



# Offer

## 1. ( PROLOGUE ) THE JOYOUS, LAKE



*“No human being is constituted to know the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth; and even the best of men must be content with fragments, with partial glimpses, never the full fruition.” — William Osler*

**High Acres Farm** is a 176-acre private estate established by my grandparents in the early 1950s, on land that’s been in our family for 135 years, since 1886.

Our land is situated beside a primordial body of water known as **Lake Champlain**, which stretches five miles across, with a geologic history going back half a billion years, when the lake was a shallow tropical sea, located near the Equator, and home to some of the oldest fossil reefs in the world.

Around 400 million years ago, this so-called **Iapetus Ocean** started to close, leaving deposits of sedimentary rocks such as **limestones** and **quartzites**, which were folded and faulted to form the **Green Mountains** — and through this process of mountain-building, were transformed by heat and pressure into metamorphic rocks such as **marble** and **slate**.

Three million years ago, as the **Great Ice Age** began, a mile-high sheet of ice overtook this whole area and transformed the landscape as it moved — scouring out valleys, eroding mountains, and depositing glacial till.

12,000 years ago, as Earth began to warm, this ice sheet finally melted, and waters began to arrive from an inland arm of the **Atlantic Ocean**, carrying saltwater creatures like beluga whales into this newly formed **Champlain Sea**.

Around 10,000 years ago, as the saltwater inflow receded, the leftover water became present-day Lake Champlain — covering 435 square miles, with 600 miles of shoreline, holding a volume of 6.8 trillion gallons, now a source of fresh drinking water for 200,000 people.

The indigenous people who inhabited this area prior to European contact referred to the lake as **Pitawbagok** (Abenaki) and **Kaniatarakwà:ronte** (Mohawk) — meaning “Middle Lake”, “Lake in Between”, or “Double Lake” — sandwiched as it is between two ranges of mountains: the **Adirondacks** to the west, and the **Greens** to the east.

In the ancient Chinese oracle, the *I Ching* (*Book of Changes*), Hexagram 58, *The Joyous, Lake*, offers the evocative image of a “double lake” — one lake resting on top of another.

The classic commentary by **Richard Wilhelm** explains:

*A lake evaporates upwards and thus gradually dries up; but when two lakes are joined they do not dry up so readily, for one replenishes the other. It is the same in the field of knowledge. Knowledge should be a refreshing and vitalizing force. It becomes so only through stimulating intercourse with congenial friends with whom one holds discussion and practices application of the truths of life. In this way learning becomes many-sided and takes on a cheerful lightness.*

This image of a joyful community of learning on the shores of a peaceful lake has helped to guide and inspire our dreams for the future of High Acres Farm.

This sparse opening ritual is a meditation on the motherlike presence of this primordial body of water through its many moods and seasons — a glassy witness to the human dramas that unfold along its rocky shores. With the horizon line perfectly centered from image to image, the mirror-like surface of the water creates a set of two lakes and a set of two skies — a living version of the Hexagram, marking the place where above meets below.

*Performed in 2015 — Duration 3:51*