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**Northern Writes**

**9**

**Entries from the  
2001 NWT Writing Contest**

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For over 50 years, [Northwestel](#) has provided communications services to the North. But there's something else we've provided for just as long: a spirit of community involvement.

At Northwestel we are committed to the well-being of the communities we serve. We value cultural diversity and are committed to long-term growth and prosperity. We actively participate in making our communities better places to live. Northwestel is very pleased to support the residents of the NWT by sponsoring this important anthology of northern writers. We are delighted to work with the [NWT Literacy Council](#) in the promotion and support of literacy in all the official languages of the NWT. Literacy and lifelong learning are very important for us all.

Read and Enjoy Northern Writes 9!





# Northern Writes 9

Words are such powerful tools. They are strong, scary, funny, and just right to say what you want. There are more than 36,000 words in Northern Writes this year, and those are only a small part of the words written down by 750 Northerners who entered the writing contest. Most of those words are English, but every year some of our storytellers choose to write their tales in their own languages, in their own words. Do you have some words of your own to share?

Whether it is a story for a contest or a letter to a friend,  
your written words are special to someone.

Northern Writes helps Northerners share their stories.

Even if you're not the best writer, here you can read  
about bushmen and Skidoos and the special world of snow, and once in a  
while about the glory of a Northern summer. Join us in these pages.

Write and read and share with others your special words.

Once again this year, the NWT Literacy Council says thank you to News/North,  
Northwestel, the National Literacy Secretariat, the hard-working contest judges,  
and the staff who sort and type and organize.

And thank you for writing and for reading all through the year.

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# Reading

Samantha Kenney, 7, Deline

Reading with Mom.

Reading with Dad.

Reading at home,

It makes me glad.

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# Summer

Grace Nowdlak, 5, Fort Simpson

Blue sky, families, flowers, biking, swimming, picnic, sweat, hot, hotter, a nice drink of water.

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# Girl's Clubhouse

Denise Beaulieu, 7, Dettah

Once upon a time Gotie, Jessica, Brieese, Donna, Nicole and my little sister Corrine and I were going to make a tree house for our girl's clubhouse.

Our tree house was beside Dettah on the trail. In the summer time we started our tree house. We used nails, hammer and wood to put the tree house together.

We wanted a girl's clubhouse to keep the boys away because they always bug us. Brieese nailed on the sign that said, "girls only." The boys wanted to go inside the clubhouse but we wouldn't let them. We chased them away.

The girls were happy now because we had a clubhouse.

# Hockey

Melanie Phillips, 8, Fort Smith

I am going in hockey next year. My brother is already in hockey. It is fun to be in hockey. It is fun to be in hockey because you get to shoot the hockey puck into the net. I might be in both hockey and figure skating. I will have fun and listen to the coach. Some of my friends are in hockey to. They have fun too. After hockey I play with my friend and maybe my friend can come over to play or I can go over there to play. Sometimes I like to have fun a lot. I like hockey and my friend is already in hockey but when I'm in hockey she will still be in hockey too. I have lots of other friends but they don't like hockey. They like it just a little bit.

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# My Dream

Erica Kritsch, 10, Yellowknife

I skate onto the ice.

I stand and wait for my music to start.

Suddenly my music starts -

I start my program.

I start on my first jump.

I jump into the air.

This is the jump I need to land.

Am I going to land it?

I start to spin around, around and around I go

Feeling the air in my hair.

I straighten my body into the position I need.

I go down, down getting closer to the ice.

As I go my foot hits the ice

My other foot springs to make the last position.

I have done it!!

The judges and audience clap.

I don't hear them.

I am so happy!

My dream has been fulfilled.

# When I Get My Skidoo

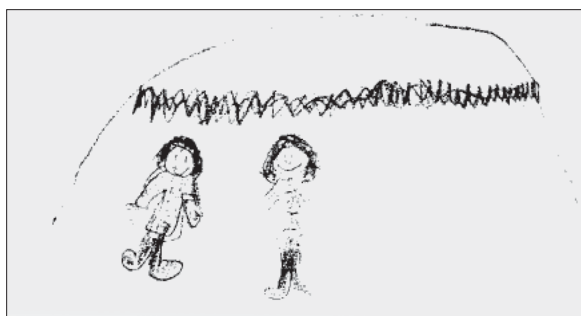
Keith Shaefer, 9, Fort Smith

Next year my dad is going to buy me a Skidoo. It will be a fast Skidoo. I'm getting a Yamaha 250.

I will go in the bush with my dad. I like Skidoo. I want to hunt all my life. I will get a sleigh. My dad likes me going in the bush with him. My dad is on a caribou hunt.

## The Snow Storm

Margaret Akoakhion, 10, Holman



Once upon a time there were two girls named Violet and Margaret. We went sliding on a hill.

We got lost when it started to get windy and the snow started to blow around.

We started to find our way home but we went farther into the snowstorm and we cried for our parents.

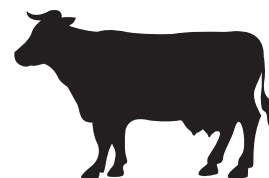
We got very cold and very hungry. We decided to slide so we kept on sliding, and it got nicer out so we found our way home.

Our parents were worried about us, and they were happy that we were coming back.

# The Little Old Cow Went to Market

Ewan Gibbs, 5, Fort Simpson

One day there was a little old cow. He went to market to buy lots of carrots. And the other day he went to market to get some more carrots because he was very hungry that day. Then he went to get a box from his house and he put all the carrots in and then he went back to market to get some tomatoes. Then he wanted to go get a box for his tomatoes. And he stayed at his house and ate all the food. Then he went back to the market to get some water. And then the cow went to the shop to buy lots of sweets for the winter.



Then he tried to find a way to go to the moon. He wanted to eat all this stuff on the moon. He saw a plane at the airport. He put all his groceries in the plane and then he took off. He ate all his food on the moon and then he went back home. He looked in his cubby, and he didn't see any mail. He went to Gramma's, and he brought all his pencils. His Gramma sharpened all the pencils in one go, because it was a great big sharpener.

## Setsíe got'e~h Setsu~

Nicole Sanguéz South Slavey Trout Lake

Setsu~ náendege

Setsíe ehdzoo ts'átlah

Setsu~ edhéh ts'eghoh gháásendehte~

Setsíe ehdzoo ndítsi~dhah gháásendehte~

Setsíe, setsu~ júh goghó~ndieto~



## Too Many Dogs

Melanie Zoe Chocolate, 8, Fort Smith

This morning I slept in. I had to walk to school. I walked to school by Primrose Lane. Just when I was in the middle of the street, a dog looked at me in a strange way. He was following me. I didn't know what was wrong. Just at the end of the street, the end of the gigantic street, the big dog went somewhere else.

Then I went on a different street, and I saw a furry dog. I said not again.

That dog only followed me for 10 steps. Then on a different street, a crazy dog was chasing all the birds, keeping the birds away from his or her house. Then that crazy dog was staring at me. All the ravens were going in the crazy house (laugh) (laugh). It was very funny. He or she, the crazy dog, was even staring at me when I was really far. By the end of the street I said to myself, no more dogs for today I've had enough. I was looking down, then I looked up. Wait a minute. What was that? It was a dog! Not again. Then another dog and another dog! Too, too, much, much, followed me! I went to school not taking my time.

If I saw one more dog, I would have gone dog crazy. The day was filled up with dogs for me! How about you? I went to school and guess what? I was late!

## Cheryl's Favorite Sport

Becky Plotner, 13, Dettah

Cheryl

Like's to play volleyball

At the little gym in Dettah

Right after school

Because she likes serving the ball!

## Fun! Fun! Fun!

Waylon Simba, 7, Kakisa

I love playing on the hills of snow in Kakisa.

I roll down the side like a log and it's hard to climb back up.

I love to dig caves In our hills of snow. In the spring it's gone but it comes back the next winter.

## Break In!

Mark Lys, 10, Fort Smith

One day when I was seven years old my tooth fell out. I was so excited, because I was thinking about what the tooth fairy would bring me. My mom told me that the tooth fairy comes at night when kids are sleeping.

That night I carefully put my tooth under my pillow before I went to bed. The next morning I awoke to find my tooth was still there. I was very disappointed because that was the first time the tooth fairy forgot about me.

That very same day my mom and I were sitting on the chair talking when we heard a big crashing noise coming from the bathroom. Mom and I ran to see what it was.

We were shocked to find the bathroom window slightly opened and the plastic covering was torn. My tooth was missing from the bathroom counter. In its place was a shiny toonie.

We were very surprised. Mom and I looked out the window and all over the bathroom for the tooth fairy.

Mom says that's the only time she ever heard of a tooth fairy break in during the day to get a tooth. We still can't believe it.

# Elbert, the Chinstrap Penguin

Joel Smith, 8, Yellowknife

Once upon a time there was a Chinstrap penguin. The Chinstrap's name was Elbert. Elbert, the penguin! Elbert didn't like the colour he had. He liked the colour of the other penguins.

One day he admired them more than usual. In fact, he admired them so much that he forgot all about mating season. The other penguins had all ready started to build their nests. When he finally remembered, there was practically no more time to build. He worked fast, very fast. To be exact, he finished two days early!

Then it was time, time for him to start sparring! He sparred for hours and hours and hours and hours! But he didn't get a mate. Then he thought of something. He thought maybe he wasn't the right colour! But in fact his nest was too messy. It was messy, because he only built it in one day, and all the other penguins built their nests in three days. So whenever the females even came close, they turned their backs on him.

Then he saw some paint. That paint would do some good! So he waddled towards the paint. He jumped head first into the paint. Then he looked at himself. Oh, that looked better! He now looked like an Emperor penguin.

Elbert decided he would go back and start sparring again. He started towards the place where he had sparred the day before. When he got there he tried to spar, but he couldn't, because they thought he was a different kind of penguin. But Elbert didn't think that. Elbert thought that he still wasn't the right colour again. So he went back to the paint and dived head first into the paint again.

Now Elbert looked like a Gentoo penguin. Elbert went to the same place to start sparring again. He sparred for so long he couldn't spar any more. AND he didn't get a mate! Elbert just had the same problems and now he was the wrong colour.

So he went to the paint again. This time he just

dunked his head in so he looked like an Adelies penguin! Elbert started hanging out with the Adelies! But something went wrong when he almost took his first swim with the Adelies. Well, he didn't mean to take a swim but he did. You see, an Adelie penguin pushed him off the cliff. It was very unlucky, because there was a leopard seal waiting for him. But luckily, he escaped and when he came out of the water, all the paint had come off.

Elbert ran off to his nest. When he got there he found a female waiting for him, and she had fixed his nest. That was very good for Elbert because now he could finally have an egg on his feet. They mated and lived very well until... Elbert decided to dunk his head in some more paint!

## Snow in the Night

Courtney Canadian, 9, Fort Smith

When it snows in the night, you can tell by the sound and everything is silent all around. So muffled and still, that you almost know before you look that there must be snow. When it snows in the night, you can tell by the feel and the passing air's as sharp as steel. It nips your nose, and makes it glow and you know at once, that there must be snow.

## Silent, but...

Sky-Lee Paulette, 10, Fort Smith

I am silent but, I am thinking I am still but, Don't mistake me for a wall...

# The Mystery of the Golden Watch

Kali Kwong, 11, Fort Simpson

Ben and Zoey were best friends. They were in grade six, Mr. Robert's class. They did everything together. They loved to read Eric Wilson mysteries and were itching to solve a mystery. Little did they know that they were going to encounter one.

"We are going to the Franklin Museum today," said Mr. Roberts to his class on a Friday morning. "Everyone get dressed, we leave in ten minutes."

Ben and Zoey were very excited and asked Mr. Roberts many questions as they walked to the museum. "Mr. Roberts, what are we going to see?" asked Zoey.

"We'll see the Mona Lisa, ancient mummy tombs, a few dinosaur skeletons and last but not least the golden watch that belonged to John Cabot!" Mr. Roberts answered.

"The watch that belonged to John Cabot?" said Ben in a questioning voice. "Is it valuable?"

"Yes, it's very valuable, worth about a thousand dollars and irreplaceable," Mr. Robert's said.

"What if it is stolen?" Zoey asked as she pretended she had a magnifying glass.

"I don't think it will get stolen because there are high tech devices that protect it. If it did, I believe that the watch has some special powder on it that doesn't come off and the police have a machine that can detect it on a person's hand," Mr. Roberts answered.

The grade six classes got to the museum and met their tour guide, Patricia and her husband Kevin.

"Hi!" said the lady tour guide. "My name is Patricia and this is my husband Kevin. We'll be showing you around."

Patricia had sparkling blue eyes and blond hair. She looked like she wore make-up and her finger nails were painted red. Her husband had short black hair and brown eyes. He wore a tuxedo.

"Well, we better get on with the tour," said Patricia.

Everyone started to follow the tour guide. They went all over the museum and saw many paintings and sculptures. At last they went into a dark room.

"This is where the golden watch is. Please don't touch anything," Patricia said. She pushed the door open and peeked inside and screamed. "Oh no!" Everyone asked what happened. "Someone stole the golden watch," she screamed.

"What! Someone stole the watch? Let me see!" Ben exclaimed as he pushed through the entrance of the room with Zoey behind him. Ben and Zoey saw an empty, unbroken, glass case that had a sign hanging on it saying "The Golden Watch". Ben and Zoey investigated the scene and saw a chipped finger nail with a reddish colour on it in the case.

"Look," whispered Zoey to Ben. She pointed to the nail.

Ben asked Patricia many questions about the watch. "Is this the first time you looked in here all day? Did you look in here yesterday? Has the case been opened before?"

"Yes, this is the first time I looked in here today but I did look in here yesterday and everything was fine. The case has not been open since the time they put it in the museum," Patricia answered.

"Hmm," said Zoey. "The robber must have chipped their nail when he or she stole the watch. The nail looks fairly new and fresh. The watch must have been stolen last night because you said you saw it here yesterday."

"Class, I think it's time to leave. We'll let the police to deal with this. Thanks for your time, Patricia," Mr. Roberts said. So everyone left to go back to school.

The next morning was Saturday and Zoey and Ben went back to the museum to investigate, but

they saw the area was closed. Patricia was wandering around so they talked to her. Hi!" Zoey said to Patricia.

"Hello," Patricia answered. "What are you guys doing here?"

"We thought we would hang around and check things out," Ben said. Ben got into a conversation about hockey. Ben and Patricia both loved the Calgary Flames.

"Hey, I'll show you my new Calgary Flames hat. I'll go get it," Patricia told Ben. She came back quickly with a cap in her hands. "Here it is!" she said as she showed Ben the cap. It had a sticker on it saying, "I rule!" It also had a red mark on the tip of it and of course the Calgary Flames symbol. Ben handed Patricia back her cap.

"Cool," said Ben.

"I got it Thursday night. I wore it all night the day I got it," Patricia said. Zoey noticed that Patricia's hand had some powdery white stuff on it and her pinky nail was chipped. "What's that?" she asked Patricia pointing to her powdery hand.

"Oh nothing," Patricia said as she swiftly put her hand behind her back. "You guys better get going now. No need to get in the police's way."

Ben and Zoey were about to leave, but they heard Kevin talking loudly and started to listen.

"What? I'm broke and I can't get a loan from the bank? Unbelievable!" Kevin shouted loudly to a businessman.

"Sorry, sir, your credit is no good, and the bank refuses to lend any money. Good day, sir!" said the businessman who quickly left.

"I'll have to take the golden watch and sell it," Kevin grunted loudly enough to himself for Ben and Zoey to hear.

Ben and Zoey watched as Kevin walked over to his wife and whispered something to her. They started to argue.

"Did you hear Kevin say something about a watch?" Ben whispered to Zoey.

"Yeah, wait a minute, he could be the thief!" Zoey said.

"We'll need more evidence though. There's a security guard. Let's go talk to him," Ben said. Ben and Zoey walked over to the guard.

"Did you see anyone come in the night of the robbery?" Ben asked.

"Yes I did. It was a blond woman with a Calgary Flames cap on. The cap had a sticker and a red mark on it," the guard said.

"Thanks," said Zoey to the guard. "Hey doesn't it sound like Patricia's description. Wait a minute; the nail we saw in the case might be Patricia's. She has red nail polish and her pinky nail was chipped. Also the powder on her hands might be the special powder on the watch Mr. Roberts told us about. I think Patricia is the one who stole the watch, not Kevin.

"Guess what we do next. Tell the police," Ben said. So Ben and Zoey went to the police office and told the police officer the clues they found.

"You know what? We also thought that Patricia was the thief. We found some other clues like fingerprints and hair, but we never saw the finger nail. If it is hers we'll be able to charge her. I'll ask someone to check the fingernail out.

"Thanks for your help," the police officer said to the kids.

The next day, Ben and Zoey read an article about the golden watch. It said that the police caught Patricia with the help of a clue from a couple of kids. Patricia confessed that she stole the watch and the police found it in her secret hiding place in the museum. The newspaper said that Patricia would not tell how she stole the watch, she said, "That's for me to know and the police to find out".

"Wow, we must have been the couple of kids the newspaper talked about," Ben said to Zoey. "We're going to be the best detectives ever!"

"Not too soon," said Zoey. "But we might be in the future!"

## Fish Camp at Frank Channel

Katrina Drybones, 10, Rae-Edzo

We went to Frank Channel and I went on the boat with our class. Kenny and I were riding on the first seat. And when we got there, there were two tents. I slept in the number one tent beside the lady. The lady's name was Mary Adele. And Willinda, Stacey, Mary and Clarissa were sleeping beside Mary Adele, too. The man came back late. I think it was fun at the camp. We picked spruce gum on the small island. There were cranberries there.

Tannis got stuck in the mud. It was very funny. The next day, two mink were playing around under the tree, and they went back to the water. I thought it was cool that they were fighting for food, and then the two mink were under the tree again. They were play fighting for the dry meat. We were playing Not It with Anthony. It was fun at the fish camp. We were plucking the ducks. In the morning we ate porridge. Then, we all went to the boat. We got stuck on the water, then we went back to Frank Channel and we went on the bus to Rae. It was so great at the camp. Christine's class went to the boat when we came back. I think it was fun for Christine's class, too.

## Dear Lucy Francis

Brian Francis, 13, Fort McPherson

I remember the time that I wanted to see you when I was a little kid. My mom was looking for me. She didn't know where I was. I really wanted to see you, so I went to the hospital to see you. My mom thought I was at school but she went to the hospital and found me.

I miss you and I hope you're well up in the sky.

Love

Brian

---

## New York

Amber Allen, 6, Fort Simpson

Once in New York City there were two best friends - a mouse and a cat. The mouse and cat lived on the streets. One day a dog was chasing the cat, but the cat's friend was not there. The dog said, "You're my dinner?" A voice said, "No!" It was the mouse. He was there to save him. The mouse pushed the trash cans and saved the cat. So the cat said, "I wish there was some way I could repay you." The mouse said, "No thanks."

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## All About Bumble Bees

Rolanda Laundry, 9, Kakisa Lake

Bumble bees love honey. They even got those Stingers. They sting people with them. And it hurts too. You will have to say OUCH!!

And they live outside.



# The Pair of Tarnished White Skates

Amanda Bradbury, 10, Fort Simpson

One day I was looking around up in our attic, and I found a pair of tarnished white skates. I liked them so I brought them downstairs and asked my mother if I could maybe use or have the tarnished white skates. She said, "Sure, why not, nobody else is using them around here, but first I will tell you the story of how they got here."

A long time ago, back about fifty years ago, our great Gramma had long wished for a pair of white shiny skates. On her eleventh birthday her father came home with a big brown box in a bag and handed it to her with a smile on his face. As she opened it her Father said, "I hope you like it." She opened it and found a pair of shiny white skates. As she tried on the pair of skates, she said to her father, "Thank you so much, Daddy." Then she asked her Mother, "Can I go skating on the pond?" Her Mother said, "Go right ahead my girl." She used her shiny white skates every day, but after about two years of using them, they did not fit her anymore so she had to put them away, up in the attic.

When she got older, she had got married. About two years after she got married, she was feeling tired, so she went to the doctor and he took some tests then told her, "Well, I think you have a baby in your tummy Mrs." "You mean I am going to have a baby?" "Yes, Ma'am, I'm pretty sure you are, and I think you should go home and rest."

About nine months later she had her baby. It was a little baby girl, and she named her Jennifer. That Jennifer is your Gramma.

When Jennifer was about eleven years old, she came home from school one day and when she went upstairs, she found the big brown box on the end of her bed. When she saw it, she went over to it and opened it, and she found a pair of

white skates. They were a little bit tarnished, so the mother bought white polish and polished them and that is how they got to look like new.

Your Gramma Jennifer outgrew the skates when she was thirteen years old. When she put them up in her attic, her father said, "Do you know that you could still pass them down from here, but you have to take care of them."

When she got married, she had me, and when I was eleven, the same age, she came home and asked me if I would like the pair of white tarnished skates. I said, "Why not? I could use them." Your Gramma polished the skates, and I used them but only for two years.

And now as your gift you could have the pair of skates but first let me polish those white tarnished skates. And I think that I should pass them down from here.

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## Bad Fox

Eric Kenny, 9, Deline

One winter morning, a fox was playing with my pups. And every time I went out, the fox ran in the bush so I couldn't catch it. I made a barrel trap with meat inside the barrel.

The fox came close and closer. I ran outside and then my dog pushed me into my own trap. I was stuck with poop all over my shoes.

I pushed the barrel off. And I went inside and everyone laughed at me. I was mad, and I went for a shower. And I didn't chase foxes from that day on.

# Peggy and Daryl are Moving

Billi-Rai Driscoll, 9, Yellowknife

One day Peggy and Daryl told us that they were moving to Edmonton. I was very sad at this news.

Daryl and Peggy started to put their stuff into boxes. We couldn't play in the playroom any longer because all the boxes were in the room. The bedrooms started to become very empty. I was feeling very sad at the sight of the house. Daryl came back from Edmonton to help pack the truck. The big truck came and was parked outside the house. Everyone was excited at the sight of the truck being packed. We all helped to pack the truck. The house was empty now. It was now time to clean the house. The big truck was taken away.

Peggy and Daryl were very happy inside, because it was time to leave for Edmonton. It was Wednesday; I woke up to see the family pulling onto the highway. I cried at the sight of them leaving, but I'm happy because I will see them soon.

## Dettah Is Special

Gotie Sangris, 7, Dettah

What is special about living in Dettah is going sliding at the hill. I play outside. I go Skidooring with my brother, Duncan.

When I went to my grandparents' camp, my grandma makes bannock and she makes drymeat.

My grandpa goes fishing. My grandma makes moosehide too.

My grandparents are not coming back until Christmas. I talk to my grandparents on the bush radio, and she has to go and cook for my grandpa.

# My Trip to the Zoo

Julian Sabourin, 5, Fort Simpson

Once upon a time my cousin, Joey, his little brother, Benjamin, Auntie Carrie, Uncle Joe, my mom and dad, and Emily went to the zoo. We saw dinosaur statues and real animals. We went to see a snake battling another snake. They were fighting over their territory and an egg. Then one snake wanted it back. Then we saw some wallabies running around getting some exercise. Then we saw some crocodiles. I pretended one was trying to get my sister but she slapped it really hard and it went away. Then we went to see the giraffes fighting over territory. Then we went to see some dinosaur statues and then some bats fighting over territory. Then we saw some crocodiles again. They were eating something. It was a wildebeest. Then I thought what if my sister threw an egg right into the mouth of the crocodile and it cracked and went out of his neck and it died. Then we went home.

## Duck Cutting

Diane Kaodloak, 12, Holman

On Wednesday, November 8, 2000 Mary Uyarek and Martha Notaina helped the J.H. 1 class to cut ducks to make soup. We did this after we finished studying all kinds of birds in Inuinnaqtun. Tommy and Kelly started to cut the ducks first then some of the girls (Pamela, Elaine, Lindsay and Hilary) were cutting the niaquq (head) of the body. After we finished cutting our ducks, we made yummy soup.

## Santa's Problem

Dalton Dryneck, 9, Rae-Edzo

Once there was a Santa that lived in the North Pole. He was going on a vacation. He was going with his sleigh. He went to Calgary to buy presents. He was buying presents for everybody. He went to a big mall called the Christmas Mall. He used up all his money on presents. All the presents together cost \$405. And Santa bought a new sleigh, too.

When he was coming back, there was a big tree. He bumped into it. Santa was getting up, but one of his legs was broken. He was so sad that he was not going to make it back. Santa's reindeer were okay, but Santa broke some of the presents and his sleigh. Then Santa went back into his sleigh and called his elves on the cell phone. He asked his elves to build another sleigh for him. So his elves built another one. His leg was getting better, and Santa's elves were riding his sled down to him. So Santa was going back home, but he forgot the toys. When he got home, his elves said, "Where are the presents?" and Santa said, "OOPS!"

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## All About Wolves

Jeremy Simba, 11, Kakisa Lake

Some wolves hunt in packs. If there's a wolf down in a pack another wolf might help it get up again. If there's wolf in your community, don't shoot it. If you know how to sing a drumming song, sing it to the wolf. This was long time ago how people and animals learn to live side by side. Today, because Dene people are no longer practising their way of life, the animals no longer befriend them.

## The Video Game and the Girl

Raslyn Nadli, 9, Fort Simpson

One afternoon, there was this one girl named Julia. She loved video games. Then suddenly, her sisters came downstairs to get their Nintendo back. A few minutes later the sisters said "We are going to take our game back because you play it too much."

Julia got really upset because she loved that game so much. A while later, Julia's mom said "You are not allowed to play the Nintendo for a month." Julia still had her secret weapon. It was her Game boy, but she had forgotten that she didn't have any more batteries.

Julia called her friend Shelly. She asked if she could come over but Shelly said, "Not right now."

Then Julia asked her mom if she could go out for lunch. Julia's mom said, "Yes, but do you have any money?" Then Julia replied, "No," in a soft voice. When Julia came back from lunch, she was wondering if she could play Nintendo.

A month later Julia asked her sisters if she could play Nintendo. Her mom said, "Yes you may." A few minutes later Julia got the Nintendo then she plugged it in, and she always remembered that she would never play too much Nintendo again.

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## The Skater

Cheyenne Denethlon, 5, Fort Simpson

One day a girl went skating. Her friends wanted to play with her. But they don't want to skate with her. So she was all-alone and she had to skate by herself. She went to get her friends. She went to knock on her friends' door. They didn't want to play with her. So she went home. She doesn't want to go skating.



# The Dance of the Little Bees

Madeline Sheridan, Yellowknife

It was late autumn of the very first year. The northern land that had been alive in the summer now was quiet. Most animals had followed the sun that led them south. Only a few stayed in the north. The days grew shorter, and the nights longer.

The Lady of the North and Bear looked out over her land. The Lady's hair, once dark as night, had become almost white. Her tears fell to the earth as raindrops, and her sighs were the cold north winds. The hand that stroked Bear was thin and cool.

"I am tired, dear Bear," the Lady whispered. "Soon I must sleep until the sun returns, when I will awaken and be young again. But, I am worried. What will happen to the little ones on my land when my tears begin to freeze?"

"Is that a problem, my Lady?" Bear asked.

She smiled weakly. "You have a thick coat to protect you. They do not. They will be hurt when my frozen tears strike them." She sighed, and the trees shivered in response. "It must get cold, and my tears must fall - but what shall I do to help them? Help me Bear, I am too tired to think!"

Bear was not clever, but he knew someone who was. "Raven!" he barked. "We need you!"

A head popped out from Bear's berry patch. "Are you calling me?" Raven shook herself free and flew up to sit on the Lady's shoulder, just out of reach of Bear's swiping paw. "What is the problem?"

"Dear Raven," the Lady said, "into what form should I change my frozen tears, so that when they fall, they will not hurt anyone?"

Raven could not think of an answer, though she did not want to admit it. "With your permission, first let me talk to those still on the land."

The Lady was silent, lost in her sadness. Bear said, "Hurry, Raven. And steal someone else's food for a change!" Raven scooped up one last berry, and then flew down to the northern land.

"I know someone who might help," thought Raven. She searched in the trees calling. "Whiskey-Jack! Where are you?"

"Oh, go away!" cried someone from behind the bushes. Raven landed, and a grey bird flew beside her. "Are you here to steal my food again, cousin? I have nothing to share. Look how thin I am, I am almost starving myself!"

"Cousin, you look nice and plump to me. But no, Raven said, "the Lady needs your help. Into what form should she change her frozen tears, so that when they fall, they will not hurt anyone? I came to you, Whiskey-Jack, because you are so clever."

"Easy!" Whiskey Jack scoffed. "Turn the tears into leaves, which will fall gently to the ground." He picked up a leaf to give to Raven, and revealed a pile of seeds underneath!

"Cousin, you are clever, and generous too!" Raven grabbed a mouthful of seeds. "I must visit more often, to learn other secrets you can reveal to me!"

"Oh, go away!" screeched Whiskey Jack, angry for revealing his cache of food. Raven laughed and flew back to the Lady.

"Lady," Raven said, "Whiskey-Jack suggests your tears take the form of a leaf. Then they will fall gently to the ground."

The Lady shook her head. "I promised the Trees that the leaves were for them alone, just as I promised the Birds their feathers. I cannot break a promise to the Trees. Still, your cousin is very clever." ("Not clever enough," thought Bear, for he saw the remnants of seeds on Raven.)

Raven returned to the land, which was even colder than before. She flew for a long time before a small movement caught her eye. It was an old spider sitting in her web, waiting for one last fly.

"Spider!" Raven said. "The Lady needs your help. Into what form should she change her frozen tears, so that when they fall, they will not hurt anyone? I came to you, Spider, because you weave so beautifully."

Spider shivered in the cold. "I am old, but I will try to help the Lady while I still can." She moved to a bare branch and began to weave the most beautiful web Raven had ever seen. Spider worked quickly at first, then slower, until she stopped - never to move again.

Raven poked a hole in the ground, placed Spider into it, and scratched dirt over the top. She took the web, flew to the Lady, and placed it in her lap. "This," said Raven, "is the final gift from old Spider."

The Lady picked up the web. "It is lovely, but what is it? What was Spider trying to make?"

"Perhaps it is a blanket, my Lady, that will fall gently to the ground," said Raven.

"But," said Bear, touching his claw to a single strand, "it is sticky. How could the little birds fly through it?"

"Oh Bear, you are right!" cried the Lady, and the tears flowed stronger.

Bear growled, "Go back now, Raven, or it will be too late!" Raven flew back but she was troubled. Was there no one who could help solve the problem?

Then in the distance she heard a low humming. "Of course!" She thought, "the Bees!" She went to the beehive, which was hidden inside a large tree, and stuck her head in. It was a strange sort of place. The walls and floor of the beehive had six sides, for the Bees did everything

in sixes, when they could.

"Hello?" Raven called. "Bees? Are you home?"

A buzzing answered her call, and in flew six bees, hovering in front of Raven.

"Hello Raven"...

"We don't"...

"Have time"...

"To talk"...

"With you"...

"Today."

Raven said, "The Lady needs your help. Into what form should she change her frozen tears, so that when they fall, they will not hurt anyone? I came to you, Bees, because you build so well."

The Bees landed on the floor and put their heads together, forming a six-pedalled flower of yellow and black. As they spoke to one another, they moved first one way, and then another, then shook their wings together. A small cloud of white dust fell around them.

The Bees flew back to Raven.

"We are sorry but"...

"We have no ideas"...

"We must get back"...

"To work before"...

"The cold gets"...

"Even worse."

Raven noticed the white dust made a pattern on the floor. "What is that?" she asked.

"It is the"...

"Honey-sugar"...

"That falls"...

"From our backs"...

"Whenever we"...

"Move our wings."

"May I take a honey-sugar pattern back with me?" Raven asked.

The Bees huddled again, and another cloud of white dust fell. The pattern made this time was different from the one made before.

"Yes you"...

"May, Raven."...

"Now we must"...

"Get back"...

"To work."...

"Goodbye."

The bees flew off, deeper into the hive.

Carefully Raven picked up the little patterns and flew back to the Lady. As she dropped them, they floated into the Lady's hands. Raven said, "These are from the Bees."

The Lady gasped. "They are delicate like the spider-web, and fall gently like the leaves. And each one is different. They are perfect!" The Lady laughed, and her laughter was like music. She threw the patterns into the air. From them a thousand silver sparkles floated down, each one different from the others. Bear and Raven danced with joy. The Lady laughed and laughed, and her tears now fell, not as rain, but as snowflakes.

"They taste like honey!" Bear said. He tried to eat more, but the snowflakes fell into his eyes and

made Bear very tired. He yawned, curled up on the floor, and went to sleep.

"Raven, dear friend," the Lady smiled, "I thank you and the Bees for this most wonderful gift. Now I too must sleep. It is your part, Raven, to watch everything for me. When the sun returns and I awaken again, come back and tell me all you have seen and heard!" The Lady snuggled into Bear's warm fur and closed her eyes.

"Sleep well, dearest Lady," Raven whispered. "You too, friend Bear." Raven turned and flew back to the northern land. The snow was falling gently like leaves from the sky, blanketing the land in white sparkles. Raven snuggled into the branches of a large spruce tree and watched, listened, and waited.

The first winter was long and cold. When Bear snored, the storm-winds howled. Sometimes the Lady's tears fell thickly, and the land was hidden from Raven's eyes.

But even then, behind it all, Raven could still see and hear the dance of the little bees.

## Braided Hair and the Three Foxes

Marie Eruste, 8, Fort Good Hope

Once upon a time there was a little girl named Braided Hair. She had black hair, and used leather to hold her braid together. She was wearing a fancy dress that was made of caribou skin. She was wearing fancy moccasins with beaded flowers. She lived in a tipi at the edge of town. There was a fox family, with a papa fox and a mama fox, and they had one baby fox. Braided Hair was sliding down and hit the foxes' tree. The foxes ran out and started chasing Braided Hair. Braided Hair ran into the bushes and saw three foxes go into her tipi. Those three

foxes ate Braided Hair's rabbit stew. After they finish eating, they went to sleep in Braided Hair's big bed. Braided Hair went back to her house. She didn't know those foxes were in her big bed. She finally knew who was in her bed. Braided Hair ran out the door. Braided Hair went back to her tipi, and she packed all her stuff and went back to town to stay with her mom and dad. Braided Hair's family went to the store. After that, they went to Braided Hair's house, and her family went to sleep at eleven o'clock.

# The Chase

Gary Lafferty, Fort Resolution

This is a story about my friend and I. This was my first time ever to go out on the land. It was the winter of 1978, I was 12 years old and I was looking for a way to get out of school. So I asked my Elderly friend if I can go out in the bush with him. He said sure as long as you can handle the life of a hunter, trapper. I laughed and replied, "how hard can it be to hunt and trap." It took four days to get prepared." Finally I was able to depart.

My friend yells back to me, "Are you dressed warm enough." "Yes, lets catch up to the others as my mitts are in Eric's sleigh." He mumbled as we drove off after the others. I was real excited, as I have heard so much about "Taltson River". We were about 1 hour out of Fort Resolution just crossing the mighty Slave River when all of a sudden we started going up Jean River. As we rolled along I looked back at Fort Resolution already feeling cold and anxious to get to our destination. I started playing around on the back of the toboggan grabbing willows as we moved along, feeling somewhat warmer. I decided to try and run and to my surprise "Wham". I fell down off the sleigh. I then got out of the cold snow and started chasing my friend. I was scared I would be left behind in the middle of nowhere. I kept running and yelling to my friend to stop. A half hour had passed, and I could not hear the Skidoo.

I was more frightened than ever. I started to cry as I thought I was being left behind. I kept on running without looking back, yelling and screaming for my friend to come back. As I went further on I noticed some animal tracks in the snow. I didn't know what kind of tracks they were, but I became more frightened as I went along. I didn't know if I should turn back to town or go on. As I was walking along the trail I began praying for God to help me, as I was lost. I continued to go on ahead and try to see if I am

close to a cabin. As I got near the end of the trail I noticed that the trail branches off. I wasn't sure which way my friend had gone. So I decided to go right. As I walked along the trail I noticed that it would be getting dark soon and I had no idea of how far my friend had gone. Frightened and very tired I continued to make my way down the trail.

As I walked along I can hear the squirrels singing and making noise. It started to get a little dark so I decided to run awhile, so least until I get out of the thick forest. I kept running and praying that I would see my friend. All of a sudden "grrrrrowl" my friend jumped out from behind a tree. I stopped suddenly and yelled, "Ahhhhh you shithead, you scared me to death." He laughed as he said "you should have seen the look on your face." I became angry and told him, "Don't you ever look behind you when you are driving?" He replied. "Nope, as usually I like to travel alone." I then said, "I fell off at the Slave River." He said, "That's only four miles away, now you see what I mean by if you can handle the life of a hunter and trapper." As we walked ahead to our Ski-doo, my elderly friend says to me "I think you will make a good hunter and trapper." My reply was, "If I don't freeze to death or get eaten by hungry wolves."

He patted me on the top of my head and said, "Son, nothing will happen to you as wolves don't eat green horns." Then he laughed out loud and said, "Make sure you hang on good, all right." Then we continued on and finally caught up to the others. Once we stopped, he laughed and told the others what had happened. The others laughed and the two girls replied, "Dam green horn." From that day forward I am proud to say I have learned to hunt and trap and survive off the land from one of the best hunters and trappers and he is Ray Beck Sr.

And that is my story of the chase.

# Untitled

Clarence Tutcho, 17, Deline

Two years ago, on the 21st of August, it was really dark and raining and my friend and I were walking to my sister's. My sister's house was way up there beside the old airport. We were almost at my sister's house. It was a half mile away.

Suddenly, somebody started to throw rocks at us and whistle at us. It was coming from the bushes. We did not stop walking. Then two big ugly Bushmen were standing in the middle of the road and looking straight at us. So my friend and I ran back to my friend's house.

The Bushmen started running after us. They caught up to us and grabbed my friend, and I started running to someone's warehouse. I broke the door and grabbed a gun, and started walking back where they grabbed my friend. I saw them, but my friend was gone. This time there were three of them. I sneaked up to them and started shooting at them, I stop and looked and there were only two down.

Suddenly I woke up in my room. The first thing I did was go to my friend's house. They saw he had not come home since yesterday. So I went to the place where I shot those two Bushmen. There was blood everywhere, but the bodies were gone.

This happened to a friend of a friend of mine.

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# December

Marianne Bromley, Yellowknife

After days encased in frost  
the willows in the wind fling  
the ice from their limbs  
and stand bare again in  
the wintry sun  
Expectant.

# Mouse Legs

Nicole Manual, 14, Fort Good Hope

One beautiful summer day, two young men were on their way to Edmonton. When they were leaving Dawson City, they fuelled the car tank. Their names were Jay Jay and James. They had just gotten into college.

While they were on the highway, they saw an old lady with a hunchback, and wrinkly hands and face. She looked like she had been walking for a pretty long time, and she was tired. So they picked up the poor old lady. They asked her where she was going. She said, "To Edmonton."

The old lady sat in the back seat with James. They were on their way. James was drinking a can of pop. They ran over a squirrel. The car had a big bounce. Jay Jay asked, "What was that?" James was looking back, and he saw a dead squirrel. He dropped his can of pop.

When he was leaning over to pick it up, he saw the old lady's mouse legs. James got scared, so he tapped Jay Jay and asked him to pull over and let the old lady out. Jay Jay asked, "Why?" James whispered, "She has mouse legs!" Jay Jay stopped the car and they threw out the old lady. They left her.

By that time it was dark, and there was a full moon. They looked back and saw the old lady on her mouse legs, running after them. They were going as fast as they could. When they got to Edmonton, the old lady was gone. They were going to see their grandma, when they saw one of their old friends on the road. Their friend phoned them from a pay phone. They had a cell phone in that car. Jay Jay answered the phone. Their friend said, "Why is there a mouse on top of your car?"

# The Legend of The Cliff

Koty Loe, 17, Fort Liard

This is a local legend that is being from a third person point of view, which revolves around a warrior named Nateecho. It is of a great war that took place on top of a cliff located across the Petitot River just outside of Fort Liard. There was a lot of tension between the Liard (Echot'ine) and Nahanni (Na?ai) tribes back in those days, they wanted our land, which was very good for hunting and fishing. The Nahanni were an ambitious tribe that worked hard for everything they had, it was still hard for them to provide for themselves and they badly wanted our rich lands.

Nateecho was a hunter whose name meant "the dreamer". His name was given to him when he was born by a medicine man. He was given the name because the medicine man felt a strange energy coming from him. He knew that Nateecho would help the tribe through his dreams. By the request of the medicine man Nateecho had a normal childhood and was raised the same as any other young Echot'ine. He often wandered off on his own, and this was encouraged by the elders.

## The Legend

Nateecho had just arrived back at camp from a successful hunting trip with several others. They had killed five moose and twelve beaver. They already had a good supply of meat and fish to last them until the fall hunt, and now had a few weeks to relax and prepare for the great hunting trip.

The next morning Nateecho decided to go on an overnight canoe trip up the Petitot to relax and get away from life at the summer camp. He stopped at Luludeh and made an overnight camp. He went for a quick swim and then fell into a deep and troubled sleep. In his dream he was sitting around a fire with more than three hundred warriors listening attentively to what appeared to be the war chief. Nateecho could understand a little of what he was saying. The

chief was discussing the plans for a night raid on a camp where the two rivers meet. They were planning the raid for the next night. As soon as Nateecho heard that, he woke up in a cold sweat. He couldn't believe what he had just dreamed. The Na?ai were planning a raid on the Echot'ine camp the next night. Nateecho jumped in his canoe, without taking down his camp, and paddled back to the main camp as fast as he could.

He told the chief what he had dreamed, and the chief immediately called out for everyone in the camp to meet at the ceremonial grounds in the middle of the camp. Since the summer hunt was finished, most of the warriors were at home. There were just over two hundred battle-ready warriors. Nateecho described his dream and immediately, the chief and elders proposed that they move everything to the top of the cliff. They were very organized and efficient in moving the camp. They finished just as the sun was rising above the horizon.

They assembled in their new camp at the top of the cliff. The strongest Medicine Man in the camp gave out personal medicine bags and told each of the warriors what their duties were in fortifying the cliff. He told them that the Medicine bags would protect them from hunger, fatigue and pain. This took most of the morning. Soon after the Medicine Man had done this, a bird came out of the sky and landed on his arm. They talked for a while then the bird flew away. The bird had told the Medicine Man that the Na?ai were half a day down the Liard River, and they were at least three hundred warriors strong. The bird had not sensed any medicine power from them, only desperation and hunger.

The best archers made fires and set the camp up like it was still being lived in, and they hid just

out of view from the camp waiting to ambush the Na?ai. Meanwhile the rest of the warriors were busy fortifying the cliff on all sides with loose rocks and deadfall traps, they were ready for almost anything. The sun was starting to reach the horizon when Nateecho saw something going on around the decoy camp. It looked like they were in some trouble. Nateecho could see them shooting their arrows and turning to run. Now they were the targets of the Na?ai arrows. The Na?ai warriors were mowing down the Echot'ine with their own arrows. Although they had medicine power protecting them against pain, the Na?ai arrows, spear and axes were too much for them. Nateecho could hear their screams but he could do nothing but watch helplessly as his brothers were being brutally slaughtered on their own land. Nateecho wondered how they knew the archers were hidden. There must be a spy in the camp.

The whole Echot'ine army was waiting in anticipation as they watched the Na?ai warriors emerge from the Liard River and move up the Petitot River. The whole Petitot River was covered from bank to bank with warrior's canoes. The Echot'ine front line opened fire with arrows and fire-hardened spears. They were met with return fire from their enemy. As the Na?ai were landing on the bank, they were being forced back by boulders being rolled down on them and their canoes. Many of the first wave of Na?ai warriors lost their lives at this bank.

At the same time a small war party that had made its way to the other side of the cliff the night before, on the advice of their Echot'ine spy, were just coming into view of the camp and were discussing how they would attack. Nateecho was in the band of warriors guarding the camp. They were making regular checks of the camp perimeter when Nateecho heard some leaves rustling. He quietly went back to camp and sent all of the women and children to a shelter that they built into the ground.

It was well-hidden and built solidly. He and some other warriors hid and waited to ambush the coming Na?ai killers. They waited for the Na?ai to enter their trap before they struck. Nateecho took out the biggest warrior with a swift chop to the back of his neck with his stone axe. Blood gushed all over as his partners were also chopping up the enemy. They did not see the other warriors behind them in time to react. Two of Nateecho's people were killed with spears to the back. They couldn't feel pain so they were able to do some damage to the Na?ai with their axes before they collapsed. Nateecho and the others ran back to the camp to get help to protect the camp from the thirty or so Na?ai warriors closing in on them. They saw a woman trying to sneak back to the shelter. She was obviously the spy, and they shot her with two arrows. Nateecho and twenty other warriors got their bows and quivers ready for the advancing warriors.

Meanwhile at the bottom of the cliff the Na?ai started to land a little ways down the river, and there were now about a hundred warriors coming through the thick bush. Bows and arrows were useless in this type of terrain, so the Echot'ine dug themselves into the side of the cliff and prepared their spears and axes for coming battle. The first wave of Na?ai were crushed under the man-size boulders that were crashing through the brush and snapping fully grown spruce trees like twigs, having a similar effect on a man's body. This did not stop or even slow down the onslaught of bloodthirsty Na?ai warriors that were now coming up the hill. Many were now engaged in bloody mortal hand-to-hand combat using weapons or whatever was around. The bodies were piling up and there was blood from both tribes making a small creek that dribbled down the side of the cliff. There was a huge Na?ai warrior tearing through every Echot'ine that got in his way, he was making his way to the top of the cliff. No one could stop him.

On the top of the cliff Nateecho and his partners had killed off most of the war party that had came around the back of the cliff. They were now ceremoniously offering the Na?ai bodies to the land that had given them so much, by putting them over the front of the cliff and spilled the Na?ai blood on the rocks of the cliff. Suddenly a big Na?ai warrior came up over the edge of the cliff and started searching the tents and setting fire to them. The defenders started shooting him with arrows, but they did not seem to affect him. Three warriors jumped on him and started stabbing him over and over, but he just laughed and broke their necks as he shook them off. Nateecho was very strong and an excellent fighter, that is why he was chosen to watch over the camp. Nateecho was also immune to pain, thanks to the medicine bag he had been given. This other warrior also obviously had some Medicine power protecting him. They stared at each other for a moment, sizing each other up and then they jumped at each other. Nateecho hit the other warrior in the jaw with a solid fist and was met with a hard shot to the gut, they were now wrestling on the ground, both trying very hard to overpower the other. Nateecho rolled away and jumped to his feet. He pulled out his knife and grabbed the other warrior around his neck and plunged the knife in and out of his chest until the giant warrior stopped moving. Nateecho got up and wiped the blood from his blade and listened to the fallen warrior gurgling from the blood in his throat and lungs. He looked over the side of the cliff and saw a huge battle going on just below the top ledge. He called down for some reinforcements to guard the camp. When Nateecho looked down at his fallen enemy, he was gone. He scanned the camp and immediately ran down towards where the women and children were hidden. He saw the warrior tearing the cover off of the hiding place, and Nateecho could hear their screams as the Na?ai

warrior was getting ready, raising his axe to slaughter them. Nateecho tackled the warrior to the ground and cut his throat wide open, he then dragged the warrior to the front of the cliff and shoved him over. At the last second the fallen warrior grabbed Nateecho's leg and pulled him off with him. On the way down Nateecho used his knife and cut the other warrior's head clean off before their bodies were splattered onto the rocks below.

Word spread among the Na?ai that their leader was dead. The remaining warriors started retreating, and the Echot'ine took a few prisoners but let the rest go. They brought the prisoners up the edge of the cliff and slit their throats to offer their enemies' strength to the land.

There is still a patch of red rock from the Na?ai blood that was split on the cliff face. The legends also say that the river is now black because of all the blood that was drained into the river during the Great War. There have been many ancient weapons and bones found in this area around the cliff as well as evidence of many less significant battles around the Liard area.

## Arthritis

LeahAnn Kuneyuna, 19, Holman

Arthritis is very controlling

Because it runs your life.

The thing that can control it  
is medicine.

Sometimes medicine will help

Until your body gets used to taking it.

Arthritis is the hardest thing you  
could deal with;

Especially if you are diagnosed

With it at a very young age.

Arthritis, I hate you



# Living in Fort Good Hope, NWT

Gabriel Tobac, 16, Fort Good Hope

I live in Canada, NWT, Fort Good Hope. I am proud to be a Canadian because this is a free country. I like to live in Fort Good Hope because this is my hometown. I was born and raised here.

The best time of the year is summer. When it gets too hot, lots of kids catch a ride or ask their parents to bring them down to Rabbitskin for a swim. But most of the time I use my bike. I like to ride around with my friends.

Fort Good Hope is a good place to live. The view of the town is Old Baldy. You can see the whole town and the Mackenzie Mountains in a great distance. When you are up there you can see for miles and miles away.

The winter can get very cold. This year winter came in just a couple of days. It was snowing for about a week. On the second day of snowing, people had already pulled out their Skidoos.

I like to hunt because out on the land it is very peaceful. When you go hunting you can see hundreds or even thousands of caribou. The last

time I went hunting with my dad, we saw hundreds of caribou. My dad asked me if I wanted to shoot a caribou. I replied, "Yes." So I took the rifle and shot. I missed it, but I shot at a caribou and it went down, so did the one next to it.

My dad said, "You hit two caribou with one bullet." That's partly what it is like to go hunting here in Fort Good Hope.

When you come to Fort Good Hope, you will realize that the folks are very nice around here. We have two stores: One Co-op and a Northern store. When you look at the river at night when the moon is out, it looks like a picture. Sometimes when it snows, it snows really hard. The river is starting to freeze up, but when it freezes completely then people can go up or down the river to their fish camps or to go for wood, or set their fish hooks for Loche.

That's how it is when you live in Fort Good Hope.

## The Journey of A Water Drop

Andrew Poucher, 14, Yellowknife

High up in Mountain  
A cold ancient glacier drips  
Into frigid pool  
Trickling down to mirrored glass  
Gathering peacefully still  
Calmed glacier lake  
Hazy Deep aquamarine  
Guarded with hemlock  
Then slowly it's descending  
Always moving on its journey  
A gentle current  
Now befriends the lost wanderer  
Guiding and helping

Knowing the way and reason  
But now urging on faster  
The noise is growing  
Bigger, expanding but why  
Then falling but where  
What is waterfall and how  
Destination close but when  
Even closer still  
I am majestic serene  
Grown and yes ready  
NO stop, confusion, and then  
Water, water all around...

# Prophet Ayah

Tahti Bayla, 15, Deline

Prophet Ayah: I'm in his school where it is named after him. He predicted a lot of things such as the war, which did happen. One thing that concerns me is the prediction of the world coming to an end and people from all over the world coming here - for this is the holy land, which will be protected. Did he predict right then? What will happen to us as Dene people?

Youth today know little about making drums, snowshoes, and all the other things that our ancestors learned throughout this beautiful land. I hope to learn all that my ancestors learned in this region and gain knowledge of my people. The Prophet said that this lake here that we live by will be the only fresh water in the world. The other lakes of the world will dry up. This means war among people around us for water. This will be a good thing or bad, and could cause total chaos.

Right now the United States are asking Canada to sell the water to them, but luckily we are protected by an Act (Law). I wonder if this is true or not, because the results could be bad and people here look up to the Prophet.

Recently I heard another prediction from Prophet Ayah. He said that soon people wouldn't do anything outside anymore. By this he meant computers and internet, where you can shop for anything and don't even have to go outside anymore. This prediction I believe. It is getting to us, making our culture and us more vulnerable to others.

Only one thing can tell me the truth, and that is time.

# The Old Man

Gordon Cumming, 8, Fort Smith

Once upon a time there lived an old man. He was very nice. Everybody loved him very much. But one day he got very, very sick. A few days later he died. Everyone was sad. Even the birds missed him. Two years later, a boy named Joseph said to his mother, "Mom what can we do to help them?" His mom was sad that the old man died, too. "Nothing," she said in a sad voice.

The boy thought and thought. Then the next day he went to his friend's house and said, "I need a scruffy old jacket and a old man mask." The next day they met in Jonathan's tree fort. They got the old man mask and the rags. Joseph got into it and started walking to the old folks home. He had to be very careful, so he wouldn't get caught by anyone. As soon as he got there he went to floor eight.

Then the waiter came in, and all his clothes fell off, and he got caught. The waiter threw him outside and said, "Don't come back!" Joseph went back to the tree fort. Jonathan was there waiting.

Joseph got mad and threw their ragged chair out the window. Joseph said the plan was a failure. Then he said, "Let's just forget about it." But Jonathan said, "No, we can't quit now." And Joseph said, "You're right." "So what's our next plan?" said Jonathan. "Oh no," said Joseph. "What is it?" said Jonathan. "That was the only plan I had," said Joseph. "Wait," he said. "Do you know how the old man used to go for a walk and feed the birds." "Oh yeah," said Jonathan, "good idea." Joseph got back into the old clothes and went for a walk. He took some pieces of bread to feed the birds.

Joseph went for a walk and sat down where the old man used to sit. He fed the birds. Then a little girl came along with her mom.

"Mommy, mommy, look it's the old man," said her little girl. Her mom believed her. And soon the whole city knew. The end.

# Memories of Home

Sarah Darkes, 13, Fort Smith

The first thirteen years of my life were spent in a small, isolated community on the banks of the Slave River. Ever since I was a child, even since I was a baby, I have been doing things on the river. Going on canoe trips with my family to all the little river islands, swimming in it, kayaking on it, drinking its water, camping and guiding tourists through the rapids with my sister and father; I have seen it in all its moods and seasons, and for all my life it has been a second home to me and of central importance in the life of myself and that of my family. All my early memories are somehow linked to this rushing expanse of water and it is only now that I am far away from it that I realize how much it really means to me. I am thinking of my home now and I would like my readers to accompany me on an imaginary hike as I follow an anonymous hiker in his exploration of my favorite riverbank hangout.

To reach this marvelous spot, the hiker must drive for about a quarter of an hour down a narrow, rutted gravel road winding through a thick pine and spruce forest. Only rarely does he see another vehicle, and residents of the area consider the traffic rather heavy if they see more than a few vehicles in the entire day. Soon he would come to a small open field, bordered with small spruce and stately birch and poplar and this is where he must turn. If he were to walk across the field the hiker would come across a blackened foundation and some sooty logs, the charred remnants of what was once a proud house standing there, which had served as a hotel and livery stable in the long portage between my home in Fort Fitzgerald and the nearby town of Fort Smith. The muddy dirt road leads down a shadowed corridor of enormous trees whose overhead foliage is such effective blockage that only the brightest sunlight can penetrate.

Sometimes the mud is so thick in the road that the hiker must park the vehicle at the top of the huge hill and walk down, slipping and sliding all the way. At the bottom he catches a glimpse of the river through a gap in the trees, sparkling and dancing in the sunlight, reflecting a thousand facets of brightness of all the colors of the rainbow.

Now the hiker must proceed entirely on foot, and the path he must follow is narrow and laced with tree roots, making the footing very precarious. Then he turns a corner and a beautiful sight lies before him. A stately hill raises its magnificent head, its shoulders covered in a mantle of pine, spruce, birch, aspen, and poplar, and at its foot a little bubbling creek laughs and dances as it hurries towards the river. The air is filled with birdsong and the fresh scent of pinesap. There is a small plank bridge straddling the creek and it is on this fragile support that he must cross. Now comes the hardest part of his toil.

Steps have been cut into the first few meters of the hill but from there on it is a free-for-all scramble. If it has rained lately, the hardened clay of the path is more slippery than ice, and if the weather has been dry, the clay is a covering that is smooth and unyielding as rock, and it is hard to get a foothold. The first quarter of the climb is the hardest, but after that the hill slowly levels out until the final steep slog at the top. At some places the hiker must scramble on his hands and knees if he is to ascend, but once at the top there is a convenient log for him to flop down upon and rest his weary legs.

Well rested, most of the path from there is easy going. He strolls along, listening to the birdsong from the many small inhabitants of the treetops. Deep in the shadows of the forest the

grouse and ptarmigan flutter and drum. If he is lucky the high-bush cranberries are in season and the hiker can pick a handful or two of these tart, tasty fruits to eat as he walks along. The path is lined with wolf scats, giving adequate testimony that the wild inhabitants of the north also enjoy this spot. This is a major rendezvous point for the northern wolf packs. The cool breeze at the top of the hill is sweet and fresh, carrying to his nostrils the healthy scents of pine, high-bush cranberries, and wolfwillow, essence of the boreal forest. Around him the leaves and needles of the trees flutter in a slight afternoon zephyr.

The narrow footpath continues straight and level for three kilometres, only rarely rising and dipping up or down, until, reaching a thick poplar marked with a blaze, a narrow footpath (almost invisible to those unfamiliar to this forest) leads off into the thickest part of the woods. Here the hiker must turn off the main trail and follow this offshoot, which immediately begins to slope sharply downwards, so steeply that he must grasp the tree branches to prevent himself from slipping and falling head over heels to the bottom of the decline. Then he emerges from the woods and confronts one of the most beautiful sights in the whole of the Canadian north.

The Slave River is a huge expanse of water, and here at Pelican Rapids it is at one of its widest points. The opposite bank of the river is so far away it is almost out of sight, lost in the mist, and the water is never still as it hammers against rocks, pours through the channels between the islands, and crashes against the rocky shoreline, dancing, sparkling, and glittering like blue crystal. Very audible is the roar of the falls, which lie just around a bend in the river, out of sight but a power to be reckoned with.

As the hiker descends, the path on either side of him is lined with wild rosebushes, and their scent lies sweet and heavy in the fresh misty air, mingled with the spicy smell of wolfwillow. The

path he emerges upon branches along the river in two directions, but he must take the left fork, and soon it enters a small woodland and on the other side emerges upon a sandy beach.

This is his destination. On one side of him the water roars through a narrow canal splashing out into a large, deep pool before rejoining the main river later, and on the other there is a small sheltered bay where the water lies calm, a resting-place from the hurry and crash of the rapids. The many driftlogs that have been washed out by floods over the years make convenient benches for him to sit upon. In the centre a small fire pit has been dug, and it shows the evidence of many blazes that have been lit in it over the warm summer days. This area has a homey feel about it, for it is a well-used and well-loved spot.

Past the sandy picnic area lies what I consider the best attraction of the spot. A large, blue, still pool of water lies there, connected to the rushing river only by a small canal at the widest two feet in diameter. The influence of the sun has warmed this pool to a deliciously cool temperature from its usual numbing cold. It is completely surrounded by rocks save for one place, where a narrow strip of sand runs right to the water's edge. It is on that strip of sand that most people enter the pool. At the deepest, the pool is about seven feet, but it only reaches this depth in a single spot and it is on average only four to five feet deep. An overhanging log provides an ideal spot for the hiker to sit and dangle his feet and for the adventurous to dive. Everybody who has seen it agrees that this is a most perfect natural swimming pool.

After he is finished basking in the waters of this pool, the wildest part of the rapids lie before the hiker. Now there are no sandy beaches, no warm swimming holes. It is pure, hard, rose-coloured granite rock that he must walk upon. Beside the hiker the river crashes and roars like an angry thunderstorm about to unleash its fury

upon the world. He is passing small water-filled hollows in the rock, which have grown over with thick strings of algae, and it looks like wild green hair floating on the water. At the edge of the perilous precipice he comes to a narrow spit of rock that juts out into the river and just off the point is a tremendous mountain of water, shrinking and surging like a wild horse. Sometimes it is barely three feet tall, then

suddenly roars up to fifteen and then, back again. The hiker feels dwarfed standing besides it, and he is in awe of the river's power. Despite the danger it draws him just the same.

Somebody once described Pelican Rapids as the most beautiful natural display west of Niagara Fall, and I agree. I think, of all the lovely places in the Northwest Territories, I miss those rapids the most.

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## The Funeral

Maureen O'Hagan, Yellowknife

She died above the clouds somewhere over Kuujuaq, a medical evacuation case on her way to hospital and high technology in Montreal. From the sweet confines of her father's igloo, through the years of assault and change, she saw her children discard their dog teams for Skidoos, their harpoons for twenty-two's, their Shamanism for God and Christianity. Her last glimpse of the world was the hard insides of a Twin Otter and the sad eyes of the French Canadian nurse who tried to save her life.

The plane tilted, turned, and brought its cargo home. It glided softly into Salluit, a tiny Inuit village nestled beside a sparkling fjord in the far-flung forgotten reaches of Northern Quebec.

On that day, the Co-op closed its doors on commerce and the women tucked their sewing into dresser drawers. In the dim shadow of crowded hallways, men propped their guns along the wall and their boats lapped dolefully against the vacant beach. Children revelled secretly, the village school crouching silent on the hill; shades drawn, mourning like a veiled queen.

Daniel Aupalu was the local minister and his services were long. One by one, the people filed quietly into the small Anglican church, resigned to an afternoon of hard benches and confined energetic children. The elders sat, drifting in and out of long ago memories, shifting a sleeping leg,

absently rubbing a softened hand. A baby squeezed a wet biscuit through her fingers and patted her mother's cheek. Childish whispers mingled with the coughing and the clatter as a marble rolled brazenly toward a shoe. In the languor of late afternoon, toddlers played and rolled clumsily, like a tangle of soft puppies around the feet and legs of their more impassive elders. The nurse's head dropped, heavy with sleep, then jerked up sharply as the unfamiliar sounds of the minister's voice droned on into the leaden afternoon.

Now it was done. The pine coffin, decorated lovingly with plastic flowers, was wheeled inchmeal to the front of the church and out into the sharp Arctic air. Solemnly the men, still in their work clothes and still in their prime, lifted her onto the half-ton truck for the last ride through town. Children scrambled giddily around the decorated box, eager to ride at the front of the procession. Triumphant girls, their black hair whip-dancing in the bitter breeze, plunked themselves firmly on the lid as the truck began its slow grind along the icy road. Up the hill toward the cemetery they snaked, some on snow machines, some on sleds, and some on foot. In the distance, pyramids of fresh-dug soil stood in bizarre contrast beside the February snow. Above the village, a silver plane slipped silently between the clouds.

# Childhood Memories

Debbie Beaulieu, Fort Smith

Early in the morning, as the sun was beginning to rise with the early mist hanging over the fields, I could hear Grandma's voice in the kitchen humming "Amazing Grace." I remember her as if it were yesterday. Her long silver gray braided hair wrapped around her head like a halo and her angelic voice sounding so sweet to wake to.

It was so good to wake up to the tune as well as the aroma of breakfast being cooked on the old fashion woodstove. In the middle of the kitchen was a table set for three. Each individual plate was set at their usual place with our favorite utensils beside each one. Of course, Grandma sat at the head of the table, a captain being in command. Her team, as small as it was, listened to every word she put forth. The simple truth was, we loved her.

In the living room hung a cuckoo clock that chimes every hour on the hour. At seven o'clock in the morning, the clock did its usual thing. At that moment Grandma called, "Time to get up, girls." We knew that she would call out twice before she heard us hustling around in our bedroom. This time she didn't hear a peep from within. We pretended that we were still sleeping, fully clothed under our blankets with only our faces exposed.

We knew she was entering because the creaking of the linoleum gave way with each step she took. As she crept closer to our beds, I felt an urge to break out in giggles, but was nudged by my sister to control my outburst. While we were trying to stop ourselves from laughing, two eyes appeared with a smile to match the face. She gave us each a big hug and a big kiss to make the day start out right.

Finishing up our breakfast, we headed out the door with school bags in tow, to walk a half a

mile to catch the school bus. This was a routine of ours every morning, until, one time after school, my sister told me that she was going to run away from home. This was the last thing I could picture my sister doing, being only two years older than me. This was terrible. I was to keep this a secret and not tell a soul including Grandma.

This secret was weighing me down. I couldn't concentrate on my schoolwork or anything for that matter. It was eating away at me for a week until I came out and told Grandma. She was furious to think that a seven year old would want to leave the warmth of a comfortable home. So, my sister wanted to leave home. That was fine. Grandma got a long pole and placed all the necessary items on a kerchief and tied the ends into a knot, placed it on my sister's shoulder and proceeded to the door. Grandma told her not to go over to her cousin's place or her Auntie or Uncle's place because they would not allow her in.

Each door she knocked on, she was refused entrance. The sun was setting, and the evenings were getting colder, but she wouldn't budge. My Grandma was getting very worried because at this time of the year, bears were around. She phoned one of her sons to go and look for my sister. Our cousin liked to do pranks on us when we were small but this time it was a big one. It was easy for him to crouch down low enough so that my sister could not make out the form. He then proceeded to make growling sounds. My sister turns around every so often to see where the sound was coming from. She held onto her rod tightly so as not to lose it and started to run home as fast as her little legs could carry her.

There was a bang on the door. Grandma went to the door and opened it up, and there stood my sister gasping for air and trying to tell Grandma what had happened. Grandma put her arms

around her and, looking over her little head, had a big grin that stretched from ear to ear.

While the outside faded into darkness, the inside of our domain was filled with warmth and

comfort the way it should be. To think back on these occasions, brings fond memories of the things that we did as children growing up. The old saying, "Memories are made of these."

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## Extract from "Letter to England"

Griselda Hill, Fort Smith

7:00 a.m....

and I can hear the scraping of Al's shovel over the road, as he heaves a load of freshly fallen flakes onto the ever-increasing pile. It must have snowed during the night. I listen more intently. A long, muffled pause between scrapes means a lot of snow. Shorter, sharper scrapes mean he's nearly finished and it's later than I thought. I wait. It's warm. Who wants to get up? I listen again and hear the phew, creak, phew, creak of the rowing machine as Bill starts his day. It is a regular and monotonous rhythm; dangerous to tune in on that because it has a hypnotic effect. Then I am rudely awakened by my bleeper... Boo Be Boo, Boo Be Boo... and have to get up to reach it. The house is still quiet. Water splashes into the shower, cisterns flush, the kettle is filled and begins to boil. I break the ice off the door as I wrench it open and push a reluctant dog through before all the cold air comes in. Next door is starting their car and the threat starts Flicka barking furiously. All the dogs in the neighborhood join in. Honour satisfied, she returns to sit on the doorstep, melting a patch that will later freeze into black ice. A cat yowls to go out, but baulks on the step and whisks inside before the door closes, another yawns and stretches, and heads purposefully downstairs towards a warm, occupied bed. I pussyfoot into Duncan's darkened room to reset the modem, waking him in my efforts to be quiet, and then the sounds of the day begin as the computers start to warm up, their motors slowly whirring into action. The bread maker shakes itself, the kettle clicks as the toaster pops up, and there is a Shuff Shuff as a

teenager heaves into view. Bill announces that the morning is good, but there is no reply. The morning is not good. The afternoon obviously isn't looking good either. A door closes with an abrupt finality. At ten to blast off, a diminutive figure materializes and there is a hasty chomping of cereal and a chewing of soggy toast before the door slams on the man of the house and the fishwife takes over. Everyone is gloated into activity. The table leaps into the dishwasher, the washing machine groans into its load, teeth are promised, sad remains of breakfast are consumed on the way downstairs and, in the schoolroom, the bleeps take over. For the next six hours the chatter of the keyboard and the slithy scrawl of pencil on paper are punctuated only by the mutterings that bemoan the lack of anything to eat in this house, and another hurried meal. At about three p.m. the soporific effect of grammar exercises is rudely shattered by the shrilling of the telling-bone, and the announcement is made that all other home schoolers in the known world have ceased to work, why haven't we? And the assigned Active Living for the day will be at the sledding hill. Ten minutes later, the house is silent. Cats sneak out of hiding to inspect the uncleared remains of lunch before trickling into the bathroom, where they lie in skeins along the heating vent. Outside, the daylight is fading fast as the warm glow of Christmas lights under a light covering of snow, takes over, and one can hear the scrape, scrape, pause, of the shovel as I heave a load of freshly fallen flakes onto the ever-increasing pile.

Winter has come to the North.

# A Night on the Barrenlands

John Bourne, Rae Lakes

There were wolves out on the Barrenlands. They could hear them clearly in the darkness, howling in a distance, just beyond their perception. It was the first trip out to the Barrenlands for Bernard. He was not alone - a Dogrib elder and his grandson accompanied him, both from the community where he was now teaching. He had moved up to the Northwest Territories from Ontario two months previous, and he was still getting acclimatized to the new culture and environment.

The short autumn was quickly disappearing, and the three men could sense that winter was on its way. Bernard had never experienced weather this cold so early in the year, but was prepared. He did not want to lose face amongst the Dogribs.

Gerry Drybones was the name of the elder that had come with him. Bernard could not be certain of his age, but he estimated that he was anywhere between sixty and eighty. Gerry was easily one of the most respected people in the Dogrib community. His picture or his name seemed to appear in all the documents outlining the history of the people, from the time of Chief Jimmy Bruneau to the present. He was one of the last remaining links between the new generation and the past.

As revered as Gerry was, Bernard could not help but notice that he did not receive much respect from his grandson, Danny. It was obvious that this foray into the Barrenlands was as much for the grandson as it was for the outsider from Ontario. Many people attributed the somber relationship between Gerry and Danny as nothing more than a generation gap; however, Bernard sensed something more. He sensed a distance that was abstract and inhibited.

The subtle tension between the two was never more apparent than when Danny had to translate for the elder. Gerry could not speak English, and it was not certain whether this embarrassed his grandson, or that he simply felt inconvenienced by the interpreting duties. Although his disdain was subtle, it was painfully apparent.

Nevertheless, Gerry began to relate a story while Danny repeated it to Bernard in English.

"When I was a boy, my father used to trap out here. He would bring me and my mother out with him, to this very spot, and we would set up camp for weeks or months at a time. There were no schools in those days, so I was able to spend as much time on the land as possible. I grew up out here, hunting and trapping with my father. The land determined time. The history of my people and my family was written out here on the land.

"Even though the land is vast and lonely, we would always be connected with each other. Other people from the various communities would pass through, and my father would share stories with them. While the grown-ups would speak, I would play over beside the tents with toys that my mother or father would make for me. Usually they would make it out of caribou, or wood.

"This morning, when I was thinking about the old days, I found one of my old caribou antler toys laying on the ground. I was amazed that it had not changed very much after so many years and so many harsh winters. What I thought was funny is that the toy had not changed very much, and the land had not changed very much, but the amount of people had. We could sit out here for the next winter and spring and we



would probably not see a single Dogrib. Not like the days when I was a boy. The young people today are not happy in the bush. They would rather eat candy and watch wrestling. And if we do not share our stories with them, and take them out here, our tradition will be lost forever.

"And that is all I have to say."

Bernard listened to Danny translate the words of his grandfather, studying the expressions on both of their faces. When the story was over, all three of them sat in silence for several minutes. As they did, the northern lights started to rip the black sky open, a streak of green opening the night to dancing colours. Pink rounded out the edges as the Barrenlands turned into a prism of life.

Bernard contemplated the words that the elder had shared with them. He wondered whether or not it was wise to preserve an ancient culture and tradition in the new world. The community has Internet in the school, and almost all of the houses have a satellite dish. The rest of the world had found them; and they were slowly finding the rest of the world. It seemed to him that most of what they considered to be 'traditional' culture was formed after contact with the Europeans.

On the other hand, he realized that every group of people needed some type of barometer to determine who they were. Everybody needs something to call their own - something to forge their identity. Without it, they would cease to exist.

There were no easy answers.

During the silence, the old man got up and slowly, made his way back to the tent, leaving the outsider from Ontario with his grandson. Back in the community, Danny was in his class, one of three in grade nine. He was a weak student and Bernard could easily sense his feeling of anger and displacement in the classroom. He was part

of the generation of Dogrib who were raised in a very different world than their parents and grandparents.

"You know, your grandfather is telling these stories probably more for you than he is for me," Bernard said, hoping to quell the frustration of the young man.

"I hear it all the time." Danny replied flippantly.

"Well maybe you should start listening a little closer," Bernard began lecturing, turning into a teacher once again. "You have to start thinking about the future for you and your community."

"As soon as I'm old enough, I'm going to Edmonton..." Danny cut in abruptly. His vision of the future obviously did not include traditional Dogrib culture.

Bernard thought about the aspirations of his young student. It seemed that all of the kids in the class really had no understanding of the world beyond Edmonton. Places like Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, London, and Paris were all abstract words that had no bearing on their real life. To them there was only their own community, Yellowknife, and the ultimate destination - Edmonton.

"There's nothing for me here..." Danny continued before he stopped. He was not interested in sharing too much about himself with his teacher - the white man from Ontario. He had said enough already.

Without pausing, he got up and walked away into the darkness, letting the night swallow him up.

Bernard was left alone with his thoughts and the dying fire. In the distance, he could still hear the wolves howling and patrolling the land. As the brilliance of the northern lights moved across the sky away from him, he realized that Ontario was so far away.

# Accidents

Kirsten Kocik, 13, Yellowknife

It happens to everybody once in his or her extremely long lifetime. I'm talking about very enormous accidents. The problem is you never know when it's going to happen, and you never know what it is going to cost you. Here's my first and scary adventure about falling off a beautiful, young horse.

Monday, August 31, 1998

It was my first day at a new school. It was great to see all my old friends and some old teachers. I was so excited to get out of J.H. Sissons and go to a middle school. I was very scared at first, but then I got over it. I met a lot of new teachers and kids.

Tuesday, September 1, 1998

It was the second day at school. The day went past very fast like it did the first day. I could not wait until I got off school because this was the day that I went horseback riding. I rushed home as fast as I could. It took my Dad quite a while to get out the door. Finally, we were at the stables to see my pals. This was my second time on Nyoka. She is the most beautiful horse out of the girls in the stable. It didn't take long to get her ready. Then we started our riding lesson. It was a good hour workout. When we were cantering, she didn't like it when I gave her a little smack on the bum to make her go. Suddenly she bucked. It was fun because I didn't fall off and I could barely feel that she bucked. After every lesson you have to loosen the girth to let the horse rest. As we were cooling down the horses, I decided to unzip my jacket. Unexpectedly, she started to trot in a circle. I was so scared. Then she started to canter and sadly, but true, I fell off and just the toe of one of her feet hit my mouth. It is amazing the damage a toe can do. Blood was everywhere: on the saddle pad, on the saddle, on my jacket, on my shirt and in the sand. I was crying so loud, but

only the barn dog, Mason heard me and barked to get everyone's attention. He normally doesn't bark in the arenas.

There was a big rush to the hospital from the stables. It is a long way when you are hurt. At the hospital, everyone was so surprised to hear what happened. Half the nurses never even knew there were horses in Yellowknife. My Dad was trying hard to calm me down and at the same time, he was trying to phone my Mum to tell her to come to the hospital. After the initial examination the doctor on call sent me to the dentist's office as my teeth were damaged. So it was back into the Suburban for another rush to the dentist's office. There, a cool dentist by the name of Dr. Haghi was to examine my mouth and take some x-rays. On the way back to the hospital, my Dad stopped by the house to see if my Mum was there and to tell her what the problem was. I could see my Mum through the window react to the story my Dad was telling her. He grabbed my sister's old comforter to wrap around me, as I was so cold. They say it was shock. Back to the hospital went my Dad and I.

Dad told me, on the way to the hospital for the second time, that the reason we couldn't get Mum was Derrick was downloading a game from the Internet. That put a stop to using the Internet when someone is not home. Mum arrived at the hospital and came right into emergency to see me. By this time I was calm, cool and collected. I could barely talk as my jaw hurt, but the dentist was able to book the OR for 9:00 p.m. and so by 9:30 I was "asleep" on the second floor of the hospital under the care of two very nice nurses, a doctor and a dentist. I was in the OR for two and a half hours. All the time my Mum and Dad waited with the stable owners to see what the outcome would be.

As I was recovering in the Recovery Room, Dr. Conrad, who was the anesthetist, told me I would have to go to Edmonton on a medivac flight to see doctors there. I didn't want to go at first, but then I remembered there was a big mall there so I said, "That's OK, I can to the big mall and shop." They all laughed about it, because I was still unable to raise my body at all, and I hadn't eaten since lunch on Tuesday.

Wednesday, September 2, 1998

After I returned from surgery, my Dad and Mum tucked me in and left me to sleep as my Mum had to get up early for the medivac flight. When I awoke on Wednesday, my Guide Leader, who is head of Peds, was beside my bed and explained to me all the procedures that I was going to go through in Edmonton. Andy, the Medivac Paramedic, appeared with a sleeping bag on a stretcher and with the ambulance drivers from the Fire Hall. Together they got me in the very warm sleeping bag. It was orange in colour and had zippers everywhere. When all was said and done, all that showed of me was my face and even that was partially covered by the sleeping bag.

My mother informed me that we had a very long flight to Edmonton, but I do not remember it as I slept most of the way. I had been given some drugs before we left so that when I wasn't sleeping, I felt no pain. We arrived at the old Municipal Airport in Edmonton to an awaiting ambulance. We drove to the U of A Hospital Emergency Room that my mother describes as a scene from *Trauma, Life in the ER*. I was wheeled into another ER where I spent the day lying in a hospital bed. By late afternoon, I was scheduled for a CAT Scan. My mother and I were moved up to the second floor where I waited patiently in the corridor. A nurse on that floor asked me what had happened and when I told her, she told us of her uncle. He had been kicked in the side of the head by a horse and still has a hoof print on the

side of his head. I don't have such a lasting impression. Life returned to relative normality when the doctor told my mother that we could go home, as I did not have any broken bones in my face. I had to get dressed and have the bag of the IV removed, but not the needle, this was because I was returning to the hospital in Yellowknife and they did not want to have to put another one in. A nice lady in a van came and picked up my mother and me and took us to the airport. I was very hungry and thirsty, so my mother bought me a juice and Jolly Ranchers. When I tried to drink the juice, I couldn't suck juice up the straw so my mother cut several straws into different lengths and I used them one by one until I got to the longest straw. Looking back, it was rather funny. We were the first to board as I was in a wheelchair. When we got to Yellowknife, I had to walk off the airplane to a waiting wheel chair that they used to escort me to the taxi to take me back to Stanton Hospital.

Thursday, September 3, 1998

I woke up back in the same bed I had left the day before. I then realized that I had not gotten to shop at West Edmonton Mall. I did feel let down. They had reattached the IV, but I was served breakfast (I didn't eat much as my mouth was not working at its best). I had the bed raised so I could watch some movies to help try and pass the time until they decided I was well enough to go home.

The dietician spoke to my mother at lunch and said I wouldn't be able to eat real food for six weeks. I proved them wrong and ate real food within the week. Remi and Stephanie came to visit in the afternoon with the cuddliest bear I have ever seen. I called him Radar. My Dad came after work to take me home, which was a great relief, as I really wanted to sleep in my own bed.

Friday, September 4, 1998

Finally, I was back in my old comfy bed. I began comparing my bed to the beds in the

hospital. I felt I was in Club Med. I had a TV in my room plus the VCR. Room Service was at my beck and call. That's how I saw Titanic. Sandra, the girl I ride with, sent beautiful flowers and beside my bed was a big basket of goodies from Johanna and Tom. They are the two very nice people that own all the horses and who stayed at the hospital until midnight. Radar, my new bear, was beside me; he shared my pillow.

I had recovered enough by Saturday to go back out to the stables to see the horses. By the

next Saturday, I was back riding twice a week. Just remember this: that accident waiting to happen does not have to be as bad as it first appears.

It is with great sadness I have to add the following sentence. On Thursday, November 30, 2000, Nyoka died of colic. Even though she was the cause of my injuries and medivac, she was still a wonderful horse and I will miss her and will always have a special place for her in my heart.

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## **Travel Log - Week 3, Day 24: Kokofu, Ghana; “Just Another Ordinary Day”**

Helen Vaughan, Yellowknife

The sweaty fingers of a humid African night entwined themselves around my flesh as I sat amongst friends in Yau's bar. Spiders in shadows slid silently across their silvered webs. The sky was low and clear, dangling tinsel diamonds just beyond our grasp. The rusted dust swirled across the rough roads, and around the chickens roosted for the night.

We flipped cards down onto the table between sips of Coca Cola and beer. Candles flickered around us, scalding the damp air and casting shadows across our faces... the power was out, again. But then, that didn't seem to bother anyone, lest alone myself.

The night patrons of Yau's bar were predominately male. Of the two regular night women, one was excessively large and liked to smooch the unsuspecting between her heaving bosom. Loud and aggressive, Ama also spat all the time. As a cool breeze is to a hot evening, was Ama's absence to the bar tonight.

The second regular woman sold fried eggs served in sweet bread, just outside the bar. She

often leaned through the window to order herself an Orange Crush and to gossip with the men playing checkers. Nana Adjua was an elegant question mark at the end of an eloquent letter. Her eyes beguiled, her hips enchanted... she was one of the most beautiful women I had ever seen. Her presence was soothing at the same time as it was exciting. When she spoke, it seemed as though she had lived a thousand lives as wisdom dripped from every word... Nana Koffee, my checkers opponent, told me that she was very old. But just how old, I could not guess. Her hair was silver and mostly wrapped beneath colorful bands of cloth. Tonight Nana Adyua sipped her Orange Crush, her lips pursed to the thin yellow straw, as she watched us play our game through the window.

Kennedy swooped towards our table asking if we needed any more drinks. It seemed odd to me that such a young boy was working this late in a bar, but Yau, his father, was home sick (Nana Adjua leaned into my ear to whisper that it was the malaria, back again) and it was his duty as oldest

son to run the business until Yau was well again.

Kennedy wore a blue T-shirt which read, "Everybody is Somebody in Connecticut" and a pair of old blue jeans, ripped above the knee. When he wasn't serving drinks or sweeping the chickens out of the bar, he studied from a large book. When I asked him his age, he told me he was ten.

Nana Koffee got up from the table and excused himself, "Wait small my friends," and he left the bar through the back door. I set down the cards I had been holding in my hand, and leaned against the stone wall. The heat crawled down my neck and dripped down my back. The stone wall was deliciously cool, and my skin lapped up its offered refreshment.

I closed my eyes beneath the flickering candle light, and inhaled the exposed moment... How long do moments last? How long would Africa last, how long would she stay in my blood? Eyes still closed, I again inhaled the fragrant Ghanaian night, savoring the air passing slowly through my nose and emptying into my lungs. A year ago, I didn't even know that Kokofu existed... I marveled at how easy it had been, following the twists and turns of fate, to end up in Kokofu, Ghana.

The first person in Kokofu that I was to befriend was Nana Koffee, the fetish priest. I spent much of my day with Nana Koffee, as he explained the nuances of life to me. It became quickly apparent to me that the people in this village were deeply spiritual and devoutly religious, and to them faith was not a choice, but an inherent part of themselves. As Nana Koffee explained, the people had effectively combined Christianity with their traditional religion, thus adopting a syncretic faith.

Nana Koffee was a fetish priest, the spiritual leader of the traditional religion. He also read the Bible every night before he went to bed. As he explained it to me, "The Catholics have many

saints who they worship... so to me, my God of Thunder is also a 'saint' who I respect, however I still keep The Lord closest to my heart." He went on to say, "I know that God is unhappy with my work. As a fetish priest I must sometimes take fellowship with the dark-ones, but I cannot deny my calling. If I deny the dark-ones, I will go insane. I pray each night that God will forgive me in the next life."

Nana Koffee was very tall, as he towered above his fellow Ghanaians. He was very tall, and very lean. And although he was lean, his muscles were finely chiseled from laboring in his cassava field. He reminded me of a sleek cat, taut and ready to pounce. His hands were massive, his feet, colossal. He had brilliant white teeth, which gleamed in the dark. His manner was humble, with the undercurrent of power undefined. It would be a foolish man who took Nana Koffee's passive and calm demeanor literally. I do not doubt that he would make a formidable enemy.

As Nana Koffee returned to our table, my eyes opened, breaking me from my reverie. Just as Nana Koffee sat down, picking up his cards, a crack fractured the serenity of the bar's atmosphere. A scream pierced from the outside shadows. Nana Koffee spun around on his feet, turning towards the door, and the rest of us followed behind him. I felt my spine shiver to escape my flesh... what had severed the pieces of another ordinary day? (As if any day during my trip has been "ordinary"!)

We stood outside the bar, in the middle of the road. Nana Koffee rumbled, "The church!" As he extended a long dark finger up the street, flames echoed across the starry night. For one breath, everyone stood transfixed - mesmerized by the sight. Yau's bar sat at the bottom of a hill, and a road linked the bar to the pastor's house and church, which crowned the top of the hill.

Kennedy, who had followed us outside to the road, pulled the crowd back to reality, "Let us go!"

his boyish voice rang out. I imagined him to be a conductor of a large symphony, cueing the instrumental responses from the orchestra. I could hear the trumpet slicing through the silence, as the drums battered out an immediate response. My feet kept the beat as I followed behind the rest, climbing the hill towards the church. Nada Adjua stayed behind with her eggs, and watched us with her careful eye, as we ascended en masse.

At the top of the hill, we found a very old Volkswagen Bug in flames. A car is quite uncommon in Kokofu, other than the tro-tros which ferry people between villages and down into Accra. Few people own their own vehicles in Kokofu, and those who did, were not necessarily concerned with whether or not the vehicles actually worked. An old car or truck served as a status symbol, as most things “western” often did.

I stood back from the crowd around the car, an uneasy observer. I turned to a woman standing next to me, and asked her what had happened. She informed me that a group of “foolish” people had decided to take a ride in this old Bug and upon attempting to start it, the car drove forward a few feet and backfired, erupting into flames. No one had been hurt, but everyone was afraid that the flames would catch on the hedge and run their fingers of destruction towards the pastor’s house and church. We stood side by side as we watched the large group of men crowded around the car, grasping the dust from the road, and throwing it on the flames. I saw Kennedy in the thick of the crowd. Throwing his soul into his fire extinguishing efforts. I looked around for Nana Koffee, but my eyes could not find him – he had slipped away without my noticing.

My attention refocused on the car, and I noticed, as had the woman standing next to me, that the car was dangerously close to a hedge of bushes. The fire did not seem to be heeding the

dirt attempting to suffocate its fervid life, and aggressively continued to burn. It was decided by the crowd that since the flames were coming from beneath the car, that perhaps it would be best if the Bug were overturned to expose the source of the fire.

The moon shone fiercely overhead, as I watched in horror as the car heaved onto its side... as soon as the Bug hit the ground, the long tendrils of fire arched towards the hedge and the night burned with ominous fervor. My flesh was freckled with terror, the ladies surrounding me gasped in horror. The men stepped back from the car. The flames tore down the hedge and plunged onto the pastor’s porch. The woman standing next to me began to cross herself, and as I looked about me, I noticed that no one was moving – a cloak of silent immobilization had enfolded every breath. Even the crowd of men had become statues in the wake of destruction, never before had the blackness of night felt so oppressive. There was nothing anyone could do but watch.

And then it began to rain

This was no sprinkle of droplets falling through rainbows, this was a torrential downpour. The rain transformed the air into liquid, the road turned to mud between my toes. Voices swam through the night and swelled into a cresting wave of song. I stood in the midst of a choir of exultation. The rain quenched the thirsty souls and animated their flesh. Arms wrapped themselves around my body – strangers without hesitation. Voices beckoned me to follow with praise to the Almighty.

I felt a hand tap my shoulder, Nana Adjua had decided to come up the hill and join in the celebrations. Kennedy circled around us with his joyful cries. The words miracle and hand of God floated through the river of song. And as my eyes again search for my friend, Nana Koffee, I surveyed the crowd whose euphoria engulfed the night. Nana Adjua clasped my hand with hers and

looked directly into my eyes, "The fire is out," her voice eddied in and out of the air. I understood her meaning... or so I thought.

The fire was out. Not even smoldering embers were left to rumor about what had transpired. The rain departed just as swiftly as it had arrived. There were no lingering wisps of water to fall delicately from the sky, it came down hard and

fast and then it left hard and fast.

The sky had cleared, and the moon slid across our faces once more. The night rang out with songs that carried on long past my presence upon the hill. The night extended itself beyond its confining limits of time, and echoed on through the wrinkles of memory...

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## Dear World

Stephanie Ross, 11, Fort McPherson

I think kids are important because if there were no kids there would be no adults. Some kids are not always happy. Some kids are poor. If there were no kids, who would go to school? I think all kids need good food and a house. They should have a good house and a good education. They need education so they could get a job. They need good health. Some poor kids don't have a home, and a mom and dad who love them. Every kid needs this.

What kids want . . .

Some kids who live down south who are poor want a peaceful life. Kids who live where war is want a home maybe because their house got wrecked in the war. I think kids want a good mother and father who love them. I think every kid in the world wants something. That's why I think kids are IMPORTANT.

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## This is Just To Say

Krista Larocque, 16, Yellowknife

(With apologies to William Carlos Williams)

I have frozen your  
Underwear  
That were in  
Your overnight bag  
And which  
You were probably  
Going to  
Wear today.  
Forgive me,  
I ran them under water  
And threw them in the  
Freezer overnight.

## My World

Mary-Anne Fancy, 18, Inuvik

To be relaxed, I read a book filled of wonderful words. It takes me away, away from hate, nervousness, sorrow or frightful images. Off in a world so far in, you just don't want to leave. My heart explodes and my mind is at ease. Why live in reality all day long, when there's a fantasy waiting? I enjoy to be there, I feel content in that world. So there I am trying to be in a fictional world. I go to escape, but I know I can't be there forever, so I enjoy every minute of it. So open up and just take it in.

# Hah'to

Lorayne Menicoche-Moses, Fort Simpson

This story about Hah'to was told to me by my Ama in Slavey, during one of the long winter nights. It is very interesting and amusing so I have translated the legend into English to share with you. It is a legend about Hah'to (Stranger in Slavey and the same size as us) and the A'to'zhegotia (People-that-lived-under-the-leaves and they were tiny people) way back when the world was young.

Hah'to was wandering the country and finding many adventures. Hah'to was walking in the bushes, following an old trail, when he heard someone screaming for help. He followed the voice and found a man A'to'zhegotia. The tiny man had fallen into a footprint of a moose and could not get out. Hah'to helped him out of the track. They greeted one another and Hah'to found out that the tiny man was the Chief of the A'to'zhegotia tribe.

The Chief was so grateful that Hah'to rescued him before any more terrifying events happened to him. The Chief invited Hah'to to his camp for food and to meet the A'to'zhegotia tribe. They walked through the bushes until they arrived at the Chief's village. The A'to'zhegotia were glad to see a visitor. They made preparations for a feast in gratitude to Hah'to for saving their Chief. Hah'to shared stories of his adventures, during the feast.

All of a sudden, the A'to'zhegotia Hunters came running into the village and yelling that they had gotten a moose. Everyone was happy and excited because they will be eating fresh meat. The Hunters needed some help to haul the meat back to camp. The helpers gathered their knives and packsacks. Hah'to thought that these people are so tiny and it would take them a long time to haul a moose back to the village. Hah'to

volunteered to help, as the Hunters and Helpers were leaving the village.

Hah'to followed them down the trail until the Hunters stopped and said the moose was in the bushes. The Hunters went into the bush so Hah'to followed them. When Hah'to parted the leaves - he saw a big dead rabbit. The Hunters were skinning the rabbit and cutting the meat. The Helpers were cutting the meat into smaller pieces to fit into their packsacks. Hah'to was astonished at what animal that the A'to'zhegotia called a moose. Hah'to asked them if he could help carry the meat back to camp. The Hunters and Helpers were amazed that one person could carry a whole moose.

That night, Hah'to thought about the events of the day and decided that he will ask if he could stay in the village for a while. The next day, he asked the Chief that he would like to spend some time with them and the Chief agreed. Hah'to went hunting for them - he killed a moose not a rabbit for them. They helped him haul the meat, which had to be cut up into tiny pieces to fit into their packsacks. Hah'to fished and hunted other animals for them. They made lots of dry meat and dry fish. The village had lots of food saved for the winter and the A'to'zhegotia were so happy.

They built Hah'to a dwelling place so that he could live with them longer. The Chief was so happy with all the good events that happened for his village that he asked if Hah'to would like to marry his daughter. So the Chief's daughter moved her belongings into Hah'to's home. Life carried on, as it was in those days where the people had to gather food and make preparations for the long winter.

After awhile, the Chief noticed that his daughter was growing taller than the rest of the



A'to'zhegotia. The Chief and his wife talked about this and the Chief's wife decided that she wanted to grow tall, too. So she begged her husband to ask Hah'to, if she could live with Hah'to, so she could get taller. Finally, the Chief decided that he would ask Hah'to about his wife's request.

The Chief went over to see Hah'to, drank tea with him and mentioned that they noticed that his daughter was taller than the rest of the people. The Chief said "Hah'to. Now that you have grown my daughter taller than the others, could you take my wife and grow her taller, too?" Hah'to was so insulted that he chased the Chief out of his home. Hah'to packed up and left the village, by the morning. The A'to'zhegotia were so sad because they would have to go back to their kind of moose meat.

Hah'to continued on his journey in the country and had many adventures. There are many other legends that were told about him; but I will tell you some of these legends, another time.

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## Mon Rêve

Meg Leishman, 9, Yellowknife

Finalemant c'est la nuit. Je me lève et je vais mettre mon papier dans la machine à rêve. Sur le papier c'est écrit Allé au Pole nord. Tout à coup je suis là ou il fait froid. Je me réveille je vois de la neige. Je me promène dans la neige. J'ai très froid. Tout à coup je vois un ours polaire. Je vais me cacher mais l'ours me voit.

Il est fâché contre moi. Je court et crie, je court et court. Tout à coup une main me touche. Elle dit Meg, Meg réveille toi. Maman, moi je suis à la maison. Je n'ai pas été mangé par un ours. Non tu n'a pas été mangé par un ours. Main dans mon rêve je l'ai été.

## The Young Trapper

Ryan Larson, 14, Fort Providence

A long ago time there was a young boy. He was about 15 years old and he worked hard for his grandparents. The things he used to do were cut wood, get water, make fire, and check his snares every day. When he turned 16, he got his first gun. Before that he loved to go hunting with his grandfather by dog team in the winter. They went to the mountains to check the traps to see if they caught anything. They would bring it back to the trading post and get money for it. With the money they would only get what they needed to survive the winter. They would get shells, flour, and food that won't rot or spoil. When the boy got his first gun, he went out on the land and shot a bull moose. The moose was young. It took him about two hours to skin the moose. When he skinned it, he took it back to his home. In the winter he would put it in an old shack, so that it would not rot and stay frozen. All winter even when it was very cold he would have to go and check his net. When they had no food to eat he would catch some fish. He would have to fix the fish to bring to his grandparents. They were getting too old to check their nets and getting sick. He had to stay close around the camp. One day his grandfather was getting very sick. He had to bring him to town to see a doctor. The boy went to get his grandmother and brought his grandmother and all of the food to their house. A few days later his grandfather passed away from some kind of disease so he stayed in town. The young trapper became very sad.

# Big G, A Modern Logging Camp

Sharon Kofoed, Inuvik

Remember Paul Bunyan, the tough logger with the plaid shirt, muscles and an ax? There are a lot of people who still think of that image when they think logging. Logging and loggers are much different now. There are big machines that do the work that took many men to do before. Also, the environment and protection of it are big factors in today's logging industry. Briefly, I will tell you about the camp that I worked in. I will change the names and use the term men exclusively.

First, there was the cook Millie. She made sure the men had good meals. Lunch was packed by the men, but there was always a pot of soup on and sandwich fixings for anyone who did come into the camp, including visitors. (By the way, one of our visitors was Julie, the grizzly bear. I'm not sure if she wanted the soup and sandwiches, or us.) Baked goods were a necessity and butter tarts were the favorite. Millie made sure the men stayed civilized, which meant taking their shoes off at the door and by telling them not to swear. So be prepared to fork over a dollar for the swear jar. There were two relief cooks to take over when Millie went on days off. Inspectors came periodically, without notice; to make sure safe food handling techniques were being followed. Millie also kept the camp clean, was a safety officer, and counted trees. (No, she didn't go out and count standing trees. She counted the logs after they were cut.) She was a busy lady and "Mom" to the camp.

Then came the owner. (Or should he be first?) The owner's name was Warren. He made sure his business was running smoothly. He didn't have to be there all the time, because he had a good Supervisor whom he could count on. Warren usually did some mechanic work when he was at camp. While he wasn't at the camp, he spent a lot

of his time buying equipment. Warren usually did the hiring but when it came to firing he usually left it to the Supervisor. Production was of major importance. But quality of work was also important when it was decided who was to go and who was to stay.

Floyd had the supervisor's job. It was an interesting one. He was an on-hands supervisor, which meant he was personally involved in all aspects of the business. He did not sit behind a desk. Instead he was found out in the field checking on the men, ribboning boundaries, roads and buffer zones. He also built bridges as well as numerous other tasks. He was a liaison between Big G, Forestry and Bellfor. Bellfor was the company contracting Big G to do the logging. It was said Floyd had a compass up his ass, which is useful when mapping out new territory.

The roads were either built by Floyd or by Sam with the aid of a CAT. Sam was a local preacher who thought the camp was a den of iniquity. (We all thought we were being good.)

The men included Millie's husband, Ben, a buncher operator. A buncher operator cuts trees with a machine called a buncher. The buncher looked like a little house. Ben had to be careful not to make ruts with his machine or it was cause for a fine from Forestry. Forestry was the government agency overseeing the logging industry. The buncher operator as well as other operators worked 12-hour shifts, 24 hours a day. They did this at night with the aid of powerful lights on their machines. Ben could cut up to 1,700 trees a day. When Ben was through cutting, Andrew, the skidder operator took over. The skidder operator picked up the trees and put them in piles. They were separated by type of tree, whether they were poplar or spruce. Then it

was Andre, the delimeter. With the aid of his machine, he trimmed off the branches and cut them to the required length. He cut off any bad parts like flared butts and put the logs in neat piles. The tops had to be a certain width or a fine was imposed. Then it was time for the log quality person, sometimes the supervisor, to come with his chainsaw to fine-tune each logging pile. He also marked for discard any logs not meeting specifications. When that was done, the logs were ready for the loader. This usually happened in January and February. The logs were taken to the mills and our job was done.

The "Stanley Cup" of logging is for a company to be chosen as "Logger of the Year." We got close but no cigar as the saying goes. Most of the loggers were older men. They certainly were not like Paul Bunyan. With modern machinery, muscles are not necessary any more. It is just like operating a car. All that is required are hard hats, safety vests, and steel-toed boots.

I found my experience in the field interesting and exhilarating. If you ever get the chance, visit a modern logging camp but watch out for the bears. Believe me every logger has a bear story to tell.

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## I See Winter

Elizabeth Koe, 13, Yellowknife

I see snowflakes  
I see snowmen  
I see white on the ground  
I see children all around  
I see children slide  
Now look at them zoom and fly  
Now I hear their mom yell  
It's time to say goodbye.

## Not That Bad After All...

Leila Hurse, 12, Yellowknife

Amy:

Your picture's so much,  
Better than mine.  
My colours are slopped,  
I can't draw a straight line.  
Your crayon is gorgeous,  
Your outlines so fine.  
Your picture's so much,  
Better than mine.

Julie:

My picture's so much,  
Better than yours.  
Ha! What is that?  
You call that a horse?  
My whole thing is perfect,  
Your quality's poor.  
My picture's so much,  
Better than yours.

Amy:

You are just so much  
Better than me  
The teacher is coming  
I can't bear to see  
But, what is this?  
'A!' And you, just a 'B'  
I guesst you're not so much  
Better than me.

## Mother Nature's Riches

Peter Hagar, Yellowknife

Let the miners find  
all the diamonds  
and hang them on a tree.  
A priceless sight  
snow provides  
for free.

# What Makes A Good Read?

Holly Darkes, 16, Fort Smith

Recently I witnessed a rather strongly worded discussion about the Harry Potter books by J.K. Rowling while exploring one of my online secondary school's chat rooms. I will spare the details, but the gist of the dialogue was that secondary students should not read this series because: (1) The books were originally written for younger children. (2) The language is too simple for people of a higher reading level - secondary students should be reading more advanced literature that challenges them. (3) The Harry Potter books don't give the reader any increased perception about the world or life.

The following is a composition that I posted in the chat room, describing my opinion of the issue:

I disagree that the Harry Potter series is not suitable reading material for secondary students and adults. The reading level of a book is irrelevant as long as the literature is interesting to read and has a good story line. A story does not have to be chockfull of insight or teach you a wide new vocabulary to be considered "good" by people of a wide range of ages.

I am in grade 11, have skipped a grade in school, and received 98% on my English exam last year. I read books such as "War and Peace", "Two Years before the Mast" and "Stories of China", but this still doesn't stop me from appreciating and enjoying the Harry Potter books. I know many adults, several with very advanced educations in English, who really enjoy and recommend them too.

The Harry Potter series may be fantasy books, but they keep a person interested and maintain a good plot. Isn't that the ultimate goal; what fictional writing is all about? These books were actually recommended to me by my grade 10

English teacher as a good read. At first, just from skimming the description on the back of the first volume, I also thought that they were too childish and elaborate. But once I dove into them I couldn't put them down. What does it matter what reading level or who the intended age group of a good book is, as long as the reader finds the work interesting and enjoyable? Reading is supposed to be fun, and not always done with a specific purpose or goal in mind.

I think that young society is too much divided by "age" and what is appropriate for each "age group". What is it that stops most teenagers from playing tag? Or hide and seek together? Is it a feeling of superiority to younger people due to age and an absurd idea of what is considered "grown up"? I think that in reality it is the people who disregard this concept and participate in any activity regardless of their age who are actually the more adult. You don't see adults only associating with or participating in activities with other adults of the same age. They associate with a wide variety of people from all age groups, including young children. So in this same context, why can't teenagers enjoy a good book just because it was originally intended for a younger age group?

I also disagree that the Harry Potter books do not use advanced enough language or provide any "special insight" about life to be suitable for people of a "higher reading level". This simply is not true. The entire story line of these books is a conflict between good and evil. Lord Voldemort's continual desire and gradual increase of power shows the reader that some people will stop at no ends to achieve their goal. It demonstrates the concept that once a person has had a taste of power, they feel unsatisfied without it. The Harry

Potter series is much like the "Narnia" series by C.S. Lewis, or "Animal Farm" by George Orwell. "Animal Farm" is a fantasy book about a group of animals that take control of a farm because the farmer has been abusing them. They make a list of rules and resolutions that will prevent a reoccurrence of this treatment, but gradually a small group of animals takes over, abuses these rules and the situation becomes worse than before. To a small child this book is an interesting story about farm animals that can talk, but an adult would realize that these events parallel patterns of events in human history (for example, they are almost an exact analogy to the French revolution). The Narnia series have events and language that can be easily understood by small children, but in the Harry Potter books, simplified language and events that can be understood, or identified with, by a larger group of people are used to make the true meaning behind the books clearer and easier to understand. It might be necessary to read all of the books, perhaps several times through, in order to understand what this insight or idea is.

I think that the Harry Potter books are excellent and rank among the top books of this century that I have read. The fact that the Harry Potter books use simplified language does not degrade them or render them unsuitable for older people of more advanced reading level and vocabulary, but makes the theme easier to understand and the books available to a wider range of age groups. I think that a piece of literature should not be judged by the age group or the reading level that it was intended for, but by the insight it evokes and how the theme and events are expressed by the author. A book needs not be chockfull of fancy language and big words to be considered a good and interesting read.

## That Was Summer

Logan Gruben, 11, Tuktoyaktuk

Remember that time when the spider's web had dew? It was like silver threads. And the rain watered the plants from God's hands. And the lightning coming from the sky like a bright light coming from Heaven.

Remember that time swimming in the ocean that God made for us, and smelling the smoke from the campfire, and the birds singing in the morning.

And remember the bird flapping their beautiful wings?

That was summer.

## The Town I Live In

John Bounds, 13, Norman Wells

My town

Norman Wells

lying in the valley

between two

mountain ranges.

A wide, fast river,

passing by the town.

Our main transportation

source in the summer.

The summers are hot

with the sun never setting.

Hot, sizzling, dry heat

Everywhere.

Cold, blinding winters.

Rushing winds everywhere.

The northern lights

sparkling like diamonds

or dancing fireflies.

# Life With Mikey

Jennifer Rooke, Fort Smith

The sun shimmers off the dewy grass on the infield of the track. It's a cool, crisp morning with a slight fog. Mikey loved these kinds of mornings. I sit in the bleachers, staring around the red shale track, remembering.

Through most of my life, I tried, very hard, to pretend that I didn't have a brother. That's not to say I didn't love him. I did, very much. I just didn't want anyone else to know that I did.

Mikey was two years old, when I was born. Mikey's dad had been killed in a car accident before he was born. Mine was a drunk that I wished would disappear.

I finally got my wish, but the price that we paid for it was extremely high. I was four. I don't remember much of what happened, but I remember the sounds.

As was customary in our house, Dad was drunk and yelling. He stepped on a toy in the living room. In his drunken stupor, he fell. He became very irate and violent. I cowered in the corner, behind the couch and out of sight. I knew it was my toy. Mikey knew it was my toy. He told dad that it was his, anyway.

What followed has always been a blur. I remember screaming, hollering and crying. Then it happened. They were the most gruesome sounds I have ever heard. To this day, the memory turns my stomach.

The sound reminded me of a snowball hitting a window, as my father's firm, leathery fist connected with Mikey's tiny six-year-old body. It sounded like someone had dropped an egg, when Mikey's head crashed into a heavy, wooden bookshelf.

I was too young to remember the hospital or the order of events that ensued. Everything I know is from listening to Mom's account of the

consequences of my failure to pick up my toys.

She said that Mikey stayed in a comma for three weeks, after the emergency surgery. The doctor told Mom and Dad about the swelling around Mikey's brain. He told them that Mikey suffered from brain damage. That he would have mental and physical disabilities for the rest of his life. He would have to learn everything again. I don't recall my father ever being around after that.

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Mom worked nights, days whatever she could. We had to leave our pretty, little house and move. This did not distress me. I was more than happy to leave those horrid memories behind. What bothered me was the dingy, smelly, run-down apartment building where we moved.

Mom was always tired, and she cried often. Mikey's learning was delayed. Mom couldn't afford to send Mikey to a special school, so he attended a regular public school.

Mine!

He was called names for the first few years and overlooked, for the most part, after that. Everyone ignored him, including me. Mikey and I had different last names, making the feat less complicated. By the time I reached junior high, Mikey had explicit orders not to talk to me in public. It seems extremely harsh now, but as a teenager, it was a very appealing concept. I couldn't be linked to the "cripple kid."

There was no high school near our apartment building, so I attended one two kilometres away. Mikey went to a special high school, thanks to his grandparents. I graduated, took out a school loan, and went to university. I wasn't far from home, but I didn't visit often. I made all kinds of excuses, too much work to do, couldn't afford to,

studying. My mom was disappointed; she could have used a break. Although I didn't know she was sick at the time, I felt guilty for abandoning her.

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At my graduation ceremony, I discovered that she had been fighting leukemia for three years. She died a year later.

Mikey moved in with me. There weren't any other options. It was difficult; Mikey was difficult. He was restless and easily bored. I was working and couldn't spend all my time with him.

One night at dinner, he exclaimed, "I start work tomorrow!"

I was shocked. Work! He told me about Mr. Parker and working at the field to help prepare it for upcoming events. He was ecstatic. I went with him the next day to meet Mr. Parker.

Mr. Parker was a round, little man about 60. He stood 5'3" and reminded me of Santa Claus. He was a cheery fellow. He put Mikey to work immediately.

"Mikey seems to think that he works for you," I commented casually.

"Sure does," was all the man said.

My curiosity was piqued. "Why?" It was the only question that came to mind.

"Why not?" was the reply?

"What does he do and why did you hire him?"

"He helps set up for events and clean up after them. I hired him because he's enthusiastic, works hard, and I figured if he was going to be here everyday anyway, I could use the help." Mr. Parker looked at the shocked look on my face and gave a warm smile. "You didn't know this was where he spent his days, did you?"

"No, I guess I didn't and I never thought to ask him, either," I replied, still flabbergasted. Why would Mikey be spending his days at the field, I wondered.

Mr. Parker must have read my mind. "That boy loves to run. He spends most of his time racing

around the track. Even made friends with a few of the runners."

"Really? Mikey has never said anything about, well, any of this," I stammered.

"He figured you were too busy and wasn't sure if you would care or not," he replied placidly.

My heart fell. This stranger seemed to know more about my brother than I did. I handed him my business card and mumbled something about if Mikey needed anything to call. I fumbled to my car and managed to arrive at work, though it was all a fog.

I tried to talk to Mikey that evening, but he was withdrawn. I prodded him to tell me about everything that he did that day. I couldn't stand it anymore. "What's wrong?"

He looked at me sheepishly. "There is a big track meet coming up," he said quietly. "I asked Mr. Parker if I could race."

"Mr. Parker organized track and field?" I asked, trying to avoid sounding stupefied. "I thought he just worked at the field."

"Not that Mr. Parker, his son. He's the local track coach." Mikey just shook his head and gave me that "everyone knows that" look. "He said I have to check with my doctor."

"That seems reasonable," I stated, still in shock and trying to recover before Mikey hit me with another one.

He also said that you would have to come with me to practices and meets, but I know how busy you are..." He left the thought hanging and looked down at his plate with sadness in his eyes.

My heart broke. I couldn't say anything for the longest time. Finally words fell out of my mouth. "Well, I guess you should make an appointment to see your doctor."

His face lit up like a Christmas tree. He ran around the table, whooping. "Really, you'll do it?"

"When is it?"

"The meet is in two and a half months. We practice on Monday, Wednesday and Friday at five

o'clock." He answered so fast that I almost missed it. "Oh thank you, thank you, thank you." He ran out into the yard hooting and hollering, jumping up and down, and running around in circles. I laughed. I couldn't help myself; I hadn't laughed with Mikey since we were little.

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"You can go back to the change room and get your clothes back on now, Mikey," smiled Dr. Vaspar. He looked at me once Mikey had left the room. "His blood pressure is really high and the valve on his left ventricle is deteriorating."

"What does all that mean in layman's terms?" I felt nauseous. I knew the answer.

"He's on the verge of a heart attack. That's as plain as it gets," replied the doctor. "I would suggest not allowing him to run."

"So if he doesn't run, his heart will be fine?" I was grasping at straws now.

"No. His heart will never be fine without a transplant, and, unfortunately, the waiting period is quite long." His response was meek. "Without a transplant, he might have a year."

I was incapable of speech, my eyes welled up with tears, and my lip began to tremble.

"Ah, Mikey, you're all set to go I see." I wiped my eyes at the sound of Dr. Vaspar's words.

"Can I go now? I don't want to miss practice, excitement edged into Mikey's voice.

The doctor glanced at me as if to say, "Are you going to tell him?" I blinked back the tears, rose with bravado, thanked Dr. Vaspar, and ushered Mikey out the door. I hoped he wouldn't see through my facade.

I took him to the track. I was so confused I didn't know what else to do. I sat in the bleachers trying to decide the best approach to this dilemma. As I contemplated, I watched Mikey run.

It was incredible. He was revelling in pure joy, but not only that, he was an equal. The rest of the team treated him as if he were just one of the

guys. No one had ever done that for Mikey. How could I take it all away from him now?

At dinner, I explained the situation. At first, he was sad. When I told him the doctor didn't think he should run he became angry.

"Mikey, this is your life and your decision." The words had escaped my mouth before I could think about their implications. Was I insane?

"I want to run!" How did I know that would be his answer, but what followed surprised me. "I'm going to die anyway, and this is the first time in my life that I am normal." He began to weep. "I don't want to give that up."

Could I really ask him to walk away from the happiest time in his life, and for what? So, that I could hang on to him for a few more months? To this day, I don't know what possessed me to speak. Maybe it was moment of selflessness, or maybe it was just twenty years of guilt.

"If that's what you want, I'll support you all the way, as long as you're happy."

Words eluded him. He broke down in tears and wrapped his arms around my neck. It had been a long time since we hugged.

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Mikey's coach accepted our justification, with a little help from his father. I checked Mikey's blood pressure everyday, and twice at practices. It had climbed slightly, but that was to be expected. Mikey ran with all his heart. Every practice confirmed his passion, and when it was over he had no energy left to expend. I heard others say they wished he could win the race; no one had worked harder. He deserved to win.

On the day of the track meet Mikey's pressure was very high. I tried to chalk it up to nerves and little rest; he had been so excited the night before that he hardly slept. I knew better, of course.

Finally his heat was at the start line. When the starter's pistol fired, I held my breath. He was keeping up, no wait he was in fourth, now third. I



couldn't believe my eyes. He finished in third place. I raced down, from my seat in the bleachers.

When I arrived, he was flushed and out of breath. I took his blood pressure, again. It was through the roof.

"Mikey, you can't keep going. Your pressure is too high."

"Your sister is right, Mike." His coach placed a hand on Mikey's shoulder. "You proved yourself today, there is no need to push it any further."

"No! I'm in the finals. I can't quit now. You promised this was my decision. I'm fine, honest." He walked away. I started to go after him, but a voice stopped me.

"Let him go." Mr. Parker had come to watch the meet.

"He could die," I stammered.

"Let him go," the old man repeated.

"Dad, I really think you should stay out of this," argued the coach. "It has nothing to do with you."

"It has nothing to do with the two of you, either," he responded sternly. We both looked at him flabbergasted. "He's an adult, and as much as you would like to think of him as a child, he knows what he wants."

"But, he could..."

"I know. He could die. You want to know something else? He knows that, too. Let him have this, before he does."

At the start line of the final race, Mikey received high fives from all the other runners. They knew what he had accomplished by just getting that far. Mikey beamed.

The pistol fired. My heart leapt into my throat. The race was underway. Mikey started in a flash and ran straight to the front. He was leading the race. He pushed harder and faster and began to pull away. The crowd looked on in shock. He was going to win this race.

Thirty meters from the finish line Mikey collapsed. The other runners passed him. Then something amazing happened. They all stopped, turned around and went back. No one had finished yet. Mikey stumbled to his feet. The other runners gathered around him and began to chant.

"Mikey! Mikey!" The crowd joined. Events taking place on the infield stopped and the athletes began to chant. "Mikey! Mikey!" The entire crowd was roaring my brother's name.

Some cheered because he was the underdog, others because they didn't want to see him lose. Mostly, they cheered because they couldn't help themselves.

Mikey lurched forward. His fellow athletes followed behind, cheering him on. "Come on man, you can make it!"

"You're almost there Mikey."

"Come on buddy you can do this!"

He finished the race. All the other runners carried him off the field and laid him on the ground. I ran over and wrapped my arms around him.

"I did it, sis. It wasn't world record time, but I did it."

"I'm so proud of you, Mikey! I love you," I managed to whisper between sobs.

"I love you, too," he whispered, before he closed his eyes.

We buried Mikey two weeks later. The doctors said his heart gave out. All the athletes were at the funeral. We buried him with his gold medal around his neck.

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"Mom!"

A shout jolts me from my reverie. I absent-mindedly wipe the tears from my face. A young boy races across the field, waving his arms in the air.

"Mom, are you watching? Look how fast I can run!" He grins from ear to ear.

"I see you, Mikey, I yell back. "I see you."

# A Call Beyond Duty

Gladys Norwegian, Hay River

The days before starting my new teaching job was certainly a call beyond duty. It was by no means a promise of success in the months to come. My 'lows' overrode my 'highs' by a long shot. My only saving grace was that I arrived three weeks before I started teaching. As a Northerner, returning home after spending two years south, I thought nothing of my new job posting at the Hay River Reserve. I was only too happy to return to the north. Little did I know that formidable challenges awaited me. I soon learned that teaching in a small community such as the reserve involved everything else outside the line of duty.

The troubles began with the moving crew next door to me at a motel. They consistently knocked on my door to let me know they are waiting to unload my freight. Much to my dismay, my freight arrived before I did. I just arrived from Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, with an overloaded car, a restless kid and an almost broken arm from driving what seems like forever. To hunt for a place to live was far from my mind at least for that day anyway. However, I managed to politely explain my situation to the movers and that surely their company has a storage place to store my stuff temporarily. For whatever reason, they did not buy my story. They decided to wait.

The next day I settled for a government house on the reserve, but a disgruntled woman that was evicted took her time to move out. I was quite sure she sneered at me as a Department of Public Works worker checked me in the house; as if it were my fault she waited until the last minute to gather up her belongings. The house was another story when I did a thorough check after the worker and the disgruntled woman left. It was filthy. I considered myself to be a dirt expert.

After all, I scrubbed between the tiles under the sinks with a toothbrush for my penance during my residential experience in Lapointe Hall. Therefore, despite my fear of having to delay the movers again I lugged the enormous rented steam cleaner from the Northern Store in Hay River in my already packed car and drove back the distance to the Hay River Reserve to clean my new place.

My son was my assistant. He was more of an adventurer than a worker. He lined up the dead bugs from the cobwebs and expressed his sincere concern about the havoc we caused the spiders' subsistence. As I struggled to push the heavy and awkward steam cleaner, I justified to my son it is important to live in a clean house free of cobwebs. Meanwhile I felt guilty for the double standard life I was about to pass on to my son. I was fighting for survival at the cost of the very means for spiders. I also knew that when I looked into my son's dark innocent eyes I clearly read, "Nice try, Mom." I was guilty through and through. Not only did my son learn of my double standard life, he also knew I lied to him. I truly thought I was making everything right.

Surprisingly, the movers showed up the next day with understanding attitudes. They even took the extra time to help set up some of my heavier furniture. I was quite happy when they put my bed together. I pictured myself falling on it with exhaustion later. Well, my well-deserved sleep was far from happening because in the early hours of the morning I woke up to a loud noise. What I woke up to was a loud heaving noise of a machine struggling to stay on. Right away I thought, "How can the furnace be making such a noise, it was not even on?" When I went to investigate, it definitely was coming from the



furnace room. I had no idea what might cause such a strange noise. I panicked. My immediate thought was to wake up my son and rush out the door with him, in case my house blew up. I then had a much better idea. I reminded myself that just the other day I glowed over my accomplishments as an independent newly divorcee. Somehow that term doesn't sound as exciting as 'newly wed'. However, it kind of serves the same function, which was starting a new phase in life only this time, totally by you. Anyway, I rummaged around for my toolbox and my 'How to Fix Everything' book had that my son's dad gave me the first Christmas after he left. My 'How to Fix Everything' book had information on everything including water pumps. I was so proud that I was able to identify the machine in front of me as a water pump. However I realized that the identification of the water pump was of no use, the machine was still heaving. When I read on in my book I probably needed to get water in the water tank.

When I thought it was late enough to contact the water delivery man I was again faced with another dilemma. I had no telephone and I had no idea where the man lived. I noticed a man across the street outside his house so with my information sheet provided by the Public Works worker in my hand; I went over to ask to use his telephone. I telephoned the water delivery man. A sleepy man came to the telephone after a kid bellowed for him on the other end of the telephone for what seem like too many minutes. I had to move my ear away from the receiver; the kid did not have any trouble with his lungs. I explained that I was the new teacher and that I needed water delivered. He told me that water delivery was during weekdays and certainly not Sunday mornings. I managed to keep him on the phone long enough to tell him about the strange noise coming from my water pump. After minutes of awkward silence, he replied, "It's your water

pump." I felt somewhat confused and questioned myself about whether I just finished telling him about my water pump or not. I can tell I knew more about water pumps than he did. Anyway, I marked his response, as maybe he was not fully awake. It turned out, by the time I got water, my water pump burnt out. With all my new acquired information about water pumps I did not have enough sense to turn off the pump until water was delivered or should I say the book did not provide that information. To say a call beyond duty was an understatement.

## The Snowflake

Jaya Bastedo, 11, Yellowknife

A snowflake falls  
 swirling  
 twirling  
 twisting  
 turning  
 dancing through the still air.  
 It lands  
 softly  
 gently.  
 Does the vole hear it?  
 - the new shingle landing on her roof?

## Míh

Nicole Sanguetz, South Slavey, Trout Lake

Míh tsáhtłah segħa nezū  
 Łue ehk'éch'a káde?a gháehnda  
 Łúhaa gháehnda,  
 Dedelí gháehnda,  
 Ehch'ųų gháehnda,  
 gots' ęh udaa gháhnda.



# Natural Instincts

Brent Lafferty, 16, Hay River

Looked like a nice day for hunting. To go find game, that seemed to be the only way to take care of my worries, and my problems. To get away and checking to make sure that natural instincts are intact from ancestor to ancestor. Foggy, but that isn't a problem, just make the challenge more rewarding.

"Let's go into the bush already, Uncle! You know that this waiting around for you to grab all that useless stuff just kills me! All you need is your gun and one bullet. Well, that's all I need," said my nephew, being as cocky as always. But he does have a steady hand for what's important now. Especially when you're hunting with me.

"Hey not everyone is as good as you! And you're ten on top of that!" But I finish rounding up my supplies for the day.

"You sicken me bringing all those supplies, all you need is one bullet like my son said. After that it's considered a waste of ammunition and money." His Dad was my brother and where he got his attitude from, obviously.

"All right I'm done, lets go, just to stop your complaining." I say with an aggressive tone in my voice. "What do you mean complaining? I was just pointing out a fact, so quit getting mad at me there, uncle."

We all head out together. I dare not venture out with more than two people just for safety reasons. The fact is, it gets deathly quiet in these woods. Sometimes, when you've been waiting for hours on end just to shoot something that move, you can hear your own heartbeat. Fascinating? Yes. Frightening? Oh yes.

It's late afternoon. It's my fault we headed out so late. We have plenty of time to hunt, but it's time to go when you hear the howl of the wolf. To me that is a sign that something not normal is

going to occur and it involves you. Today we'll try to at least get one kill and that's all for a while that we would need.

"Don't know 'bout you guys but I'm going my separate way. Just to stay out of your way, and you stay out of mine knowing that I'll be the only one getting the kill today." Then my nephew darts off knowing that we would say no to that decision. Fortunately for him, we'll let this one go since he'll probably be coming back soon knowing him. He's been coming out with us for the past year and it all went smoothly so I shouldn't worry like usual.

We trek for ten minutes; just enough to go out of sight of the truck and start to explore the area for good hiding places. It isn't too bright out; just bright enough that you could see everything. Thought, there isn't enough light for shadows to be cast at all.

"Well this isn't a bad spot, hey, Chet? Just enough cover for us, don't you say?" as I call behind myself. But no response, so I turn around on instinct.

"What the hell, Chet? Quit playing games. Y'know I don't like to play games while I'm hunting," I say in sarcasm while turning around. He's running into the bush as I catch a last glimpse of him before he disappears into the woods. So I follow him, because I certainly don't want to hunt by myself, and who knows if he would get lost.

"CHET! Slow down, man. I can't keep up with you nowadays. Now why don't you be nice for once in your life and slow down!!" I try to keep up with him, but he's running too fast. No slowing down, it's fast and smooth like a blur almost. As Chet runs and fades into the surrounding area, he makes no sound, nor does he notice me chasing after him.

There I am. Alone, confused, frightened, and lost. As I look around, I see nothing but endless trees and no traces of how I got here. My watch is broken mysteriously with the hands broken off and the protective glass shattered. I don't remember hitting anything against it. I flip up the watch to expose the compass underneath, which is just as useful. This time, the compass hand is going around and around in a clockwise motion very quickly. Seeing as I will have to do this myself, I begin trekking further into the wilderness hoping something will go my way for once today. Vowing this will be the last time I'll be hunting for a long while that's for sure.

From mid-dawn to early dusk, it has been hopeless as far as locating my nephew and brother. Searching through infinite amounts of dense bush areas doesn't help at all. Sunlight fades away through infinite gaps between the trees, catching the last glimpse of it as this day comes to an end. Stopping for a moment to go through my pack looking for a lantern to light my endless way, I pull the lantern out, enough fuel for a couple hours if I use it well.

"Hey, Uncle!" were the first words that I've heard in hours. My heart almost stops upon hearing those words and dropping my lantern, which made it shatter. Looking around quickly, I see my nephew a good ten feet in front of me. He looks as if nothing has happened to him, and he doesn't seem to be very emotional at all.

"Where the Hell have you been! I've been in this bush looking for you and your father endlessly for hours! What do you think you're doing?" A feeling of relaxation came over me knowing that the boy is okay. And rage wondering what he has been doing.

"Come with me, I've got something to show you" he runs off without waiting for his Uncle, running at a fast pace almost forgetting which way he went. I'm running after him as fast as I can go. But my nephew was too fast, as his voice

called out to me which way to go. Barely being able to see, as it is the middle of the night, I throw down my gun and gear so that I would be able to keep the pace that I am running.

"Okay uncle, stop right here," a voice tells me. I'm tired out from what seemed to be a good hour of running. My ears can't hear a thing as my heartbeat is overpowering any kind of sound that's around me. Hands on knees, staring down at the ground finally being able to catch my breath and hear again. Standing up and looking around I don't see my nephew; instead I'm inside a small clearing of grass in the endless maze of trees and shrubs. Dark as ever, I can still see the moonlight seeping through the forest canopy vaguely lighting anything that's around me.

Mad as ever since I do not see the culprit that led me here, I holler out in a fit of rage and aggression: "I'm gonna kick your ass, nephew! 'Cause I know this is pointless and you can't explain it!"

Bad move, as I hear the infamous calling of the wolf. Loud and freaky as ever. I'm wishing that I could take what I said back now that I heard that howl. Standing alone and frightened, no weapons or supplies, I feel naked almost. Anticipating the howl was pure coincidence rather than on purpose, I get down on all fours, bowing my head down to the ground, praying for a dream rather than reality on this fateful day.

Through the ground I feel vibrations. Footsteps almost, shuffling-like motion, I sense their direction from in front of me following a circular path to all the way behind me. Dim light doesn't help me, because the source is located in the near shrubs. No sound at all, not the forest, not the wind, not even my heart was conducting any kind of sound. No more feeling of movement as the source of vibrations stops. Right behind me.

Motionless from head to toe from fear, I stay on the ground, praying once more to myself,

feeling that my turn to see the white light is too close for comfort. On the back of my neck, I feel the warm, humid breath of a predator emerging from the backdrop of leaves and plants. It happens to be a hungry bear, a fairly large one at that, as his shoulder height is comparable to seven or nine foot trees. With a head bigger than my torso, the predator sniffs me, seeing if I'm suitable for his diet.

Knowing this is my time, knowing this bear isn't like any others and not going away without breaking a sweat, I prepare myself for what may be my lifesaving opportunity. With all my energy, I push myself forward preparing to run. Losing traction with the first few strides from loose dirt, I almost fall over then finally regain my traction as I dart towards the closest set of shrubs.

The bear, now angry, attempts to swipe me with his enormous claws. Fortunately, I duck under, the powerful swing barely missed me, but rather skinned the fur off my back, making it sting. His claws miss me and hit the tree next to me, knocking it down roots and all. Running with such a breakneck speed I had never felt before, I dodge trees and plants with such grace and speed, it makes me wonder if this is natural.

My lead ahead of the bear doesn't last for long, as I hear him steadily gaining ground behind me. His footsteps now are so disturbing that I almost fell to the ground from the force. He's galloping at a steady pace, knocking down and destroying tall trees with no sign of slowing down.

Quickly glancing ahead, I see quite a bit of moonlight coming through the leaves and branches. A clearing! With all my might now, I jump as far as I can throw myself. Pumped from adrenaline, I soar with such height and distance, so high that as I look behind at the panting and tired bear, I see him eye to eye, on the same plane. I crash through leaves and branches,

feeling wind blow by me, and eventually falling to the ground with a thud, losing my balance and lying there on my side. A hind leg can't move, it's in such terrible pain, I know it's broken.

Wasting no time, I raise myself from the ground. Very slowly, legs trembling from such pain, I use most of my energy to do that. I feel light headed, glancing around. There's no bear in sight. I heave a big sign of relief knowing that this might all soon be over. The moon high in the nighttime sky gives clear and well-lit vision. I glance around, observing the woods I came out of and the endless-looking wild grass in the also infinite clearing. I notice something different - two small figures low to the ground as if they were hiding. Walking closer, I realize it is two people. Then I clue in. It is Chet and my nephew! With excitement, I try to trot my way over to the two of them and try to ignore the pain in one of my useless legs.

• • • •

"My, that deer is a beauty!" Chet says to his son, who raises his rifle to the animal and focuses with his scope. "You're right there, Dad. Notice his broken hindquarter? Must have been in a scrap or something like that," His observant eye looks up and down the deer as he prepares to shoot. "That's weird. Why is he running towards us?" Chet questions his son, who has now loaded his weapon with one and only one round of ammunition. "Who cares, Dad? Just makes hunting all the easier." There's an impatience in his voice, as he's ready to shoot the deer who is dangerously close to them. "Your uncle would be proud to see you hunt right now. Too bad he isn't here to see you at this moment." With a grin on his face and pulling the trigger, the nephew answers, "You know what? I think he is."

# Spring Hunt

Lisa-Marie Pierrot, 15, Fort Good Hope

I am going to tell you some stories from when I was about six or seven years old. There is only so much that I can remember from when I was that age and younger. Well anyway, my family, some of my aunties and uncles, and my grandparents went out on the land for spring hunt. We stayed along the Mackenzie River at a place called Grandview (across from there). Here are some of my fond memories:

## While I Slept

Here is a good one! One morning I got up to a regular day. The sun was shining beautifully in the bright morning. It was soon time to eat. My mother called everybody that stayed in my tent to come in and eat. While everybody was sitting around the Slavey word here (Slavey for table cloth), my mom asked me, "Lisa, last night when you were sleeping, did you hear anything?" I replied, "No why? What happened?" She said, "Last night while you were sleeping a bear came into the camp and your grandma spotted the bear and started to yell out BEAR! BEAR!"

I was just sitting there all amazed. Well that's not the end of it all! She then said "All the men came running out of their tents as fast as they possibly could, all in a race for their guns." As she went on, I started to get a little scared. What if the bear came back and started to eat all of us up? She continued, "The bear climbed up the tree outside of the tent and all the men started to shoot at the bear and they killed it."

I asked my mother "Why didn't you wake me up to experience this scary moment?" She replied, "Well, I tried, but you sleep like a rock." I learned a lesson from all of that, and it was try not to sleep so hard.

## Breakup

Here is one moment I will never forget, because it was so exciting. The ice was almost ready to go. One early morning, my dad and uncle went out hunting. They were gone all day. Everyone was sitting around after a hard day of work, when all of a sudden the ice cracked in half. It slowly started to move.

We all started to get very frightened because my dad and uncle were still not back from their hunt. The rest of us sat around in an endless wait for my dad and uncle, calling all the places we could, to see if anyone up river had seen them. Finally we saw a little black dot at the end of the point on the river. Sure enough, it was they.

I can't really remember what happened next, but what I do remember was that while the ice was moving, I was standing along the riverbank, watching a good friend of the family running on the ice while it was still moving. She saved our Skidoo from drowning. Somebody had left it on the ice before it started to move. We were very thankful that we had her there with us. If not, we would have never had a Skidoo for next winter.

## Small Memories

Here are small things that come to mind about the fish camp back then: Playing along the shore with most of my cousins. Making sand castles, playing hopscotch and best of all, having a huge mud war, with girls against the boys. Sitting on the floor in the tent and eating on a Slavey word here, teasing mom and dad. Making popcorn on a primer stove before we went to bed. And last but definitely not least, helping my mom and grandma with any help they needed with geese, fish, or one of our many cultural traditions. That's about all that comes to mind.

I had a lot of fun that spring. I remember some small stories. But I'm not sure if they were

dreams or true stories, because these events occurred so long ago.

Most people can remember nearly everything that happened to them when they were fairly young. Some people can only remember some of the things that happened to them. They will remember most of all the times they cried, were angry, were mean to others, and teased one another and felt bad about it.

As for me, I can only remember some of the times people were mean to me or teased me. But more than that, I can remember all the times I had fun with my friends and laughed out loudly with joy and happiness.

In conclusion, I have told you the stories I remember from the first time I experienced life in the fish camp. I hope you liked my stories.

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## Medicine Magic

Emily Ingarfield, 13, Fort Providence

The tapping that I heard at my window was soft at first but then it became louder and louder until I sat up and realized that it was coming from my friend Gabrielle. I blinked the sleep from my eyes and walked to the window.

"What do you want?" I questioned, glancing at my clock, "It's 1:30 a.m."

"I'm sorry, but I just had to come and get you. I found this abandoned cabin in the way out in the woods."

"Well couldn't it wait till the morning?" And what are you doing out wandering around in the bush at this time of night? Keep your voice down, I think I heard my mom getting up." We stood silently for a moment listening but heard nothing more. "OK, listen," I said, "can't we continue this conversation tomorrow? What do you want me to do tonight? Go out into the bush with you?"

"Well sorry to bother you, I just thought you would like to know. Now I'm going back out there. You can come with me or go back to bed. What's it going to be?" I thought for a minute and was going to go back to bed when I thought of how unsafe it was for Gabrielle to be walking around the bush all by herself. I hemmed and hawed for a couple more moments and decided it would be safer if we both went together.

"Wait a sec until I get dressed." I shut the

window and slipped into an old pair of jeans and a big sweater. I hurried silently to the door and let myself out with only one small screech from the hinges. I met Gabrielle half way around my house, and she led me in the right direction towards the cabin.

We must have walked at least 15 minutes before a faint outline of the cabin came into sight.

"How did you ever find this?" I asked.

"I got in a fight with my parents and I left the house steaming. I took a walk to cool down and ended up here."

"Don't you realize how stupid it is to walk into the bush, late at night, all by yourself, not telling anyone where you were going?"

"Yeah I realized that after I was way out here and had a chance to cool down. But since we're here, why don't we check it out?"

"I don't know, the floor boards could all be rotted and dangerous."

"Oh don't be such a wimp." I watched for a few minutes as Gabrielle went towards the house and then hurried after her. What was the point of coming way out here if I wasn't even going to check out the cabin? The door screeched its disapproval as it swung open and we glanced in. As the door stopped moving an eerie silence fell



over the woods. As we tiptoed into the cabin, the floor boards creaked and groaned. The dim moonlight let us see an outline of the roughly made chair which was covered in cobwebs and the set of bunks looked very much rotted.

Gabrielle took a match from the box that was left on the table and tried to strike it but the match stick broke in half. I took out the flash light that I had taken with me and shone it around the cabin. It looked as if it had been left suddenly, there was still a pot on the stove and a pipe on the table. I walked closer to the stove and peered into the pot. Whatever had been left there had either evaporated or gotten eaten by some unknown animal.

"This place is creepy, let's come back when it's light out." I said.

"Just wait, I see something sticking up from under the floor board." Gabrielle walked closer and pulled on the item, only to have the whole floorboard move. I stepped back and gasped as a golden glow came from under the cabin. Gabrielle scurried away from the hole on her hands and knees. An old voice filled the cabin. It didn't sound threatening. Kind of soothing actually.

"Do not be frightened. I am here only to help. I know that you can not see me. I was once alive and as young as you. I was one of the most powerful medicine men there was. I only used my powers for good I can assure you. But like all people, even the most powerful medicine can not keep you from aging. But when my time came to leave this earth I still had power left that could be used for good and I did not want to waste this, so I left all my powers in this... this sphere." I crept closer to the edge and gazed in wonder at the golden, glowing sphere that was under the cabin.

"As I was saying, the rest of my power is in this sphere. I left my powers in a place where I hoped they would someday be found and used

to help once more. In this sphere is the power to transport two people back in time for 24 hours. After this is done, my powers will be gone and I will finally be able to rest, knowing that I made the right choice waiting all this time so that I would be able to help better the world once more. Choose wisely now, for I only have enough power for one trip back in time. You may take me with you until you decide to use the great power which I am offering you." I glanced at Gabrielle who had a look that is almost impossible to describe. Her eyes were opened so far it looked as if they would pop any minute. Her skin was a pale white colour that looked very unhealthy. After the voice stopped and silence once again reigned in the cabin, I stepped forward to see the glow dimming. I heard a raspy whisper just before the light flickered out. "My powers, are growing weaker. Do not call me until you need to."

The next morning I awoke early and lay in bed insisting to myself that it had all been a dream. That Gabrielle and I had not gone out to the bush and found that magical medicine man's spirit. I had almost convinced myself that it had been a dream until I stood up to see all of the scratches on my hands from when Gabrielle and I had been running back to town, as if a pack of hungry wolves were chasing us. I walked shakily to the phone and fumbled to dial Gabrielle's number. Her mom answered the phone.

"Hi, is Gabrielle home?" I said

"Yeah , but she's still in bed. Could I take a message?"

"Well it's kind of urgent. Could you possibly wake her?"

"Actually dear, I'd rather she got some rest. She was up late last night. I feel kind of guilty about not letting her have her way. She came in late last night, covered with branches and leaves, looking as if she had seen a ghost. Why don't I ask her to call you back later, hon?"

"I guess it could wait a little while," I said

yawning and hung up.

She didn't call back until around 12:30 p.m. and I was more than a little annoyed.

"How do you get off sleeping in until lunch, after what we went through last night? I've been up since 9:30 and I have no one to talk to about it. I mean I don't think we should tell any adults or anyone for that matter because you know no one will believe us." Gabrielle didn't say anything for a minute, but then responded with, "I guess you're right, but what are we going to do with him?"

"I haven't figured that out yet." I said, "But I think we should go out there and at least bring him back. I mean we left him out there uncovered and everything."

"Okay, I'll go if you go."

"It's a deal."

We got there around 1:30 p.m. and entered the cabin unspeaking. As we walked we could see the cabin better than the night before. Gabrielle walked up to the edge of the hole made by the missing floorboard. I walked up beside her and saw that after the bright glow had diminished last night, the sphere type object was actually wrapped in tanned moose hide and a single eagle feather was hanging off it. I glanced at Gabrielle and saw that she was making no attempt at taking the magical object from its resting place. I knelt down and carefully slid my hand underneath the ball. It was warm to the touch and when I tried to lift it I found that the centre must have been made from light material. It was relatively small for the power that it held. I could almost conceal it within my hands. But not quite. I placed it carefully in my backpack and we slowly left the cabin and headed back towards town. It was an unusual walk home, for neither Gabrielle or I spoke a word. When we finally arrived at the outskirts of town I broke the silence.

"What are we going to do with it?"

"My guess is as good as yours."

"Are we just going to leave it somewhere, after he waited all these years in that cabin, just so that he could help somebody again?" I asked.

"Well, are you planning to go back in time? That thing probably doesn't even work!"

"Oh yeah right, if it didn't work I don't think that medicine man would still be hanging around."

"OK," said Gabrielle, "Even if it does work, what would we use it for. It has to be something really important, since this guy spent all of those years hidden away in that cabin."

"OK, finally something we agree on!" I said smiling. After that we got a little of our sanity back and talked the whole thing through. In the end we decided to wait and see what happened in the days to follow.

A week passed since we first brought the medicine man back to town. We hadn't heard a word from him since the first night, and were beginning to wonder if we had imagined the whole thing, but that made no sense because we still had the ball, and that meant that we had gone out there that night and everything that we thought had happened did.

I was in my room relaxing with a book. I was home alone since the rest of my family had gone on a day trip to Hay River, on the other side of the ferry. I heard the phone ring. I ran to the living room and picked it up.

"Hello," I said

"This is Gabrielle," said a weak sounding voice from the other end of the line. "I need you to come over. Bring IT."

When I got there I was out of breath, 'cause I had run all the way across town to Gabrielle's house. She had sounded so desperate and she wouldn't tell me another thing over the phone. When I got there, Gabrielle was waiting at the door.

"It's my father," was the only thing that she could get out of her mouth.

"Where's your mom?"

"My father."

"OK, calm down, what happened to your father." She just stood there white as a ghost, not speaking.

"You asked me to bring you know what," I said glancing around to look for her mother or father. "So what do you want it for?"

This seemed to snap her out of it some what. I could see that she was struggling to speak. I guided her to the couch, and she sat down.

"It's OK, " I told her. "Just tell me what's wrong." I saw her swallow before she began.

"My father," she said dryly, "was on the ferry like every day, when he lost control at the wheel. I just heard it on the radio. The whole thing went down. No survivors." I sat down beside her and waited a second before I could get it out.

"Do they know which vehicles were aboard?"

"You don't mean your family!?" I nodded and saw her face lose the last bit of emotion that it held. But then the conversation that we had on the phone came back to me. There were two words that stuck out in my mind "bring IT". I grabbed the ball from my back pack and as Gabrielle's eyes caught sight of it I could practically see the hope grow.

"Where were you yesterday afternoon at this time?" I asked.

"I was in my room alone. My mom was at work and my father," her voice croaked and I patted her shoulder.

"It's going to be all right now. I was at the store picking up some groceries for my mom. After we go back in time we'll meet on your front porch." And with that I spoke to the medicine man. "We would like to go back in time to save our parents' lives and those of the other poor souls on that boat which went down this morning."

"I believe that this is a worthy cause and I let it be so. Thank you for setting me free," whispered

the old man. Then the feeling that went through my body is indescribable. It felt as if I was being crushed and then I was weightless. Then there was a strange popping noise, and I was back in the store, the day before. I set down all the things that were weighing down my arms and I ran fast as I could to Gabrielle's house. She was sitting on the porch waiting for me with a big smile on her face.

"It worked! Right now they're alive! All we have to do now is stop my father from going to work tomorrow."

"How are we going to do that?"

"That will take a bit of thinking, but I know that we can stop him some how." A small cracking noise came from inside the house. We both cautiously entered to see the shimmering image of an old man where the moose hide ball had been left. " Now you can see me. I am leaving this world now for the next, but I heard you saying you needed a way to keep this man home. I don't want the last of my powers to have been a waste so take this." He passed Gabrielle a small pouch that seem to be filled with something. "Just slip this into his drink or food and he won't be leaving the house for at least 24 hours." The old man snickered as he faded to nothing right before our eyes.

The next day the ferry was closed due to the captain mysteriously taking the week off for reasons not known to the public. They managed to find a person with the right training to drive the ferry after one day of being out of order. Only Gabrielle and I knew that the night before Gabrielle had slipped the powder from the pouch into her father's drink, but even we did not know what kept him out of work for a week. We never heard from the old man again, but we both hope that one day, when we leave this earth to go to the next, we will be able to thank him for doing so much for us, even though we will never be able to repay him.

# A Life Time Story!

**Billie Clark, 16, Tsiigehtchic**

I close my eyes when I get too sad  
I think lots so I won't think bad  
I close my eyes and count to ten  
hope it's over when I open them  
I want the things that I had before  
like an alien poster on my bedroom door  
I wish I could count to ten make everything  
be wonderful again  
I hope my mom and I hope my dad figure out  
why they get so mad I hear them yell I hear  
them fight they say bad words and make me  
wanna cry.  
I close my eyes when I go to bed  
I dream of adventures to make me smile  
I feel better when I hear them say everything will  
be wonderful some day.  
Grandma says mean everything when you're  
little and  
the world so big, I just don't understand how you  
can  
smile with all those tears in your eyes  
Tell me everything's wonderful now  
Please don't tell me everything's wonderful now.  
I go to school and I hang out all day I tell the kids  
it's all ok. I laugh out loud so my friends don't  
know.  
when the bell rings I just don't want to go. I go to  
my room and I close my eyes I make believe I  
have a new life.  
I don't want to hear you say that I will  
understand someday.  
I don't want to hear you say that we'll go a  
different way  
no, I don't want to make new friends  
no, I don't want to start over again  
I just want life to be the same, just like it used to  
be and no more tears in my mother's eyes...

# Spirit of Illness

**Linda Shott, Fort Smith**

A long time ago when alcohol was invented everyone was excited about it, because they got good feelings of being happy and no worries about anything or anyone. These feelings would happen to me when I would keep myself intoxicated day after day, and this is how I became acquainted with the Spirit of Illness.

A friend and I were out partying for at least three days and were cruising home in the wee hours of the morning on a four-wheel terrain bike when he was experiencing a blackout, (which I didn't know about at the time). We kept on cruising and I was thinking about how sick I was and how good it would feel to crawl into my bed and sleep. I was only going home to get some rest and sober up, because my brother was coming into town for a fishing trip that we had planned earlier that week with more drinking and partying included.

While I was thinking of all this I noticed my friend was driving off the road towards trees and rocks. I gave him a couple of taps to get his attention so he would know what was happening, but he didn't acknowledge me at all. I thought about jumping off the bike, but it was too late. We crashed into a big stump and we both went flying through the air. I saw trees coming towards me real fast, and just before hitting the ground I fell into a blackout.

Unconsciously I got up and looked for my glasses because I knew I couldn't see without them. I found my lens but not my frames so I stuck the lens in my pocket and started walking towards my parents' home, which is a fifteen- minute walk from where we crashed. When I got home I went straight to my bedroom and passed-out, like I usually do after a drunk. Unfortunately my mom and dad would always let me sleep until I sober and come out of my room on my own.

It just so happened my brother came into town



for our fishing trip about an hour after the crash. He arrived at mom's and asked where I was because I was supposed to meet him at the airport. Mom told him I was still sleeping. He came and knocked on my door. When I didn't respond, he opened the door to find me lying in bed surrounded in blood which was oozing from my ears, mouth and nose. Blood was also gushing from my right arm where the collar bone broke through my skin and from a big gash on my thigh where my muscles are all ripped apart, actually clots were coming out real thick and fast. Seeing the shape I was in my brother yelled to my mom to call an ambulance. The ambulance arrived within minutes and took me to the hospital and I was medivaced to a city hospital for treatment.

Three days later I regained consciousness. While I was focusing in, I saw a misty haze floating above me. I didn't panic. I just laid there watching the mist float gently above my entire body and while I was doing that my body started to feel light and relaxed, then I fell back to sleep.

Later that day when I regained consciousness I felt totally at peace like I've never experienced before.

I started thinking what that misty haze was all

about and why it was hovering over me on my hospital bed and making me feel so peaceful. I then realized it was a Spirit of Illness and that's how I now know that it cured me of my alcohol sickness.

To this day the Spirit of Illness remains nearby. Knowing the Spirit is with me, I've gained my self-respect and confidence to pursue the life I've always wanted. I'm not saying it's easy all the time, because in the past five years I thought of drinking three times, but I would always think of how lucky I was five years ago when I was given another chance at life with my family and friends. The Spirit of Illness has given me the strength and courage to go on one day at a time and become closer to achieving my personal goals.

In the Spirit of Illness, faith can be found, Faith not only in the soul, but also in mind and body.

P.S. As for my Friend his injuries consisted of scrapes and minor cuts to his body, plus his artificial toes broke so he had to get those replaced. I recently went home to my hometown for a visit and happened to run into him and he is still driving fast and partying hard.

But hey! Each To Their Own, who am I to preach!!!!

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## Edaanìgho Seet'ì Gigho Àxohdi

Maryrose Sundberg, Dettah

Nìhtf'èchì tai wegho dii nìhtf'è èèt'èa, dii nìhtf'èchì sii, sii wegho àxohdi. Dii nìhtf'èchì sii, setse, setsì eyits'ò setà wegho hot'è. Setse 1900's ekìyeh Kw'ahtindee ìle, ekò NWT Ekècho nèègha, Treaty yehts'ì.

Nìhtf'èchì nàke t'a, setsì hot'è. 1930's ekìyeh setse ìawo hò, setsì, setà whacho yeeshò. Whacho yeeshò neehò, edaanì dechìtah naawo t'à edets'enda sii hoghàyeetò. Setsì dii haanì goghò hayatì ìle. Semba, sède eyits'ò sechi azhò nèt's'ìcha-le hò, dii haanì goxè hagoodea gohdì. Edaanì goxè hòdòga sii

gohdò yik'è zhò ìle. Azhò goxè edàgòde haìle sii yik'à whehtì, ekò semò, setà ts'ò hadi hò, edàdiadi wek'èjò-le ìle, aki gonde ts'ìwo ìle, haanikò, dii dzè k'e edaanì nàhòdi ìle sii, wek'e ts'enda, haanikò dii dzè k'e, ehtsì ehkw'i adi ìle nehwhò àja. Dii dzè k'e weghò nàniwho dè, ayi haadi ìle sii, wek'è hòdòzha, ohda gogende nindè, giakw'ò diadi, eyits'ò ayi edàgedi sii, weghò nàndèh diadi ìle.

Nìhtf'èchì tai sii t'a setà hot'è, Ìndakò, 100 xo gha dzèdee hohfè hò, gots'ò Framework Agreement



goizì wek'è nèt's'ìṛò hò, setà sii wìzì dek'è'nèyìṛò.  
Eyi dze k'e July 25, 2000 hot'è ìle, eyi dze k'e ìdi  
100 xo hò 1900 k'e sii, setse goet'ì gha Treaty  
yehtsì ìle. Setà sù nezì hoghàgohtò, samba ìfe, sedè  
tai gohì, eyits'ò sechi nàke, ats'ò sònàts'ede ch'à  
goṛṛò ìle hò, ayi ha àdi ìle t'a wet'à hoghàdèts'ètò  
ha gohdi ìle. Gohxì whacho asi wek'èhò ts'ìzha  
nìwò t'à, àts'ò ayi ha la k'e eghàlats'èda sii  
wek'èts'èzhò nìwò t'àadi ìle. Setà àts'ò nezì  
gok'èedì, weghò sheezhe àts'ò gòts'ò eyits'ò  
dlò'ehts'ehts'ì t'à sii hoghàgootò, setà weghò  
sùdidò elì, eyits'ìṛò dōne ìṛò gighò neetò, ats'ò dōne  
yeeṛì dè, dōne xè dlò'ehts'ì. Ìfe dze dii dōne weghò  
àisì sii wek'èashò dè neehwhò, nahxì sii weghò  
nààtò.

Dii xo k'e Ìk'e, sexè dzèdee hòlì sii wegħa, sù  
sìna. Seet'ì azhò, akò nègìde, eyi dze k'e, sù  
wegħò àxohdi, welò sexè nèhòchì ts'ò eyi dze k'e  
wenahdia, “sa daaṛa ts'ò, ndè neelì ts'ò eyits'ò t'ò  
dehshe ts'ò eyi dze k'e wenahdia”. Eyi dze k'e sa  
nezì daaṛa xè, nìhts'ì gòkò xè nìhts'ì ìle, dōne  
azhò gìna xè segoot'ì, gòts'ò Treaty wenaawo k'è  
gòxè ndè seedlea gha goizì nìht'è k'e nèt's'ìṛò t'à

dōne azhò gìna. Eyi xèhts'ò nàsì hòlì xè dàgòṛwo.  
Eyi xèhts'ò sii seechà ṛhda xè eye sònàṛwò. Seechà  
haanì eye yìitò t'à sònàṛwo sii, sù sìna neehwò, 18  
sa weghò neehò, haanì ìnee gowhaedò edaani eye  
sònàgeede ìle sii k'è, sònàwo gha, sù mahsi  
dehwhò. Setà dii hasehdi ìle, eyi haanì t'a dōne  
eṛk'ède nèe seehdi ìle. Mahsi ts'ìwò t'à, gòkè  
hoghàgehts'ehtò hot'è dii. Eyt'è eyi dze ts'ò ìda  
sekwìghà dego xè ìfa t'èekoa ehì dè, seechà ìda  
azhò geade sii, eyi dze k'e edaanì dzèdee ts'ehts'ì  
ìle sii wegondi t'à gixè gohdo.

Dii nìht'èchì tai weghadah nindè, setse ts'ò  
dōne ehì sii, sù weghò àxohdi, Kw'atindee ìle  
eyits'ò setà nezì hòghàgootò ts'ìṛò sii, dōne  
weehwò xè weghò neetò, eyits'ò mahsi weesì ha  
dehwhò. Qhdaa, dōne gets'ìwhò dè, ìda hoowo dè  
wet'à nezì ets'èndaa nee dii ìle, eyi t'à dii dze k'e  
seyati k'èhdì ha neehwò eyits'ò weghò nàdàhwhò  
dehwhò. Eyi dze k'e ìda welò hòle t'sò, àts'ò  
wenahdia, yati azhò goghà nègìṛò sii, gòkè wet'à  
gixè gohdo, eyi wet'à sii, ìda gòkè wet'à nezì  
egeendà, eyi xè sii wet'à gonaawo ìfa endaa ha.

Mahsi-Cho

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## Careless

Alfred Masuzumi, Fort Good Hope

One day I decided to go hunting for caribou. This was going to be the first time I would be travelling with my new 503-Skandic. I wasn't worried about travelling alone, since I'd be able to make it back in record time on my big Skidoo, no sweat!

I went past the Game Warden's cabin halfway to Colville Lake, and turned left onto the second cut-line that goes to Fádáraga Túé. The caribou were gathered along this cut line.

I shot four caribou right away, only seventy-five miles from town. What more can a person ask for? I was taking my time, on top of the world. When I had my old Élan Skidoo, I could haul one caribou at a

time. Now I tow two at a time, bringing them all to one place for butchering.

I heard unusual sounds from the engine, but I paid no attention. All I had on my mind was how great it was to drive my new snowmobile! But the unusual sounds became more noticeable on the way back, and the machine was losing power. I was getting anxious. I had told my wife Sarah that I would be back by ten-thirty in the evening, and it was already nine. Sarah might get worried. I was travelling on the big lake, under the big hill some thirty miles from town. If the Skidoo were to break down, I hoped it would be further along. The Skidoo



was shaking, rocking and rolling. I passed the muskeg on this side of the Big Lake, and then went down toward the crossing of Rabbitskin River. In about ten or fifteen minutes I would be home.

All of a sudden, the Skidoo backfired, and completely stopped. My fantasy world also stopped. I actually came back to my senses.

I had no tools. What was the use anyway, since I didn't know much about mechanics? I had no blanket or trap. All at once I noticed the weather. It was clear and cold, and the wind was blowing from the north. For the first time in my life, I became panicky.

Right away I busied myself setting up camp. I began by cutting lots of wood. Since I had no blanket, I was afraid to sleep. Since I was tired, I might fall into a deep slumber, a sleep of no awakening.

"My goodness! Is this really me?" I thought to myself. Long ago, in the days of travel by dog team, you'd carry a blanket even if you were travelling ten miles. How careless I'd become!

With dogs, you always had company. When the Skidoo was stopped, the silence was deafening. For the first time in my life, I was really scared. Death was lurking.

I made a windbreak from tree saplings. But I decided not to stay at the camp. This was the main

route between Colville Lake and Fort Good Hope. Someone should be coming along at any time. So I started walking toward home.

The moon was full, and the shadows of the trees on the road were playing tricks on me. It seemed as though a Skidoo was coming from behind. So I kept stopping and looking back. But there was only silence.

Then a small voice said, "Sleeeeeeep beneeeeeeeath aaaaa treeeeee, youuuuuuuuuuu wiiiiiiiiiiii feeeeeeeel betterrrrrrrr!"

As soon as I heard that, I veered off into the bush and prepared camp. I knew what that voice was. It was a voice of eternal sleep. But I tell you, that voice is alluring. It would surely tempt a less experienced person, tired and easily lulled to sleep.

I walked for seventeen hours on that dreadful night, and made four camps with windbreak shelters along the way. About twelve miles from town, I was walking along the cut-line past the big muskeg on the south side of Rabbitskin River. I looked behind me, and saw the headlights of a Skidoo from along the Loche Lake road. There was still a long way to go, so I made fire and waited for the Skidoo. It was Stanley McNeely. After we had tea, I caught a ride into town.

That's when I learned to beware of the unexpected.

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## The Dragon Tamer

Elijah Forget-Manson, 13, Yellowknife

Glenroth was a young knight. He had never found glory on quests to rescue fair damsels, or slain fearsome demons as other knights had. Instead, he had been assigned to patrol the roads near the insignificant village of Burrow. He never found any adventure here, for only the weakest of bandits came to pillage the farmers of Burrow, and they always surrendered or ran when

Glenroth and his soldiers arrived. Glenroth's soldiers were mostly greenhorns, but unlike other bands they were not pardoned outlaws or drunks. However, Glenroth mourned for the adventures he would never have. Then one warm summer's day, adventure nearly smacked him in the face.

"Fire! The woods are burning to the west!" cried Tye, a young sharp-eyed fellow who was

skilled with the bow and always rode point. "Fire? Are you sure it isn't cabin smoke?" responded Glenroth. "See for yourself! Cabin smoke isn't that thick, unless the cabin is on fire!" was Tye's prompt reply. Glenroth grabbed his telescope (useful for chasing bandits) and scanned the western woods. There was a forest fire, all right, and it was blowing towards the village, from the looks of it. Glenroth instantly snapped into action. "Jared, go to the village, get Trent and his crew down here with as much water as you can find. Geifer, Terrak and Androctus, you three guard the horses. The rest of you, take buckets and come with me. We'll try to keep the fire under control." With that, he seized his bucket and jumped off his horse. His men followed him as he charged into the woods.

Jared nearly flew into the town, so fast he rode. Unlike the other solders, he was born here, and knew that his family's lands were doomed if the fire was not stopped. He jumped off his horse in front of a small group of buildings, most of them sheds. This was Trent Bearskin's home and the town fire brigade's storage. "Trent! There's a fire in the woods, burning towards the village! Get your men assembled!" Trent, who was napping on the porch, jumped up from his rest. "A fire, says ye? Big an' headin' fer the town? I'll be right to it! Just be waiting a few seconds, an' that fire'll be as good as out!" He entered his home and flew back with a horn, that he blew so hard it must have shaken the eastern peaks. Within minutes, the fire squad had all entered the yard and were quickly loading all manner of buckets and pumps onto the backs of mules.

Glenroth and his band quickly found a stream, in which they filled their buckets. They then continued for half an hour. The smell of smoke was now very present, and the roaring flames could be heard in the distance. Glenroth was fearful of entering the smoke, where his men and he would probably suffocate, and so he split the

group apart to try and control the fire. He also told them to blow on their hunting horns if they were in trouble. He heard the sound of Trent's horn in the village, but recognized it. However, right after the horn blow, another horn sounded. It was not nearly as loud, and much nearer. He quickly began a sprint towards the sound.

It took very little time to assemble the firemen's gear, and in very little time they set out. However; a stubborn mule and all of the equipment they carried held them back. The smoke was now quite visible, and Jared was surprised that the fire had spread so quickly. He doubted that the firemen could be able to control the fire, but read determination on every face. This town and forest were their lives. They would do anything to save their families and fields from the flames.

Glenroth rushed into a clearing and nearly choked from fright. In the centre of the clearing stood one of the most fearsome beasts known to man: a dragon. The creature was covered with green scales, and was larger than the mayor's home in the village. It seemed to have abandoned fanning the flames and was now searching through the bushes for the horn blower. It quickly gave up, and returned to its task. It had assembled a massive amount of dry bushes and dead trees, which it hurled into the fire as one hurled sticks into a campfire. It was also fanning the flames with its wings, directing it towards the town. Glenroth decided he had found the cause of the fire. He also decided to remain hidden. However, he then caught sight of the horn blower. Tye was hiding in a nearby thicket, and had an arrow notched, Glenroth knew that even the best-aimed arrow had no chance of penetrating the beast's scales. He gestured furiously in Tye's direction, but to no avail. Tye loosed the arrow, which zipped through the air to strike the massive beast's scales. The arrow struck with a loud crack as it snapped in two. The head



crumpled, and both ends fell to the ground, the dragon remaining undamaged. The dragon, upon feeling the impact, turned in the direction of the shot's origin. Glenroth, not having time to hide, had no idea what to do, and stood still, hoping that the dragon wouldn't see him. It did. "Well, well, well... the humans tire of slaying defenseless babies, and have come to face a full grown dragon... truly, I had not thought you to be so foolish." Glenroth, knowing he had merely seconds to respond, said, "I didn't kill your babies!" The dragon growled viciously. "Well of course YOU didn't. But humans did. That is enough to warrant the burning of your village. Now if you aren't here to die then be gone. I have no time to waste. You humans shall pay for destroying my young!" It turned back to the fire. "Wait!" shouted Glenroth. The dragon whipped around, looking enraged. "Humans can't be held accountable for the slaying because... because... because slaying dragons is illegal! Those men were outlaws! And I was hunting them!" He decided a lie was in good order at this moment. This seemed to pique the dragon's interest. "What? You say that you humans have laws prohibiting the killing of dragons? Then why were my young killed? You lie!" The dragon was now engaged. Glenroth quickly answered, "No, it's true! Most humans follow laws, but some are immoral and will do anything for gold! It is these men who slew the babies! Please, don't destroy the village for the actions of a few men!" The dragon seemed to have calmed down. "So you mean that these outlaws ... you were hunting them for killing dragons?" "Yes! But we were stopped because the fire was more of a threat! If you help us put it out, we will be able to bring these men to justice more quickly!" The dragon thought about this, for a few moments. "Yes, I suppose I have been hasty. I shouldn't have been so quick to blame all humans for the killing. This

shouldn't have happened. I have to put out the fire..." The dragon then raised its head towards the sky and began a rolling chant that seemed to echo from all directions. The once clear sky began filling with black thunderheads that centred over the fire. Then began the downpour, smothering the flames with its falling drops of water. It hammered the fire out of existence, and soon the flames had been cleansed. Then the sky cleared. The sun shined across the woods, and now all was well.

Later, as the firemen arrived to scale out the damage, they found the bodies of several small dragons, along with those of a large basilisk. The basilisk had apparently mistaken the baby dragons for its young, taking them to its nest, and though the mother dragon was saddened that the babies' deaths could have been avoided, she knew that blaming the humans had been a mistake. Glenroth had lied to the dragon, but decided to change that. He petitioned the mayor, the governor and the king to sign laws prohibiting the slaying of dragons. He argued that it was as much for the safety of humans as for that of dragons. Eventually, the king agreed. Laws were signed, and patrols were redistributed to catch dragons hunters. Glenroth worked tirelessly to stop such wrongdoers, and his patrol became famous for catching dragon hunters.

# J'aurais tant aimé

Nadia Laquerre, Fort Smith

C'est en allant vivre chez mon père que j'ai tout compris. Nous partions d'abord une fois de temps en temps rendre visite à cet homme qui nous avait abandonné quelques années plus tôt. J'étais toute petite à l'époque et je ne comprenais pas grand chose aux histoires des adultes. Ce n'est que bien des années plus tard, alors que le soleil se couchait sur le lac, que j'ai embrassé ma destinée.

La première fois que je suis arrivée sur la terre, j'ai voulu repartir aussi vite que nous étions arrivé. Une toute petite cabane de bois chambranlante nous attendait avec sur son perron ... ma grand-mère. Quelle déception, moi qui mourrait d'envie de voir mon père. Celui-ci était parti à la chasse aux lièvres avec grand-père. Je ne pouvais m'imaginer que trois personnes pouvaient vivre dans une aussi petite maison, encore moins que moi et mon frère y resterions. Ce n'est plusieurs heures plus tard que mon père, accompagné par mon grand-père, franchi la porte d'entrée.

Dans chacune des ses mains pendait deux petits lapin. Il déclara fièrement qu'il y avait quelque chose pour le souper et moi, toute penaude, je demandais à grand-mère si nous allions mangé CA! Avec un large sourire, elle prit les lapins, les déposa sur la table et me demanda d'aller chercher le couteau posé sur la cuisinette. Je m'exécuta et revint à la table pour le lui donner. Sans un mot, elle refusa le couteau et me montra comment dépecer les animaux. Ce soir là, se fut la première fois que je mangeais de la viande sauvage. Le lièvre avait été bouilli avec des légumes de jardin d'été. Grand-mère me montra l'endroit où elle conservait les légumes, comment d' biter le petit gibier et comment tanner les peaux. Grand-mère étrait très savante. Elle connaissait le secret des plantes et m'enseigna le respect de la nature. Elle disait souvent, que nous retournerons tous un jour de part là où l'on est venu. Elle parlait peu, mais elle n'avait point besoin

des mots. Ses gestes toujours exactes exprimaient ses pensées. Le jour où elle est repartie de par là où elle est venue fut jour de grande tristesse. C'est comme si on m'abandonnait une deuxième fois.

Ce fut mon père, jusqu'à présent assez absent, qui est venu me trouver et qui m'a sorti de ma torpeur. Il m'a mené par les bois pour la première fois. D'habitude, c'était une activité réservée aux garçon où seul mon frère et grand-père allaient. Mais ce jour là, se fut que lui et moi. Longuement il m'a parlé d'elle, de ce qu'elle avait fait pour lui et de l'estime qu'il lui portait. Nous nous arrêâmes ce jour là pour manger notre baluchon sur le dos d'une toute petite colline qui plongeait dans un lac d'un bleu magnifique. Ce lac, je l'ai souvent rencontré par la suite. Il est devenu mon meilleur ami. Père a fait un feu pour faire bouillir la soupe et pour nous réchauffer. Puis, il a continué de parler d'elle. Je ne savais quoi penser des mots qui venaient contredire mon coeur. Mais grand-mère disait toujours que seul le coeur parlait honnêtement. Je regardais cet homme dressé devant moi, habile comme le chat, que je connaissais à peine. Il était assex grand et portait les cheveux longs. Sa peau était balzannée et trouée par le soleil. Il connaissait tout de la forêt et était maintenant prêt à partager son savior. Ce jour là, nous restâmes longtemps dehors.

Rentré à la maison, grand-père nous attendait inquiet. Il sermonna Père en lui disant que le jour était tombé depuis longtemps déjà et qu'il aurait dû rentrer à la maison avec le souper. Père lui montra alors le fruit de notre chasse puis fila dehors pour blucher le bois. Je pris les perdrix et me mis à le découper. Pendant se temps, mon frère mettait la table. Celui-ci m'assailla de toutes sortes de questions sur mon expédition mais je resta muette non pas parce que je n'avais rien à dire mais bien parce que Père m'avait fait promettre de ne rien dire.

Les jours suivants, Père et moi disparaissions

dans les bois pendant des heures. C'était maintenant à son tour de me transmettre son savoir. Un bel après-midi d'automne, il me parla d'elle encore. Il pleurait. Ce fut la première et dernière fois qu'il se laissa aller aux larmes devant moi. Était-ce des larmes de tristesse ou d'amertume? Je n'en su rien. Il me montra mon photo froissée, qu'il gardait dans ses poches. "Tu lui ressemble beaucoup" se contenta-t-il de dire. Puis, il se leva et me quitta. À son retour, il avait une mine contrariée et dit: "Fille, tu es maintenant en âge de connaître le mariage. Il set l'heure pour toi de partir. Dès l'aube, grand-père t'emmènera au village voisin." Stoïque, je le regardais sans comprendre l'étendu de ses paroles. Ce jour là, il me poussait hors de la maison paternel sans grande conviction.

Ce n'est que bien des années plus tard, je réussis à mettre tout les morceaux de casse-tête ensemble. Mon grand-père avait quitté se monde pour rejoindre grand-mère. Mon frère avait marié une jeune fille du village de mon mari. Père était parti à la chasse sans jamais revenir. Moi, j'avais alors deux beaux enfants déjà grands et ils connaissaient tout sur la forêt et les plantes. Je considèrais alors que ma mission ici bas s'achevait. Je me souvins alors, de Père pleurant sur la colline. Ce jour là, il m'avait demandé pardon. Aujourd'hui, il était reparti vivre sa vie sauvage et bohème. Il nous avait abandonné ma mère, mon frère et moi parce qu'il se sentait pris au piège. Il nous avait accueilli dans sa cabane de bois rongé par les remords et les pressions de grand-mère. Il avait pleuré toutes ses années, la vie qu'il aurait aimé nous offrir mais don't il était incapable. Sa nature ne lui permettait pas la vie sédentaire et attaché. Son coeur était volage. Il voulait gambadé, joué et communié avec la vie. Était-il plus heureux en exit? Je comprenais surtout que pour lui, j'étais elle. Ma mère, si belle et si disparate à ses rêves. Le mariage ne les avait pas rapprocher. Elle voulait vivre à la ville, lui voulait vivre de par les bois. Elle voulait de belles robes, il se contentait de peaux tannés. Elle avait du caractère, lui préférait la paix. Elle n'a jamais voulu

faire de concessions, il avait tout donné. De cette captivité est né mon frère et moi. Nous rprésentions un passé qu'on veut oublier. Assise seule devant les profondeurs de mon lac, je pria pour Père. "Père je te pardonne. Court les bois sans honte. Tu es maintenant libre, sois heureux. J'aurais tant aimé te le dire de vive voix mais le vent s'en chargera pour moi. La vie est belle et bonne. Je suis heureuse."

## Time Ticking

James Simpson, Wha Ti

I keep thinking times will never change  
Keep on thinking things will  
Always be the same  
We stay at home talking  
On the telephone  
And we would get excited  
And we got so scared  
Laughing at ourselves thinking  
Life's not fair  
And this is how it feels  
I keep; keep thinking that it's not good-bye  
Keep on thinking it's our time to fly  
And this is how it feels  
Will we think about tomorrow?  
Like we think about now?  
Can we survive it out there?  
Can we make it somehow?  
I guess I thought that this  
Would never end  
And suddenly it's like we're  
Together  
Will the past be a shadow that  
Will follow us around  
Will these memories fade  
When I leave this jail?  
I keep, keep thinking that it's  
Not good-bye  
Keep on thinking it's  
Our time to fly

# Usurper

Kathie McNeill, Yellowknife

~~And there it goes again:~~

The last of what was left,  
The depletion of the stores,  
The bottom of the barrel,  
The fumes left in the tank.

~~I have given it all to you.~~

I do not charge you for it,

Though I believe I should.

My reserves are priceless

And in short supply now.

~~But I can never satisfy you.~~

Your desires are insatiable.

What I have to offer you,

Although it is the best of me,

Never seems to be enough.

~~I am left with dregs.~~

One day I will stop this,

And let you take no more.

I will save the best for me

And you will get nothing.

~~That is as it should be.~~

And yet, a misplaced sense

Of duty serves to keep me here,

Catering to your every need

While neglecting my own.

~~I wonder how I got to this point?~~

I don't know why I allow it.

Inside, I know this is not right,

But it seems easier to submit

Than to find the will to fight.

~~Apparently, I let you take that too.~~