stream
did that great pulse
send snake-bit
boy and man?