



# *Visions 15*

## **Table of Contents**

102nd First Date by Albert Fowell

Connecting by Albert Fowell

Innocent by Albert Fowell

Untitled by Antonio Nesbet

Baby When by Carla Ananast

Aboriginal Gathering by Coreen Kasokeo

Healing Circle by Darrell Strongarm

Fabric Tales by Eugene Peequaquat

Fabric's Casting by Eugene Peequaquat

The Man Who Influenced My Life by Frances MacEachern

The Big City by Debra Keenatch

Going Insane by Anonymous

To Be Alone by Anonymous

Whispered Name by John Scarfe

The Things Kids Say by Lee Ann R. Gladue

The Dancing Trail by Lori Arcand

House Fire by Misty Hanson

Raising Children by Robbin Vermette

The Consequences of Suicide by Robbin Vermette

Adam's Peak by Anonymous

Our Camping Trip by Anonymous

About the Artists

***Visions is dedicated to  
the students and staff of Basic Education***

*Thank you to those students who contributed  
stories, poetry and art to this anthology.*

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**Lonely Tavern**

Wishing words in the dark can be  
heard, small cries in the night can be  
Seen falling from afar.

To shrug a shoulder, to shed a tear,  
To show a happy frown, is telling  
A story that is mine.

Being trapped in here is worse than  
Any prison or windowless room, yet  
The loudest yells, the loudest cries will  
Still not be heard.

I still am here sitting in the dark next to  
You.

By Albert Fowell

## **102<sup>nd</sup> First Date**

Moonlight and candles can be set in  
The open outdoors. Looking deep into  
Your love's eyes, the moonlight and  
Candles know no compromise.

The love we see is not with the eyes,  
But with our hearts, and we shall never  
Go blind. The flickering light of the moon  
Will always be there to guide us, even  
In the darkest of night.

When setting moonlight and candles,  
Let the first flicker be it, and hold her  
Ever so tightly in your arms, looking  
Your love in her eyes tell her you love her  
So

You might be surprised, a little light will  
Never die if it is from your heart and not  
Your eyes.

By Albert Fowell

## Connecting

As two leaves fall from the sky, I look up.  
I can see the past, present and future. From  
The past I see the hardship of two people in love  
And just barely making it by. I can feel their pain  
And sorrow of not knowing if they will be there  
Tomorrow.

With the present I see a little boy and his father  
Looking up at some dying trees. The father has a  
Look of sadness and confusion not knowing where  
They are going from there.

The boy turns to his father and says, "This is  
The end of the struggling life, and the beginning of  
New life."

Now when I go back to that very spot years later,  
With my son, from the sky two leaves fall. I watch them fall  
To the ground. "Son, don't worry . Everything is going  
To be all right." "I know Daddy, because it is the end of the  
Struggle and the beginning of a new life."

By Albert Fowell

## Innocent

The tree in my back yard stands strong;  
Held in place by a good set of roots  
That give the tree its strength and its place in my world  
And in my back yard. The seasons beat on my tree year after year,  
Yet the tree in my back yard still stands strong, never falling  
To a sudden storms.

The tree in my back yard is a symbol of me;  
Together we stand, together we fight on,  
Together we feel the freedom as the air fills our pores,  
Together we are held in place by the same thing that  
Gives us life.

The tree in my back yard shows know no fear as chains  
Are wrapped around its branches, yet it shows no  
Fear, strong and steady it stays, the leaves start to  
Bleed from its branches, yet not a sign of fear, not  
Even a sappy tear.

The tree in my back yard is still a symbol of me, and  
Together we share the same fate. The digger comes to  
Dig; chain are placed around my branches and my trunk,  
And just like the tree in my back yard I show no fear,  
I stay standing strong and silent, no sappy tears from  
Me; the chains dig and cut into my branches, the red  
Leaves stream down my hands. Soon no pain will be found,  
Bound I am to the chair I have to share, soon the cool air I  
Breathe will not fill my every pore and I will see and feel freedom  
No more.

By Albert Fowell

## Untitled



I am a poor, covered soul  
So far from where,  
I am tempted to go.  
Scavenging through, life's very constant blows  
So far from where  
I'm determined to go.  
Wish I knew the way to reach the one I love, there is no way.  
Wish I had the charm to attract the one I love,  
but you see I've got no charm.  
Tonight I've consumed much more than I can hold,  
all this is very clear to you.  
And you can tell I've never really loved.  
You can tell by the way I sleep all day.  
And all of my life, no one gave me anything.  
No one has ever given me anything.  
My love is as sharp as a needle in your eye,  
you must be a fool to pass me by.

Antonio Nesbet

## **Baby When**

Baby, when will you come back

Baby, when I fall asleep with a smile on my face  
Know, it's because of you

Baby, when I dream sweet dreams  
Know, they're only of you

Baby, when I'm cold at night  
Know, it's because I need you to hold me tight

Baby, when I cry  
Know, it's because you had to say good-bye

Baby, when I lie awake in bed  
Know, it's because the words you said

Baby, when our love fades to black  
Know, it's because I'm waiting for you to come back

Carla Ananas

## **Aboriginal Gathering**

It is a hot summer afternoon on August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2001. People are gathered all over the park to celebrate their native culture as they do at least twice a year. This is part of the cultural way of meeting people and having fun. They held mini Pow Wow, and feast or dinner, handcrafts and many other activities for the event.

Some of the younger generation doesn't know their cultural and native ways, but this kind of gathering gives them ideas of how the system works. Some of them get pretty interested in what goes on in native societies. A group of people pitch the tipi, so the elder can pray and smudge for all their people and talk to the Creator.

Each person is at the gathering for his or her own reasons. Sabrina goes there for her own reasons. Sabrina has been looking forward to this day for a long time, and she keeps telling her grandma and Auntie to hurry because she still needs to get ready for the Pow-Wow. Sabrina practices dancing quietly with the Pow-Wow songs on her mind. She is an intelligent and happy little girl, and today she is anxious for things to start. She just can't wait although things won't start for an hour or two. In the mean time, she decides to spend time with her friends that just arrived for the event which are getting ready for the Pow-Wow. They are all excited. They dance Pow-Wow because its part of their beliefs and culture.

While Sabrina does her own thing, Grandma spreads her blanket on the ground and sits there to watch the people going by looking for a place to sit down and have dinner. While she waits for the activities to begin, Grandma watches for someone she recognizes to visit with. That's what she came for. Soon, Uncle Harry comes to sit beside her, and talk about the event. Uncle Harry is going to volunteer for the activities, which he does every year. Grandma is proud of him for helping out.

Aunt Maggie isn't paying attention to anyone or anything. She's in her own little world as she sits quietly by the tipi working on her beadwork. She's making beaded moccasins for the handcraft display. Aunt Maggie enjoys making handcraft because its one of her hobbies. There are a lot of questions about her work and how much benefit she put into her work. She enjoys answering in a simple way.

The day turns out to be a wonderful day for all of them. As they get ready to leave, they are each thinking about the next gathering to come. Sabrina is sad when the day is over, but one important thing is that she enjoyed every moment of it. Grandma is shaking hands with everyone as they are leaving. Aunt Maggie is happy that the day is over and that it turned out just fine. They all pack up, since the day is over. They had a good time and the day turned out to be beautiful. The sun was shining, the wind was calm . . . it was just fabulous!

Coreen Kasokeo

## **Healing Circle**

The people of the circle came from all around; they came from the four directions. Each had a purpose in life. They brought gifts with them for the Creator as the spirits had directed them in their dreams. The first one from the east brought with him the light bringing new life, joy, and happiness. The second one from the south brought with him love, discipline, and the heart. The third one, from the west, brought the unknown, darkness, dreams, spiritual insight and respect for others. Now the fourth member from the north brought with him wisdom, understanding, organization, and problem solving, and when they all arrived at the place they were sent to, they combined all their knowledge and made the circle.

Darrell Strongarm

## **Fabric Tales**

I remember there was a campfire flickering, and its glowing embers were lifting into the night. With the sun down...it's dark; "It's time," sez an old man who's walking his limp around the fire, masking and controlling his emotions with a small smile. He was an odd looking elder, an old warrior, perhaps a centurion elder. Before, he began, he would stare and glare at you until he got everyone's attention. His name was Old Fabric; his given name was Fabric but "Old" was added when he'd told a pint too many old blood tales. Finally, he'd begin spinning his tales like a spider with a giant crafty web.

"Has anyone here ever heard or seen a Mirage Indian," he asked as he looked around at me and the others who were listening. "They really do exist. Just like the magical Elves, or the mysterious Loch Ness and what about Big Foot? It was a long time ago before there were Cree, Blackfoot, Chipeweyan, or Ojibwa. No branches or roots connected them. Not even the Shoshone, Crow, Sioux, Cheyenne or Apaches were around yet. There were just Mirage Indians everywhere you looked. It was said the Mirage Indians were the only ones around when the Creator made the world in seven spins; for each spin he took, he made an ocean and a continent.

Then the Creator had given the keys and secrets of our world to a certain Mirage Indian and who was not a chief or a councillor; none of these existed. He was just a wise old man who had given the Creator some advice on how the world should be shaped. "Round" is what the wise old man said. "What about the moon?" the Creator asked. "I think that should be round also," said the old man."Why would you want the world to be round the same as the moon?" asked the Creator. Because I don't want the other coloured skins falling off this world when they cross over one of your seven seas just to see what it's like on this side of the world and to meet the old man who is the guiding legacy. He's revealed to the world many facts and secrets; he came sliding down from Mount Manitou upon a rainbow because he is to lead those few mirage Indians who left. He'll show those few mirage Indians that they have not become extinct. They may be hiding, but they are as real as the Hollywood Indians who live in two or three storey high tipis in Beverly Hills.

How do you know what's it like when you finally meet a mirage Indian? First, he smiles with generosity, and you get a great feeling from him once you've shaken his hand. You'll know he's very real, and from his touch, you'll feel a positive charge of life. In his brown eyes, you'll see a glimmer or a sparkle showing that he has conquered the obstacles the Creator has given him. He might be the perfect specimen that every race claims to have; he is very clean and pure.

The mirage Indians usually farm for a living. They hunt and track down large herds of buffalo. They capture and raise the wild buffalo in corrals called bushes. There is nothing that is impossible for the Mirage Indian. It's legendary that when he hunts, he kills with one stone using a small calibre slingshot or sometimes as many as five granite stones to drop a bigger moose.

It was almost fifty summers ago when an Indian stranger walked into our village and took a bride. She was a summer Princess; she was one of the tribe's most respected people when she became a princess for a youth council. The Indian stranger had given the father of the bride fifty horses for his daughter's hand in matrimony.

The marriage ceremony was very traditional with a flower garden surrounding a new tipi freshly made for the newlyweds. It seemed the whole tribe was ecstatic for the newlyweds. The men and women of the tribe pitched in and had a huge feast. The women of the tribe sewed the tent while the men hunted and slaughtered ten buffalo which would be enough for everyone in the village.

Life was blissful for ten summers until Death reached out with his strong grip one stormy night. Lightning had struck them both while they rode as a pair; they often went out horse back riding together. Fortunately, they had already produced four sons. The eldest was Bearpaw who went east, the second was Wolfprint; he went to the west. Next was Owlhoot who flew to the south. Last, there was Fabric. He went North, and he is going to stay here in the North for a long time.

Eugene Peequaquat©/2000

## **Fabric's Casting**

See that Indian walking into that bush over there. When he came into camp late last night, he first spoke to the whippers in the camp. They are what you call the traditional enforcers within the camp, and the whippers make sure all children are sleeping in the tents, and they watch also for anyone else who is roaming around the grounds. They watch over the camp very closely like guardians should.

When that man walked in from the dark holding a hunting sack filled with snared rabbits, "forty of them" he said. Then, he asked if the whippers were hungry, and it was close to midnight, so everyone agreed that they were hungry. So, cook your rabbit however you want it: however you like: roasted, fried or in a pot of soup, but first you have to skin 'em he said as he threw the sack of dead rabbits near the campfire.

One by one, each whipper reached into the sack and pulled out a rabbit, skinned it, and took a long stick and roasted the delicacy over a fire. There are twenty whippers having a midnight snack with what's his name again? "Fabric," says the leading whipper. "Fabric is his name, and don't you forget it cause he's an original: one of the kindest Indians you can come across." So believe what he has to say. Everyone watches Fabric eat a rabbit; he lifts his arm as he wipes his mouth with a cloth, and when he finishes his meal, he pulls out a root to chew on. Then, he goes on to say " My name is Fabric Merges."

I am one of the last mirages left, and I made my way towards the Grand Canyon.

That's where I found "Bearpaw." He was with the canyon bears; he is one of my brothers, and, in fact, he is my oldest brother. Bearpaw left the tribe of my mother's people who are known as the Sky Tribe. What he seeks for in life, I don't know; maybe he's was trying to get rid of the pain of losing our parents, and maybe he's still blaming himself; at least, that's what Kokum says. "Do you listen to your kokum? "

I think you should 'cause you never know how long her life will be. My kokum is from my mother's side, and she is the Matriarch of the tribe; she can speak a lot of different Indian languages too. She told me when I was old enough, I could look for him and the others, and that's what I did.

When I got to the Grizzly Canyon, now known as the Grand Canyon, my mouth was so dry, I needed water to quench my parched throat and for a bath. I looked down and spotted a stream reflecting light from the bottom of the canyon. On that day, it was so hot that there was something like two suns out that day. At least that's what it felt like. I made it to the bottom of the canyon and followed the stream as it widened. There, I found a small stream coming out as an underground river, and when I pulled out a wedged rock, the river busted out. The heat and the pressure of the cool water must have knocked me unconscious; I don't know for how long cause I remember seeing one of the suns going down, so it must have been a full day. On the second day, I was laying beside a beautiful river in a dazed state and scared stiff. I got up to stretch my arms and legs and reached for the sky. I finally asked myself what happened?

It still seemed like it had been a dream. When I pulled out the big rock, the stream rushed out towards me like a water punch and knocked me out. The water was then sucked back into a little stream, and I was swallowed whole by the silver underground river. Then I was saved by a brown shadowy form which seemed like a bear from the jaws clamped on my buffalo shirt.

I checked on my buffalo shirt to see if I was dreaming, but it was obvious that bear's teeth had ripped my buff shirt. I checked myself to see if I was missing a limb: an arm or a leg. Nope! All my body parts were intact, and as I looked around for something to eat. You know what I saw? Cooked fish were lying on the hot rocks a couple of steps away, so, I ate the fish. Salmon happens to be a bear's favorite meal, so I pondered on the events up to now. In fact, it seemed that I had passed into the spirit world although I wasn't dead. I was very much alive, and I stomached all five cooked salmon, and that was very real. All that thinking had gotten me tired, so I went to sleep thinking that in the morning, I will find Bearpaw.

How fast that morning came. I was thirsty once more, and since I'd had a really good night's sleep, I went to the edge of the flowing river to drink, and that was when I first noticed a cave in an L shape. I could see movement out of the corner of my eye, and bears were coming out of that cave as I watched . . . a large group of bears . . . 20 or so. In my chest, I could feel my heart thumping real hard and although I know I can trick one bear by playing dead and lying still, I don't know about twenty bears!

I must've prayed my hardest that day 'cause none of the bears seemed to notice me when they surrounded me to get a drink of that cool river. It seemed like the longest moment of my life when all those bears lined up to take turns drinking. After they were done, the biggest of the grizzlies walked into the river to bat the fish out. While smaller ones waited on the banks collecting the fish

until they had enough for the biggest bear feast in grizzly history, and still they shared with me. Indeed, four more fish were thrown my way and this time I was no longer afraid of the grizzlies. Eventually, I tried to get up, but I couldn't, and that was when I first heard the grizzlies' voices say, " You can get up now; Bearpaw will be home soon."

I looked at my hand and it wasn't a hand; instead it was a grizzly's paw; I somehow had turned into a grizzly myself, and the voice told me to relax. It was just shape shifting, shape changing and everyone here has mirage blood.

Eugene Peequaquat©/2000

February 14, 2002 - Valentine's Day!

## **The Man Who Influenced My Life**

Earl . . . he's my best friend. I admire and respect his honest and sincere approach to life. I met Earl when I was very young. My mom was very sick all the time and my dad was blind. Therefore, at times my family life was not very stable. In some ways, I feel Earl finished raising me when my parents no longer could. He took over where they left off. Over the years I've come to appreciate his many talents, quiet sense of humour and touch of flair for the good life!

When our daughter Chrissy miscarried twins, he had the challenge of keeping us going. He was strong, and a great ear for listening late into the night. No matter what has come to pass in our lives, he has been a pillar of strength to us. He reached out to our daughters and me in one of our greatest trials in life. When our daughter Jackie was critically ill, Earl usually took the night shift at British Columbia Children's Hospital. Earl knew how important it was for me to have some time with our youngest daughter, Becky, since she was to become the bonemarrow donor. She arrived in Vancouver, a very young scared girl who needed positive reinforcement. In his outstanding way, Earl did what needed doing in his own special manner. He took the longest, hardest position to do what needed doing for Jackie's care. After all is said and done, things didn't work out and we buried our daughter. He did what had to be done, and did a lot of listening to all of us on the long road to recovery.

Earl is a great father and grandfather. He works away from home most of the time, but over the years, he managed to be home for the most critical moments. It seems to work out that way. He always reaches out with steady

firm hands and grips us in his heart. We feel his strength, then the world tilts back on its axis, all is right again!

People Earl works with often tell me he's a kind and fair boss. He has compassion for the guys he works with. He has patience to train new workers and put them at ease. They tell me that when they were new they quaked in their boots, but he put them at ease with his quiet and kind sincere approach. If there is something to do at home or the church or for the company he works for, he tries to put his heart and soul into what he takes on. He shows respect to anyone in his path and in return he gets it back in full. He's my best friend, my lover, (you guessed) my husband, John Earl MacEachern!

Frances MacEachern



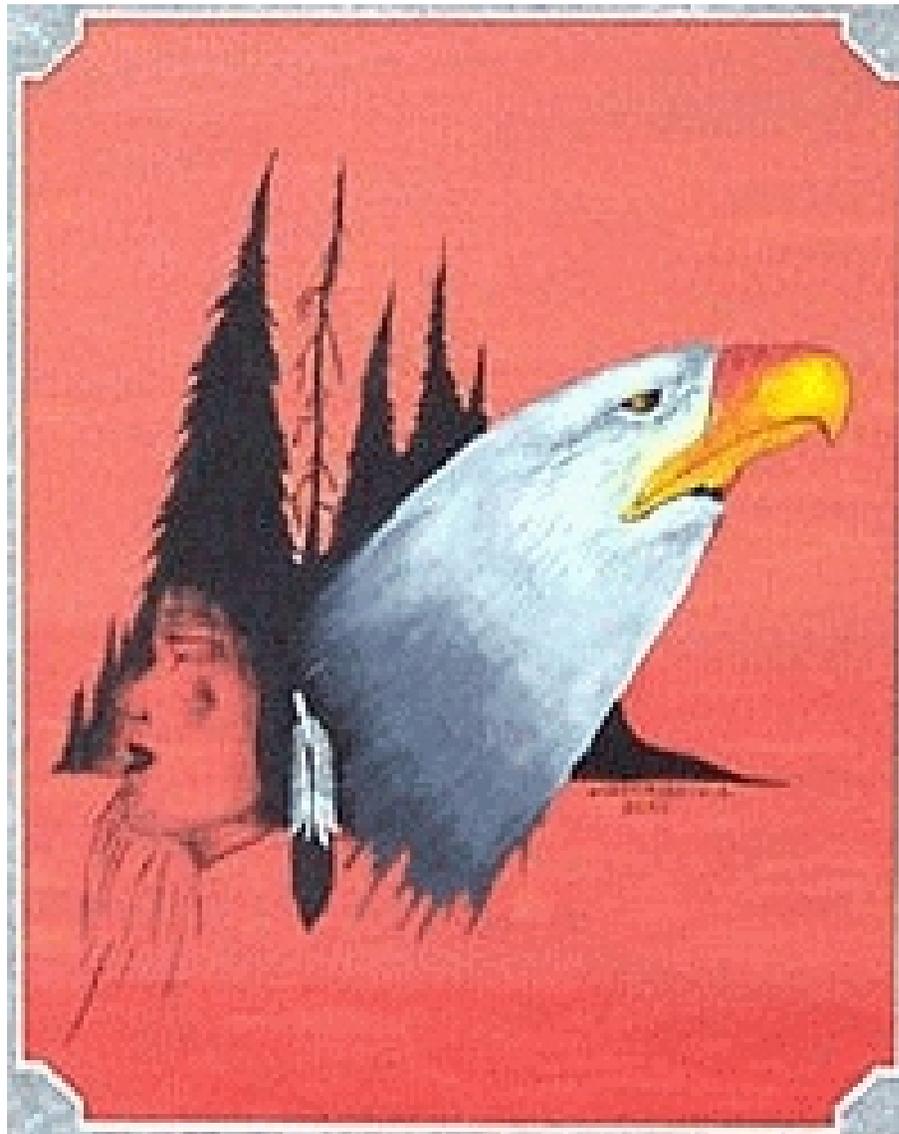
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Orest Robillard



Orest Robillard



Orest Robillard

## **The Big City**

Herman was brought up in Whitefish Reserve until he was eighteen and then left for the big city of Vancouver. Herman told many stories about his growing up in Whitefish before leaving for Vancouver. One story was pretty sad. His mother and father were alcoholics and later died in a car accident. Herman was really destroyed by this incident because he was the only child. He then left Whitefish when he was eighteen and told his friends he had to run away from his sadness. Herman had never gone to school all his life because he had to stay home and look after his parents when they came home drunk. Herman is now in Vancouver and is fifty years old. He never wrote to tell his city stories or to tell us how he made out. The only picture he ever sent was this one of him facing the other way. I assume that he was living on the streets only because there is a tarp on the trees for shade and a pillow that he probably sleeps on. I wish that Herman would turn his life around and not live the way he is today.

Debra Keenatch

## Going Insane

I walk alone on a dark street,  
Thinking, wondering,  
Where will I go, what will I do,  
What will I become, where am I from?

In the street light I see them there,  
People from my past, and present,  
Looking at me with disgust in their eyes,  
Mocking me, taunting me,  
Making me go insane.

I walk alone on the street of life,  
Looking, searching for a sign,  
To lead me down the path that's mine.

In the distance I see them there,  
People from my past, and present,  
Waiting, knowing,  
That I will take the wrong path,  
Leading me to a place gone bad,  
Making me sad.

I stand alone on the platform of life or death,  
Thinking, wondering,  
Will I die today or live to pay?

In the shadows I see them there,  
People from my past, and present,  
Asking me, telling me,  
To live another day,  
Making me pay.

Anonymous

## To Be Alone

To be alone

and watch the dawn

It could create

a silly song

About a girl

I used to know

She was the star

of the lost side show

She wasn't me

she wasn't you

Believe you me

she knew what to do

And say to a man on

the end of his tether

"Hey, fine handsome Man,

there'll be a change in the  
weather"

So what am I

supposed to do

Just sit alone

and chew my shoe

I need a love

no more than she

And yet no less

and no regrets

If you can fill me in

on my telephone

I'd be a sadder,

wiser son of a gun

I'll just this

about all that

I was the mouse

who caught the cat

I don't intend

To give you no points  
of view

I just mean to tell you

I'm alone

Anonymous

## Whispered Name

It seemed during my youth that our family was constantly on the move, an almost annual nomadic shift to a different house or apartment. These moves would be prompted by a change in jobs, as my father improved his position in a company, or shifted to another firm. Such is the life of a salesman. When not on the road, he was exhausted into unconsciousness on his brief visits home. The apparition of my father's form on the couch, while my mother cooked supper or chased the other kids around the house, is mostly what I remember of him. These moments in memory were blessedly broken by the pilgrimage each year to the lake.

My mother's grandfather owned a cabin, and during each summer, we would visit. We would spend a month each summer staying at this cabin which seemed like my only real home. The house we would move to and from never became home to me, so the lake was the next best thing. Even now in my adult life, when someone mentions the word "homesick", my thoughts are automatically drawn to that little yellow and green cabin surrounded by pine forest.

I would wake each morning with the wind whispering through the tops of the trees, and crows chattering back and forth. Even before I had opened my eyes, I knew by those sounds that I was home. The smell of eggs and bacon or pancakes would fill the room, along with the combined heat of cooking and an early August morning. My mother and grandmother would fight to keep me in a kitchen chair long enough to eat breakfast. Then I was off like a shot, down to the lake or to the town-site.

My first memory is of the sidewalks in the town-site. A memory of tiny shoes on tiny legs running on that dimpled concrete, while my mother chased the younger version of myself. Also co-mingled in that memory of running, is the sound of laughter as I ran, the sound of unbridled joy in the impromptu game of tag. This memory was buried somewhere deep in my brain until recently, when I visited the lake again with my new wife. It had been years since I'd been to the town-site and to the cabin, but looking again at the sidewalks, that first memory hit me like a truck. Memories of youth overwhelmed me then: sights, smells, sounds all fell like rain and filled the culverts of my mind to overflowing.

The sight of home filled my heart with joy, and as I paddled out onto the shimmering water, the canoe cut through and joined with the lake. Hand, paddle, and water became one entity, and I joined with the water and the trees. The forest path opened, inviting as a lover's embrace, and her name was whispered in the treetops . . . Waskesiu.

John Scarfe

## **The Things Kids Say**

Laughter and joy are always an extraordinary experience when talking with children about life. Some of the things that kids say are simply unlikely to happen or outright factual, depending on what it is that they care to discuss. There are many stories that can be shared, for children are the prime example of truthfulness and honesty. To further explain, I was talking with my aunt the other day and the topic of children arose. A conversation she had with her ten-year-old daughter, Chelsea, was laughingly remembered. Chelsea had been asking questions about a new family member that was born the day before. The name of the newest member of our family was Sundance, and Chelsea thought it was the perfect name. After a considerable amount of time trying to explain why Aunt Josephine had named Chelsea why she did, Chelsea then added the comment, “ Mom, why didn’t you name me Sundance or Raindance then you could’ve named my brother Drydance!”

Another example, Sonny Lee, Taihre, and I were sitting at a bus stop on a hot summer day, patiently waiting for the bus. The boys were snacking on Granola bars when an elderly man sat down beside us. He started the conversation by stating, “Well that’s a good healthy snack just before lunch.” The boys proceeded to eat rather than replying to the man, which I pointed out that it may be rude to not speak when being spoken to. The boys know of a simple rule: it’s okay to talk to strangers as long as there’s an adult around.

The man said, “Well Ma’am, that is quite all right. You know, on a day like this, people should be wearing sun-screen. Are you boys wearing sun-screen today?” At the same time, the boys had shaken their heads.

The man went on. “The sun’s rays could be a very dangerous thing for your skin. I have a friend that is pretty sick today because he didn’t wear sun protection when his mother told him to. Perhaps tomorrow you boys could be wearing sun-screen? That way, twenty years from now you boys will be healthy and smiling in the sun rather than being sick in a hospital bed. Don’t you agree?” He asked.

Then Taihre, my seven-year-old nephew, said, ” Yes, but we don’t need sun-screen as much as you do because you’re whiter than we are.”

The man looked at me quite surprised and said,” And that’s a fact!”

On a more serious but memorable note, my family had gathered at my aunt’s bedside as she battled cancer during her last few days of her life. Two of my nephews had decided to make a card for my Aunt Anita as she was in and out of consciousness. When they were done, they were allowed to show her the card while she was awake. In her passing wakeful moment, she read the card and looked agitated or anxious somehow. We approached her to see what was wrong or what she may need, why she looked so troubled at the time.

“Read the card outside the room so I won’t have to laugh with you,” Aunt Anita said in a very weak voice. So, a large crowd left the room to read the card that the children had made for her. Among the colorful flowers and happy faces, sunshine and apple trees, the card read, “Roses are red. Violets are blue. Sugar is white. And so are you.” Needless to say, there was much laughter as a release to all the sadness we were feeling, and the card enlightened the pain and sorrow of what was inevitably to come.

One of the last things that my Aunt Anita had said was, “ I’ll always remember that card.”

Last but not least, Sonny Lee had expressed the most incomparable and efficient demonstration of prayer that I, as a mother would ever imagine. The thoughtfulness of love, morality, and goodness were obvious in one of his nightly prayers to the Creator. This happened when Sonny Lee was reprimanded for fighting with Taihre. Later that evening, Sonny's prayer was proclaimed, " Dear Creator, thank you for all the babies and mommies that love each other and take care of each other. Thank you for my mommy. If I forget to thank you every day for her, then tell her for me when she's doing dishes or vacuuming or cooking or studying or talking on the phone, especially when she wants to ground me. Amen." It's almost as if he knew I was listening outside the room! To conclude, children are the best medicine, for they are here to remind people of laughter, truth, and peace.

Lee Ann R. Gladue

## **The Dancing Trail**

As the spring season turns into the beautiful summer days that I have been longing for since winter, I come to realize that this is the day that I have been anticipating since the last time we all gathered together.

My people are happy people. When we haven't seen each other in a long time, we greet the other person with a smile and a handshake. If someone does not know you, they will walk up and introduce themselves, but I think I know a lot of people that return to this wonderful event year after year.

My kokum has helped me sew and bead the beautiful costume that I have designed. It is going to be like no other has ever seen. I'm so very proud, I shake when I try it on because I know today is my day to shine. My mother braids my hair, and when she's finished, I have a couple of little things to perfect on my outfit; then I will have to practice my steps which will not take long because it's what I have been doing since winter left.

When I arrive, I see all my friends and family. My uncle and my mother give me words of encouragement. I leave them with confidence.

The drum begins. My foot starts tapping to the beat of the drum. The old man starts singing his beautiful words in Cree. My body starts to shiver with fear, just knowing that everyone's eyes are going to be on me, but I think of something else. Then I begin; there is a hush of silence amongst the crowd. I have the peoples attention. I love the rush. I'm half way done and I'm sweating, but I have to finish for my people. The drum is on its last few beats; I'm finally finished. Then, I hear it: what I have been waiting for all these months: the wonderful sound of applause, whistling, and shouting. Thank you Mother Earth for everything.

Lori Arcand

## House Fire

On the day of August 29, 1988 the worst thing that could ever happen to our family occurred; my baby brother Catlin Lee Michael Crowe died at the age of three years. When my family and I had come home from the beach that night, my brother and I got ready for bed. My parents had left to celebrate a friend's anniversary; we were left with our babysitter, John. Upstairs, where the fire happened, is where all the bedrooms were. My brother's bedroom was the closest to the stairs; my parents room was in the middle and mine was at the end of the hall closest to the window. My bedroom floor was being fixed up, so they had put all my bedroom belongings in the hallway temporarily.

Around 11:00 pm I was asleep in my bed that was in the hallway when I heard my brother Catlin screaming, "Misty, help me!"

I sat up in bed and said, "What do you want?" And, because he liked to wake me up on a daily basis, I didn't think anything of it. But when I looked around my bed, I found that there were flames all around it. I was so scared that I yelled out again, "Catlin, where are you?!" He did not answer and I kept screaming for him, but still there was no answer. I ran to the end of my bed and tried to reach under, but it was too hot because of the fire. I jumped off the bed and ran down the stairs to tell the babysitter what was happening. He ran and grabbed my baby brother Zane and handed him to me and said to go outside and stay out there. I ran in and out of the house because I was so scared, until I finally went outside where there were fire trucks, police, and people from the neighbourhood. There were lights flashing and news crews. I had a whole bunch of people coming at me. Somebody took Zane from me and then I felt my feet and my legs starting to hurt, so I started crying and saying that my feet

hurt, and then I collapsed to the ground. Someone came over to me and picked me up and took me into a neighbour's house across the street and put cold wet cloths over my legs and feet, and I can remember the cloths turning red. Then I recall being put on a stretcher and, before they put me in the ambulance, my babysitter and a fireman came up to me and asked if there was another kid upstairs and I mumbled, "Yes," because I was already groggy from loss of blood and medication that they had started. But they believed that I was delusional from shock and I didn't know what I was talking about. Then they took me to the hospital.

I spent three months at the Royal University Hospital in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan with third degree burns on my left leg and second degree burns on my feet. Also I was treated for smoke inhalation and went through physiotherapy. Also I had surgery for skin grafting to my legs and feet. My brother Zane went to St. Paul's Hospital with smoke inhalation, and he was released a few days later. After they had put the fire out and moved everything around, they found my brother Catlin curled up in the fetal position under the bed; they took him to the morgue and had my father identify him, and he said that he couldn't recognise him. They said that the fire was caused by my brother playing with matches, but they had no evidence pointing to that. Besides my parents did not use matches nor did they have them in the house because they were scared one of the kids might start a house fire. Catlin died at the age of three years old, and this year he would of been 16 years old.

Misty Hanson

## **Raising Children**

My thoughts on raising children come in two ways. There are joys and troubles along the way. The joys by far outweigh the troubles. First, the newborn is a lot of fun. For example, the way that a newborn looks at their ever amazing new world. The sights and sounds around them are a joy to everyone. We enjoy the excitement that they feel. Everything is new to them. The sound of a bird, the sight of their mother, or the first smiles are many of the joys a newborn can share with others. Second, toddlers are another joy. When a baby starts walking the small steps around the coffee table, they are precious to see. When a baby is at the toddler stage of life, their independence is starting to show. They no longer need someone to feed them; no longer do they want someone to help them dress. Their first words have a cuteness to them. Third are the preschool years when they discover their artistic skills or their talent at singing or other activities the whole family can enjoy. Fourth, when the child is in Kindergarten, the association with other children is paramount. Finally, the years from seven to pre-teen are a joy when they can take a certain amount of responsibility for themselves; cleaning their rooms for seven-year-olds to the dishes for ten-to-twelve-year-olds. This is a part of growing into responsible young adults. The joys you can share with them can range anywhere from gymnastics to Girl Guides to Boy Scouts. To conclude, these are just some of many joys of raising children.

The troubles of raising children can be equally as troubling. First of all, a newborn can't tell you what they want. After they are fed, changed, burped and cuddled if they are still crying you go just about crazy trying to figure out what the problem could be. Second, when toddlers do start being more independent

they tend to fight you if you try to help them. That battle is mostly won by the toddler. Third, the preschooler is even worst than the toddler for fighting over things with other siblings and adults. Some preschoolers figure they should be allowed to go out side by themselves which is a big no-no these days. Gone are the times where you could let your youngster outside alone. The preschooler doesn't understand this and argues with you on that point. Fourth is the trouble with Kindergarten. They start the sibling rivalry over toys, parents, and others. Finally, the troubles with the seven to preteens are numerous. One of the ways that this group of children are trouble in this age group they don't know how to socialize with other children and cause other children a lot of grieve. Fighting, and picking on others are second of many troubles of the seven to preteen age group. To sum up, these are the few of many troubles with children. To conclude the joys and troubles of children are too many to mention.

Robbin Vermette

## **The Consequences of Suicide**

May 23, 2001 was very busy. It was the day I graduated for Grade 10. First, that day was busy because I was finishing the last few things I needed with my math. Next, there were a few touch ups on my grad speech, letting counsellors, instructors, and students know when I was making my grad speech; little did I know what was happening two provinces away.

This is the first time I have written about it since it happened. My cousin Kent was a happy-go-lucky 36-year-old man with a good sense of humour, who was always teasing and joking around with everyone. Kent was one year and three months older than me so I was thirty five when this happened. ( My mother and his father were sister and brother.) I'm an only child; Kent had an older brother, two younger sisters and a younger brother and was the father of a fourteen-year-old son.

Kent was more of a brother than a cousin, although I didn't realize it until he wasn't around any more. First, my mother had one sister, Aunt Beverly whose only daughter I am more in touch with now. Also, she had two sons; only one is still with us. Second, my aunt's children are a lot older than I am and they live in British Columbia, so I have hardly any contact with them. Third, my uncle was Kent's father and he lived in Grande Centre, Alberta while Kent, his brothers and sisters grew up so I was closer to my uncle's family than my aunt's.

I remember the games we use to play as children. Wade, Kent, and Andrea were the cousins I grew up with. The younger children are from my uncle's second marriage. First, there were many games of tag and war. Finally, my cousin's quirky sense of humour kicked in one day; when a four year named Robbin who would do anything her older cousin told her to do was digging for

worms ( because my name was Robbin, my cousin figured it was funny to make my dig up worms like the bird robin) in our grandparents' garden. This was according to Kent a number of years later. These and other fond memories I will always treasure.

The details are very sketchy. I don't know how or why but in Kimberly British, Columba; my cousin ended his life and affected the whole family's lives forever. All I know is that I no longer have a cousin with short, dark brown hair and a quirky sense of humour; his father no longer has a son; his son no longer has a father, and his sisters, brothers, cousins and other extended family and many friends no longer have the benefit of Kent's warmth and personality. To conclude, the irony of this situation is, Kent committed suicide two days before his thirt-seventh birthday. Finally, nothing could have prepared me for the events of May 23, 2001.

If the thought of suicide comes along, please, talk to someone, a father, mother, sister, clergy or someone else. Talk to anyone who will listen, but please don't take that drastic step! Life is worth living. Your family and friends love you. Don't let a similar tragedy befall your life or your family's lives. I know the consequences of suicide all to well.

In loving memory of Kent Ellis Babcock May 25, 1964 - May 23, 2001. Always remembered by his cousin Robbin Kathleen Vermette.



Robbin Vermette

## **Adam's Peak**

Looking down from Adams Peak on Sunshine Mountain at daybreak is the most phenomenal view. Below is a smooth, steep, beautifully coloured cliff made up of rocks and clay. The cliff leads to a small lagoon that has a series of small waterfalls running into it.

Beyond is the sun rising from distant mountain tops. Although there is a blanket of fog covering the sky, the sight of the yellowish orange sun is amazingly bright. To the left is a large waterfall with a ledge that allows you to stand behind it. The waterfall comes from within the rocks and falls into the lagoon. The sound of it is soothing as it trickles down the mountain's side, and the smell of fresh water is calming. All around is the noise of birds singing and trees rustling in the wind. In short, to savour the sounds, view, and smell of the mountain is something everyone should experience.

Anonymous

## **Our Camping Trip**

Our camping trip last year was nothing but bad luck, but since everyone was with friends it didn't seem to matter. The first day our campsite was given away, so they bumped us to overflow. That was fine until that night when it started raining; overflow was in a sort of dugout. The rain flooded our campsite and everything got soaked. The second day everyone spent hanging up their stuff to dry. My sleeping bag was repeatedly slipping into the mud and Justin's pillow was peed on by a squirrel. Later on Merv decided that a walk would be the best for all of us, but half-an-hour into the walk Scott remembered that he had left the food out. So all of us went running back to the campsite just in time to see our food had been thrown around and half eaten. The rangers later told us that they have been having troubles with bears in the area. That night everyone slept in the van because of the rain and bears. The whole night the guys told scary stories and everyone had a good time. Between the rain, bears, and lack of food everyone still had a good time.

Anonymous

**Albert Fowell:** I have been student at SIAST. Adult 10 since April 26, 2001. I was born on June 13, 1977. I wrote the poems throught different parts of my life. My life has taken some twists and turn and I choose writing as an escape, and form of therapy. I plan to go on to the Adult 12 program and live life.

**Antonio Nesbet:** SIAST. I have been at this school for two years and I'm enjoying it . I am twenty-five years of age. I have a family and a younger sister, which I love very much. I hope to graduate with excellent marks and maybe some new friends. Have a great year!

**Carla Ananas:** Hi I'm Carla. I'm a mother of four beautiful children and also attending school at SIAST. I'm working towards my grade 12. I'm from James Smith First Nations Reserve. I'm glad to have friends and family that are there to help me.

**Coreen Kasokio:** Coreen is a mother of 5 and a student in Adult 12. She has lived in Saskatoon for several years, and is determined to complete her education and reach her career goals.

**Darrell Strongarm:** My name is Darrell Strongarm. I have two kids their names are Whitney and Sarah. I was born in Lestock, Sask. My two girls were born in Saskatoon. I think I'll stay here until I'm finished school . My reserve is called Kawakatoose or Poormans, there is a lot of stuff to do in the country. I like to go there often because it puts my mind at ease when I'm at the reserve.

**Debra Keenatch:** Debra Keenatch is my name, and I am from Big River Reserve. I have one sister and four brothers. My oldest brother graduated from high school two years ago, so I'm trying real hard to be a role model to my sister and little brothers and get my education too.

**Eugene Peequaquat:** I am (with a hand over my mouth) 30 and some years old I have been writing since I was just a teen, and I enjoyed writing stories and hand-made poems because it made me feel like I just entered the world of Fantasy, a savage fantasy only I could roam and because of my problem with DNA . . . Drugs and Alcohol. For years, I wrote to impress everyone from family and friends. I always thought of writing as the focal point of my return from the staggering dead and I loved to write.

**Frances Adeline MacEachern:** I was born in Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan. I have lived in Saskatoon, most of my life. I have been married for 25 years. I have 3 daughters; one is married and has two girls and a boy, which makes me a very happy grandmother; the middle one passed away in December 1994, which leaves a sadness in my heart; and the third one is in grade 12 this year and soon will graduate. This leaves me with an empty nest syndrome. I am attending BE10 at Kelsey Campus right now. I have always liked to write short stories. My husband has always been an inspiration to me and that is the reason I have chosen to write this.

**John Scarfe:** (Adult 12) I was born and raised in Saskatoon, moved to Edmonton for a short time, then back home to the city of bridges. I've returned to school after a 17 year hiatus in hopes of upgrading for application into the commercial pilot program. However, since returning to school, more opportunities have presented themselves in regard to development of writing skills.

**Lee Ann Gladue:** Hi there! I am currently in the bridging program at SIAST Kelsey Campus, and I want to graduate by June 2003 . . . or sooner! I plan to attend a university elsewhere seeing that I've been in Saskatoon pretty well all my life. One of the courses I may want to study is journalism, so that I can write my own fiction novels. I'm also thinking of nursing, but I haven't decided yet. So much to do! I wrote this article for Ian's communications class, and he made me promise to have it published in Visions. I hope you enjoy it as much as Ian did. Good luck in the future!

**Lori Arcand:** Hi my name is Lori Arcand, and I live in Saskatoon, Sask. I just recently moved into my new home with my two children, Garrett Robert Lewis is three years old and Aubrey Breyanna Taylor is a year old. I enjoy going to visit my mother and father at my reserve of Muskeg Lake. When my children and I are visiting, we never want to leave. We really love it there because it is so peaceful.

**Misty Hanson:** I am currently enrolled in Adult 10 program at Kelsey. I was born on September 14, 1981; I am 20 years old. I have two children, Dylan, 5 years old and Chloe, 2 years old, and I am due in February with baby number three. I plan to finish the BE10 program and go on to Adult 12, or take a GED. Then I will take the Youth Care Worker program.

**Orest Robillard:** Orest was born in Uranium City and grew up in Fond du Lac in the Athabasca region. When he was 13 he moved to Prince Albert, and the next year he started art class at school. His first drawings were portraits of Elvis and sketches of motorcycles. He was always the best and fastest student at pencil drawings in his class and gave many pictures away. Later his drawings began to reflect his Dene heritage and his dreams of his northern homeland. In 2001, Orest moved to Saskatoon and furthered his study of Art at SIAST Kelsey Campus. He especially enjoys using paint to share his vision of the sky. He continues to practice painting; his next challenge will be painting on leather. He thinks that people will know him through and for his art.

**Robbin Vermette:** I was born Robbin Boulanger on Aug 6, 1965. In 1972, I was adopted and became Robbin Glover. I was Robbin Glover until I got married on Oct 7, 2000. I was born in Canada's only border city Lloydminster Alberta / Saskatchewan. I was raised by my mother and grandparents. Mom and I moved to Saskatoon in August 1977. When mom died in 1981 when I was 16, I became a foster child and was moved around from foster home to foster home. I had my first child when I was 21. I had three other children by the time I was 23. Joshua's birthday is March 30, 1987, Andrew's birthday is March 23, 1987, Heather and Thomas were born on June 30, 1989. Not being able to handle four kids in the space three years I did the best for them and gave them a better life with a family that are more able to provide for their needs. Since that time I have become a Godmother of four, Matthew 9, Tracy 7, Amy 6, and Andrew who will be 4 on June 20, 2001. I have been in the ABE Program since March 2001 in grade 10. I will be going into "bridging," and then on to Adult 12 beginning in the fall of 2002.