

“Hup All Night” – Frank Krajenka

Downtown streets are blocked as show cars fill both lanes
Food vendors cater to each and all
The park is packed with crafts of all sorts
From Spikes to across the old falls

Tarps and blankets spread early on the river bank
Claiming spots to get the best view
Two lanes are blocked on the business loop
So that spectators can safely get through

As evening approaches the river bank fills
With fans from all over the place
Five blocks away another crowd appears
To watch as the teams take their space

Paddlers chat with fans, checking out their canoes
These are craft that are light and sleek
It's a race for the strong, both body and soul
Not for the feeble or weak

Emcees work the crowd, one giant pep rally
Thousands of fans show their support
It's the AuSable River Canoe Marathon
The World's Toughest Spectator Sport

At Nine P.M. the cannon belts out a roar
It signals the start of the race
Athletes with canoes run for the river
At a crazy, mind-boggling pace

Cheers from the fans are heard across town
As paddlers run sprinting past
A couple hundred athletes and their canoes
It's too bad they won't all last

Downstream they race, 120 miles to go
As spectators leap ahead
Diehard fans gather throughout the night
No intention of going to bed

Stephan Bridge, McMasters, Camp Ten, Parmalee
Then to Mio to cross the first dam
Around Three A.M. the first team arrives
There's still hundreds of cheering fans

Five more dams to cross for the amazing athletes
How they make it is hard to understand
Speed and endurance, thousands of paddle strokes
It's a spectacle that is truly grand

As they paddle through the night, growing ever so weary
Feeders fuel the athletes to keep their minds clear
The spectators also tire; it's been a long night
And some just had a few too many beers

Men and women young and old, paddle all night long
At least 14 hours, it's quite the sight
From Grayling to Oscoda, on the AuSable River
Since 1947, Hup All Night