

Tea and Bannock Stories: First Nations Community of Poetic Voices

*a compilation of poems in celebration of First Nations aesthetic practices,
such as poetry, songs, and art,
that speak about humankind's active relationships to
Home Land and her Beings*

*Simon Fraser University, First Nations Studies
compiled by
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This project was made possible by the Social Sciences and Humanities Council of Canada (SSHRC)

Background: First Nations Studies, the Archaeology Department, and the School for Contemporary Arts at Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia, is the origin place for *Tea and Bannock Stories*. *Tea and Bannock Stories* is a grass-roots, multi-generational, multi-national gathering of poets and artists. Together we have learned from and informed one another. Our final result is this compilation of poems and images presented in a community event on Mother Earth Day, April 21, 2007, at the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Center amidst family, friends, songs, dances, art, poetry, tea, and bannock.

Tea and Bannock Stories began as research inquiry into poetic First Nations aesthetic forms between aboriginal artists and poets, the principal researcher, annie ross, SFU student researchers Brandon Bob, Eve Chuang, and Simon Solomon, and students during the years 2004 – 2007 to investigate First Nations environmental ideas in the poetic and visual form¹. First Nations Artist Mentors to SFU students were:

Chief Janice George and Willard Joseph (Squamish), Coast Salish wool weaving
Harry Beauchamp (Nakota), Northern Plains drums, songs and dance
Jackie Timothy (Sliammon), southern northwest coast cedar carving and design
Joe Feddersen (Okanagan), printmaking and book making
Patricia and Denise Makay (Thompson), beadwork
Elizabeth Woody (Warm Springs, Wasco, Dene), poetry

The purpose of this modest publication is to share First Nations poetries about the Planet with others, to encourage community and communication between various peoples, and to celebrate, enjoy, write, read, and make poems and art.

¹ FPA 389 *First Nations Environmental Ethics: Printmaking* (fall, 2006); FNST 322 *Sustainable Indigenous Technologies* (spring 2005, 2006); FNST 322 *First Nations Poetry and Poetics, Book Making*; FPA 389 *Mapping* (fall, 2005).

The Call for Poems: In January, 2007, our team sent emails to various schools, community centers, tribal organizations, and individuals, calling for submissions of poetry from First Nations people to describe their/our relationship to Mother Earth (please see Appendix A at the end of this publication).

We received a number of poetries from various locations, a selection of which are included here in this in-house publication, *Tea and Bannock Stories: First Nations Community of Poetic Voices*. We hope you enjoy these poems and artworks and they encourage you to create poetic books in your communities, with your friends, families, and associates.

This book was made possible with the generous support of the poets and artists whose work is included here. This book is a labor in continuation of the age-old practices of sharing, generosity, and re-distribution of wealth and knowledge traditional to our First Nations communities.

This publication is available free as printing and paper costs were supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Council of Canada (SSHRC), Research and Creation in the Fine Arts. We are most grateful to all who worked and contributed.

Despite my best intentions at working hard and well, I apologize in advance for any mistakes, omissions, or other errors as they may occur herein. They are unintentional.

With sincerity and the sacred word, *Hope*, for continued Love for Mother Earth,

annie ross

Thank You

Mother Earth (HomeLand and her *Beings*)

Coast Salish peoples upon whose land our communities in Vancouver rest

Simon Fraser University, staff, students, faculty

Dave Burley, Chair, First Nations Studies, SFU

Eldon Yellowhorn, Pikkanni

John Welch

the SFU archaeology faculty, for their daily support to First Nations Studies

Moninder Bubber, SFU Librarian

Colin Browne, SFU SCA

SFU students from FNST 322, FPA 389, FNST 101, archaeology, and other locales

Elizabeth Woody, Warm Springs, Wasco, Dene

Joe Feddersen, Okanagan

Robert Pictou, Mi'kmaq

Chuang family

Chief Janice George and Willard Joseph, Squamish

Gary Snyder

Corbin Harney, Western Shoshone, and Dr. Water

Kathy Sanchez, Northern Pubelo, and the grandmothers and sisters of Tewa Women United

Carrie Dann, Western Shoshone

the Chief Capilano Longhouse

poets, artists, cooks, crafters, singers, servers, teachers, students, families, hermits, and everyone from every where.



Joe Feddersen



Flight

Eagle hovers as immobile Cross
In clarity of blue
Critical detachment drops from view.

Afternoon hail, lightning and mist light blue-gray,
color-filled finches, mourning dove, and canyon wrens sing.

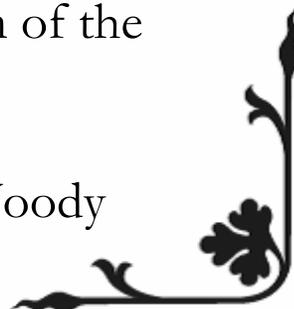
Sage rolled between fingers at the edge of Juniper berries is prayer.
The evergreen crests collect arches of pinion to mingle with ozone.

A burning red draws eye to the circle of copper in rock
Upon palm's hot lifeline.

Our eagle plume stands up in the path.
Breath moves on the brown edge of filmy down as divination of the
proper direction.



Elizabeth Woody





"My brother I know your ancestors."

Robert Dhadhiyasila Hall



Learning the Salmon's language
With the help of this paddle...
They are close just as water
Controls life for them.

The paddle moves me to their home
And they ever fail to come back and say to me...
“my brother I know your ancestors.”



Robert Dhadhiyasila Hall





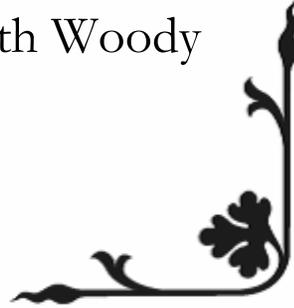
Brandon Bob



Walk (excerpt)

Imagine your warm hand in palms folded over the reach and cupped.
Hands are the size of one's heart.
Four hearts fold into the work of touching and mixing.
It is hard to walk the distance with the aging dog.
She limps and one eye weeps constantly.
In recollection, the placing of a gift is artful. The way the colors match
inside the house and how perfect the order of high desert moves the light
into slants, then absence of shadow. This design is superior. To make a
basket hold water pull its strands taut and fine.
In this basket the hands firmly pull the fibers together. With each turn of
the wrist is honed skill, method and practice. To give the container seals
the agreement for plentitude.

Elizabeth Woody





Brandon Bob



first woman
on cotton thread
first woman
softly
like feather
touches
like warm
passing
through me
like lightning
like thunder
i shudder
feeble as an old warrior
trembling
at the centre
of her dream shirt



Rolland Nadjiwon





Brandon Bob



Mother Earth

She reminds me of my own **M**other.

She has many scars that are not **H**er fault.
She has seen many battles and has endured
each and every one of them.

She has never stopped supporting me though.
She still continues to protect me and looks over me.
She gave me the tools I need to survive.

I return the favor by supporting **H**er, protecting **H**er, and
giving **H**er the tools she needs to survive.



Most of all I am grateful every day for the gifts my
Mother and **M**other **E**arth has given me and continues
to give me each and every day.

Denise Mckay





Brandon Bob



The Heart Beat

I see you drumming and singing,
trying to understand more about
the heart beat of the first people.
I hear you singing a song that helped
so many people for generations.
I can see it on your beautiful
face, the happiness of holding
the drum and really feeling the power
a drum has for us all. It really makes
me happy knowing that you have
some knowledge to teach our future children,
the traditions that are precious to our people.
You must keep learning and continue
to share the knowledge for generations to come.
So come to the sacred circle of the heart beats.



Comaka





Brandon Bob



World Renewal Ceremony (for Brian Tripp)

It is made this way
Each year
It is done for the people.

This is the Way of Renewal
The Circle of Life
Brought into Balance

Smoke, prayers
Fasting, sweating
Chanting, dancing

Once a year
Karukararra gather
To make the world new again



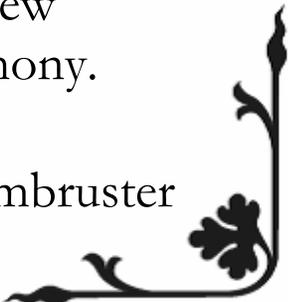
Come with a good heart
Come with friends and enemies
Come with love.

In the chant, in the song
In the stamping feet
All is set right.

Shake the earth
Shake off evil,
Realign energy.

This is how it is done.
When the world is made new
For World Renewal Ceremony.

Judi Brannan Armbruster





Brandon Bob



Another day has gone by
I don't even see the moon
I knew the night would come
I just didn't think so soon
It's so amazing
 the night, the day
it's so phenomenal the trees
and how they sway
Everything has a reason
They all have something to do
A blessing to me
and a special one for you
The rain replenishes the soil
the stars they shine at night



it's all so beautiful
it's all such a sight
The flowers bloom
while the birds sing
it's all so serene
especially in the spring
The water remains calm
the wind has a gentle blow
there's something hidden in
everything
I promise, I know
There's a secret in the clouds
a whisper in the leaves
This is how Creator wanted it
He wanted us to believe

Candace Kagagins





Brandon Bob



O'Demin Kwe

You are the heart of the Earth
My Earth
You've given to me Love
long before birth
You've shown courage and bravery
wisdom and love in all aspects of my life
I thank the Creator above
For having you, *O'Demin Kwe*
to fall back on
whenever my road becomes too rocky
because you are so strong



I thank you with these words
that I don't always speak
I'm strong enough now
I am no longer weak
You've always kept your faith in me
that someday I will do good
I'm starting to see now
all of which I could
I've grown into adulthood
and I'm glad you've taken part
because I need you
because you're my heart!

Candace Kagagins





Brandon Bob



Baba's View

Open the sliding door to the back porch,
To take the step outside,
Baba's view is breathtakingly magnificent,
You close your eyes to take everything in,
Standing still as the gentle breeze overcomes you,
Glistening sunbeams shine down,
Water reflecting a million radiating diamonds as it softly hits against the
rocks below,
Birds high in the sky flying with ease on the north winds back,
Smell of the fresh sea water mesmerize your insides and your nose,
Sense of calm takes you over,
Lull of surroundings let you escape into a serenity of peace.

Baba's View



Shannon Brown





Brandon Bob



Stat'limx Fishing: Night Air



On the Fraser River rocks remain warm
from day sunlight
The river thundering, transforms to muffled sloshing, its movement
demands space as water rams rock

Away from urban lights
I wait
Meteor showers spray and streak across
the sky, layers of black and blue with spaces
appear to shift, stars at home
in the sky
Now, out of sync two satellites cross quickly

And high above the river bed, sound of gathering tension
several BC rail engines haul northern logs
Frenzied sparks on rails toss bickering light
at midnight

Laughing, talking, we stop: rocks falling, rolling
through sage brush and choke-cherry bush
We strain to see upward to piercing darkness
then velvet stillness
We await the wind spirit, that down rush of nightly hot air
that sweeps along the Fraser River
to wind dry sockeye salmon



Lila Wallace



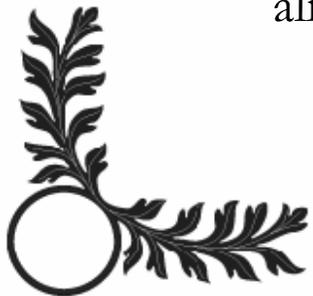


Brandon Bob



Unentitled

when i am sitting across from you
on a beam of wood
in the busy market
the salt of this place on our tongues and in our nostrils
i can feel how far away we are from
home.
i can feel how close we are to
home.
that we are the rocks and clay,
simply together
breathing the same air on this land
and i am at home on this part
alive as i ever felt



Jennifer L'Hirondelle





Brandon Bob



My Indian land

a part of me was born behind the
falling wooden walls
a part of me will die in the grass
i know i was there, in that photograph,
somewhere.

my heart begs my body to sleep
on the side of that hill
anywhere in that grass
even for a night.

it is so small, but will always be mine
will always be *mishom 's*
and i will always be on my way



Jennifer L'Hirondelle





Brandon Bob



graveyard/playground

mesa top
children
in their stiff and bright
pants, skirts, shoes
running circles into dogs, grannies,
everyone
dust
new houses being built
cinder blocks in the adobe village!
next door, right here, in my hand, in my head
a home
where she had died
how long?, some
long time,
ago.
the tree roof rafters gone,
the mud roof fallen down
re-used somehow, now
a broken walnut bed frame
bent metal cabinet
pails, dishes
fallen wall,
under rubble, dust, time
children running
new cinder blocks
going up

annie ross





Brandon Bob

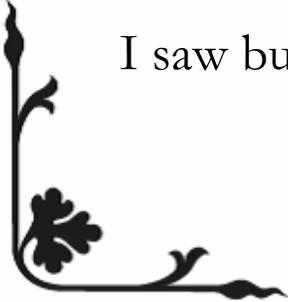


The Sky is Busy

I saw my first feather falling from the sky yesterday
separated from a bird's body flying somewhere,
but it was how it gently spiraled to Mother Earth and
then it landed on the concrete like it had been a part of the scenery forever.

How could such beauty, gentleness and serenity be a part of this fast,
honking, concrete Earth jungle?

The feather reminded me of a story a man once told me about his son
watching
an eagle's feather float from the sky until he caught it between the tips of his
fingers!



I saw but I didn't catch the glory of this moment.

Pat Christie





Brandon Bob



My First Count

The eagles cry.

Are the fish with mercury?

And northern lands are filled with coal dust from industries all around home.

So you tell me Mr. H you give this money that will most likely come down the channels too late.

The deals you speak of from the conservative way are pledging dollars to the environment.

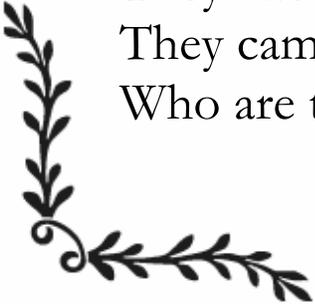
Nobody will say anything because they fear for their jobs.

Nobody will care because they all bought plots in the south pacific to exploit the next lot.

They have been here just over 100 years.

They came to save my people from their savage ways.

Who are the savages now?



Cheri Jubinville





Brandon Bob



One's Offering

I may not have seen the Buffalo roam.
I may not have seen the Eagle fly.
But deep inside my soul the Great
One planted a seed to grow.

Oh how I wish I had been able to roam like the Buffalo and fly like the Eagle so
High

So I may too, touch the mountain tops that reach for the sky.

Just as I see all people here today.
All of different Shades and Creeds
Not one Person, but all People have added color to my eyes so that I too may See.

So glorious is every day, that we all have another day to Breathe.



Cheri Jubinville



Brandon Bob



To My Elder

I do not want to go on.
For soon I will be as free as a spawn.
Contemplating my discontent.
For my accomplishments are not lent.
My disbelief in me for I can not do.
My inspiration comes from you.
Your belief in me helps me to see
My inspiring self is my true plea.
Never leave me let me go
Never please me so much so I can not go
Forever near or afar.
Distance will have no prevalence as to where we are.
So my plea is a bond.
And my discontent is not fond
My disbelief is no longer with me.
For your belief in me overflowed within me.



Cheri Jubinville



Brandon Bob



The Dusty Trail

In God's handiwork we see
Look at mother earth, you and me
We all agree God went on a creation spree

Out of our first home, mother's womb
We learned how to cry breathe and eat
A mothers love is so sweet.

Still we long to explore
She puts on us on the dusty floor, hmmm a door

Lunch buckets, math, abcs
Now I study God's love letter
And know how to take care of God's creation... better

I know in the dusty trail I follow,
It will one day lead me to Heaven's door
Where there's absolutely more



Louis Holmes





Brandon Bob



Haiku I and Haiku II
(Language: Choctaw)



*Hvshtula mintituk
Abonshonti anchi liteba chohmi atakalichi.
Na fokha okshauanli akalvpih.*

Winter has come.
Clouds hang like dirty blankets.
Washed clean clothes freeze.

*Iti ishki
Iti Chabta pa akish iksho,
Hokoli, kvnia hosh hikia.*

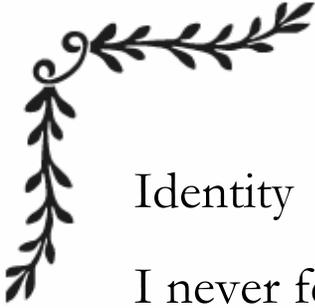
Cut off, lost
This Choctaw tree stands rootless
From its mother forest.

George Ann Gregory





Brandon Bob



Identity

I never felt so empty
Forced to experience this emotion
Alone
 Tears race
 Falling hard
Pain screams
 Louder
Time stands still
Emptiness
I never asked for this
Why loneliness
My eyes sore, my sadness nauseating
Heart ache at every beat
I pray to the Creator



Asking for guidance
Hold my hand
Please lead me
Closing my eyes
I promised “I will be strong”
I will heal
Awakened to the power of
existence
A voice whispers
“I am always here for you”
Realizing my identity was
fading
Today I stand strong
I have control
This is my identity



Carlene George



Brandon Bob



Mother Earth Exists

Before last night I had no idea
How hard is it to give mother earth back her voice
For so long she lived untouched by violence
Unmarked by torture
When water flow pure, strong
When the earth smelled fresh, alive
Sunlight gleamed with ultimate joy
Abundance of wealth yet we all forgot
Thus alone she spent countless days
Before last night I had no idea
Then I acknowledged a tiny flower
Blooming so strong, so beautiful, full of hope
This made my mind, heart and spirit realize
Mother earth still and will always exist

Carlene George





Brandon Bob



Warrior



Like a rose blooming so brilliant
Rich in color
Sent so pure
Purpose, ever so clear
Only can one man be so great to pursue his dream
Traveling one path
Holding onto knowledge that will take him far
Brave man so full of courage
Let your eyes see what you can have
Soar for the best
Brave man be positive
Optimistic thoughts are the keys
Keys to doors you may some day open
Smile with confidence
A blissful spirit will ease your journey
Continue to love
For love can concur anything
Brave man you shall the be called a warrior



Carlene George





Brandon Bob



The Power to Heal

The sun that shines so brightly in the sky gives off energy –
the energy of healing powers I crave from one day to the next.

Why I ask, do I seek these powers?

The energy it radiates to me seems to heal my soul from one day to the next.

The power to heal ones' soul is one of the greatest powers of all.

Without the rays of sunlight we would live in darkness - as would our souls,
from one day to the next.

Nancy A. Luis





Brandon Bob



Spirit of the Buffalo

From the North roams the great Buffalo.

The Buffalo is an animal that has survived mass destruction.

I feel a great sense of endurance –

the kind of endurance and strength needed to survive for generations upon generations.

I feel the cold winter days coming upon us.

Endurance and strength is what I need to succeed in life.

I must learn the lesson of endurance from the Great Spirit of the Buffalo.

Nancy A. Luis





Brandon Bob



Spirit of the Bear

As the bear sits facing west he contemplates the changes that are fast approaching.

The change in the air, from the hot summer days to the cool, crisp, autumn nights.

He uses his intuition – the intuition needed to survive the changing season ahead.

Like the bear, learn to listen to your intuition – the intuition of your soul.

Nancy A. Luis





Brandon Bob



xx

the every
day
of re-
make
ing sheep
along the
high way. irrigation arcs of
pipe
water
rainbow god
miles
alone

in the mist mis-
directed metal pipes
'herbicide application ahead' orange sign
'herbicide application ahead' orange sign

lava rocks, blood clots
asphalt hunks, road improvements
here
where



annie ross





Brandon Bob



Centuries Pass

Familiarity rests.
Centuries Pass

Discovering
My Grandmothers' path,
I fell in love
With Roscoe Inlet.

Mount Keyes
Whispering...
You are home!

My whole life I loved her!
Her blustery snow,
Falling off
Like wisps of smoke.
Frozen cold.

North Wind blows
howling songs.



Kindred spirits
Float to me,
Like beautiful Ocean's waves
Beating against
A great cedar canoe.

In a seasons change
I sat across a girl
On spongy moss.
Decaying big house beams
Enveloped us

Grandmothers connected us.
ALWAYS
We come from the land!

There, rests a familiarity
Of lifetimes ago.
Centuries
When I was truly home.

Kendra Newman (*Abuks D'nas*)





Brandon Bob



The Traditional Knowledge

To care for our earth we've shown and gave messages,
Teaching traditional custom through all the ages,
Culture isn't from some books with a few little pages,
It's something passed on through our beloved land,
It comes from elders with knowledge at hand,
A kind of knowledge that we could keep,
And learn how to love the earth in harmony and in peace.

Stephen John Marshall





Brandon Bob



The Connection of the First Nation

When it comes to the land, there is a strong relationship,
But looking back to memories where there was hardship,
All the time we think to improve our land would be a dream,
Solving problems would be a sweet taste from a cup of remedy,
And that is when we could feel a very powerful connection,
Feeling that our people are one true first nation.

Stephen John Marshall





Brandon Bob



Where I'm From

We've been taught to live from the beat of the drums,
No matter where we're really from,
All the elders already knew,
From recent years they're been through,
Believing in strong will power,
Fighting rights like heroes, not like cowards,
Where I'm from I was told to stand my ground,
The place I'm from where my people are proud,
Living in a circle of life like the moving cloud,
Maybe many years our people were told a lie,
But where I'm from we have great pride.



Stephen John Marshall





Brandon Bob

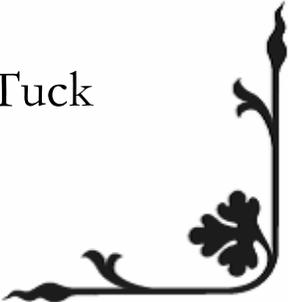


Endless

no stopping or slowing always constant
she devours us
our souls breath in the endless devotion and flowing creation
she showers upon our hearts the constant beat and
thunder of emotion
empty for us all your pain
breath the salt, the sweet she never stops,
never slows she is always constant
the blueness spreads over and over
the sharp edges never cut on the softness that she gives
we always take her endless devotion



Aileen Tuck





Brandon Bob



She speaks truth from her soul
some times it burns.

It is never intentional,
only an awakening for those who hear

The sting of the fire, hits deep through to the spirit,
the healing,
lasts a life time.

Watch the spark on her, flashing in her eyes, laughter moves
us forward beyond the ashes and cinder.

The truth is real,

as the flames of the earth turn hurt into new growth.



Aileen Tuck



Brandon Bob



The Sun Will Rise

Rage in my heart
Rage out on the streets
Person to Person
It's passing through everyone
What a horrible feeling
We're fighting for our past
not yet able to be in our future
Crying and suffering will never be gone
happiness is not yet here
hopefully when people understand
the sun will rise
and sunlight will be received by everyone
then our healing will begin
Our past will be in our past
though never forgotten
Our future will be our future
and with hope and gratitude
that we will move forward
and keep on going
peeking back, learning from peoples mistakes

Crystal A.J. Smith





Brandon Bob

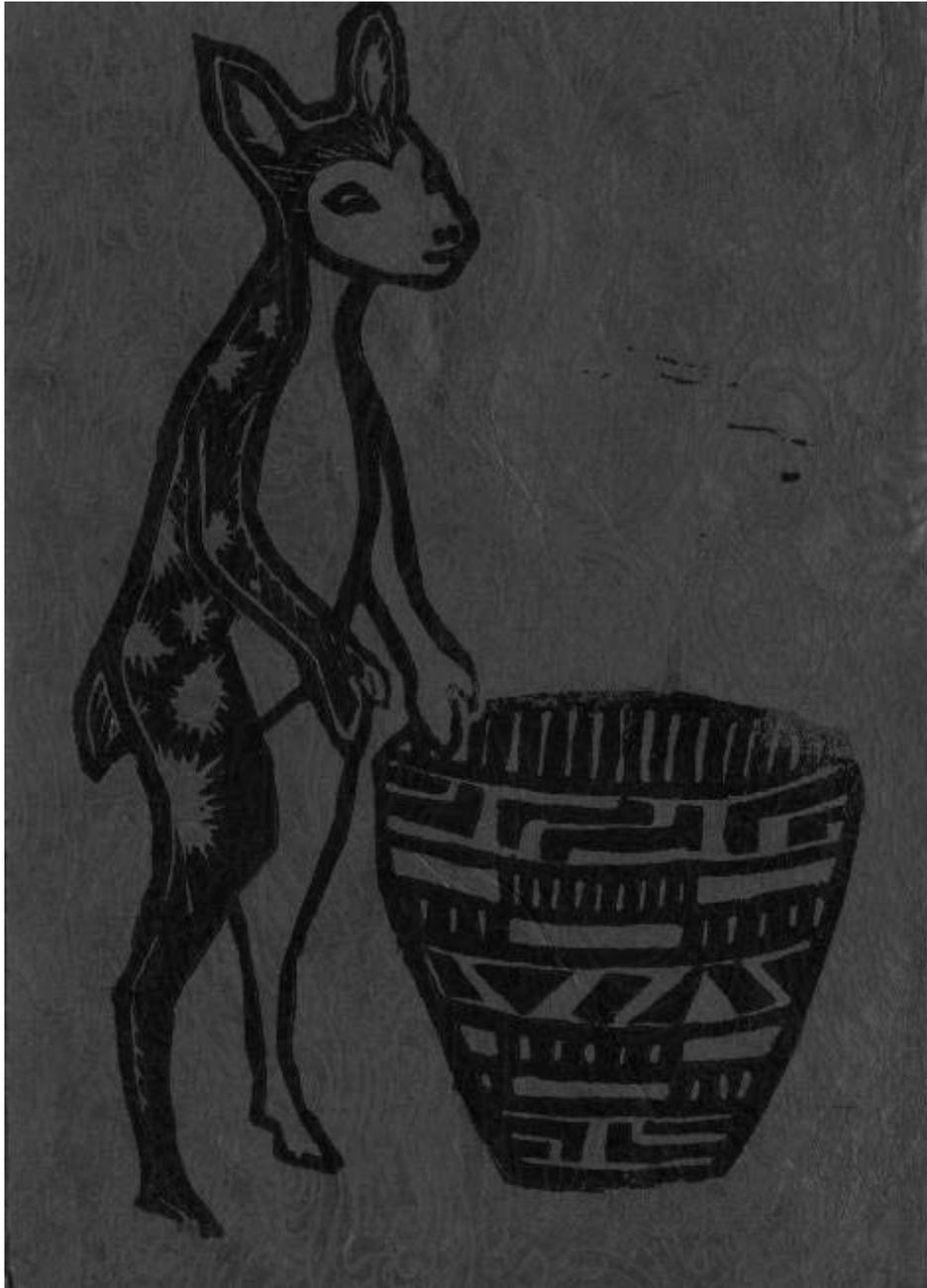


Mountain Poem

If I come back again
Please, make me a mountain
Why a mountain?
To be left alone
Won't you be lonely?
I will have the sun and clouds
The moon and stars
Thunder and lightning to keep me company
Bears and mountain lions will rely on me for sustenance
Great birds will burden my shoulders
Smaller birds will crap on me
So bring me Coyote
Let him make his home in my womb
I will get the feeling of an expectant mother
Creation in my belly



Jonathan Tylor



annie ross



The Garter Snake

The garter snake
keeps me
I am numerous
I am harmless
I hear my lifelines
on my back
She tells me

She says
“Be strong”
“Be proud”
Aboriginal Ab-original c

Large female
Small male
The rub her belly
to see if they are worthy
If they will be chosen



Often so sensitive
This woman snake of
The Americans

From the East and West
From the North and South
Surviving cold snow
and rain

This strong woman
This strong man
They are the same
in a figure eight
They emanate

This woman is strong
this woman survives
this woman is brown
and so she thrives.

Vik Buffalo Robe





annie ross



I live on land
I chopped six cords of wood
In winter
I slept in wall tents
In summer
Fish and wash clothes
In the lake
Bathed in moonlight
Ran with willows as a child
I eat cotton wood buds
I have cooked for sweetgrass burners

I grow and provide for
My children
I pray, sweat,
Participate in ceremony
Fasted as I became woman
Understanding the universe
From the sacrifices I have
Made
Fearing the truth I have seen
This is what makes me an
Indian
Of First Nation Ancestry
I am.



Vik Buffalo Robe



Brandon Bob



In My Garden

Ravens hawk hawk over roadkill
Their racket breaks the morning stillness.

An osprey circle overhead
Dangling a fish
So large
The bird struggles to gain altitude.

The sun's rays beak across the valley rim
Lighting up my tiny greenhouse.

On this glorious new day
I tend my garden
Giving thanks
For Mother Earth's abundance.

Judi Brannan Armbruster





Brandon Bob



Eerie pastel light
Why do my eyes hunger for
The cold arctic night

Locked in cold dimness
Sun angles on short-lived day
Beauty finds a way

Auroras dancing
Reflect subtle color shifts
A site I long for

Where is the charm there
Why do I long to see such
Cold foreign vistas



Artic Ice

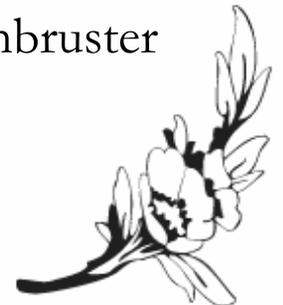
Maybe there exists
A cellular memory
Of life long ago

Following the herds
Winter's grip hard on my soul
Stark hunger driven

I cannot name it
My mind refuses the strain
I will not deny

It is my dreamscape
A possible future time
To feed my hungry eyes

Judi Brannan Armbruster





Brandon Bob



Have You Heard?

Underneath the ripples lies a life that sings!
Have you heard the water when it rings?

Spoken language is not the only
Means of communication for the lonely;
Have you heard the water talk?

Chuckling, rumbling, giggling, grumbling...

Telling a tale of happiness in its sharing,
In its sadness, and in its caring;
Have you heard the water rock?

Refining, sifting, taking, and leaving
To each and all who stop along the way;
Have you heard the water has to say?

If you stop and listen long, you will hear
The life existing close to us all, so near.

Celinda J. Rice





Robert Pictou



Recycling Reasoning:

In a dark corner of my house,
Lies a four foot Gnome.

It was a gift from a dear friend,
Who saw it, and said she thought of me!
She bought it to see what I would do.
I said, 'Thank You.'

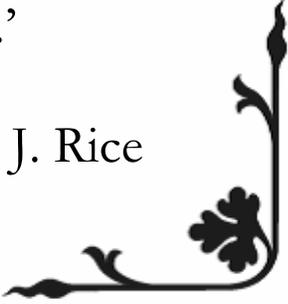
My Aunty told me I could keep
Gifts for six months, and then
Re-gift, if I want.

I kept it anyway.

I didn't want it thrown out.

I said, 'I shall have my own house,
And I will put it in a special corner of the garden.
Then my friend and I can have tea near the Gnome.'

Celinda J. Rice





Robert Pictou



The Bluejay

The bluejay came to visit today
Sitting with the cat, sharing her food!
I gawked them. I didn't mean to be rude.

Of course they could share if they wanted to.
It was the trip to the store.
Not my favorite chore.

Now I understood why I had to go more;
With another mouth to feed,
There'd be a greater need!

I decided we'd have to have a chat.
Because I hated having to drive the car, throw
Away more garbage, clean more dishes, and all that...

For visitors, using my resources,
When there are perfectly good natural sources!

Celinda J. Rice





Robert Pictou



June in Red Willow and Cottonwood

A shadow of venerable hawk
slivers through the jackrabbits kick-start leap.

Fortuitous light on a distant cattail stage
amplifies soft sloop of call, the red on wing

Heat's direction imitates a curling standard to whirls.
Reduction is a discrete hot tremor in the spring artery of river's drift.

Ecstatic yellowtails above wild pink roses float
residual freedom of surface and magnitude.

Attention drifts with last light at dusk.
One heron lifts to turn the canyon into angled ascension.

Protection cross the eyelids as wild old stars burn
and inflame her wimple of night vision.

She submits to the premises of night.

Elizabeth Woody





Robert Pictou



Wisdom Leads

Throughout my time
Walking the road
Time always tells my path
Can you hear me?

My visions see a different scene
We are as one
On the same river
What is it that you ask of me?

Ancestors guide me through song
Through prayer
Through whispers
Through thoughts
Can you see what they tell?

Do not lose sight
Of your spirit
Of your time
Most of all...of your walk



Brandon Bob





Robert Pictou



The Morning Prayer

The wind listens

Hear my heart

Hear my spirit

Hear my words

The water cleanses

Clean my heart

Clean my spirit

Clean my mind

The animals guide me

Guide my heart

Guide my spirit

Guide my mind

Mother earth feeds me

Feed my heart

Feed my spirit

Feed my mind



Brandon Bob



Robert Pictou



The forgotten one



Sorrow does not forget
Wounds open from the cutting edge
I hear your cry
We hear your cry
Arrows are always in flight
Confusion sets the scene
Words are always forgotten
Our actions are all that be
Your anger is seen
Your temperature rising
Warning all that see
Forgiveness – is it to late for us to see?



Brandon Bob





Robert Pictou



My Indian Princess

The blushing moon
cast an incandescent
silhouette upon your face;
bathing your brown eyes,
with abalone specks.
I could see
your growing need
(but not for me)
and all your secrets,
all within the borrowed light.



The cool air arose in
Surprising thrusts,
coercing your navy black hair,
gracing and grazing
sending skitters
of dancing shadows
across your face,
your neck,
down your back.

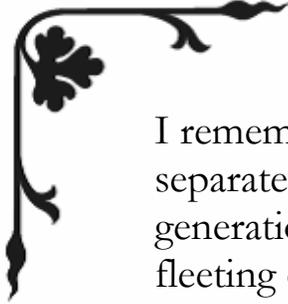
Silhouette spirits of the cedars
descended and sashayed in the breeze;
touching you softly like I wanted to,
but unlike the shadows,
I could never be as undaunted....

Wanda Marie John





Robert Pictou



Life and Breath



I remember a place
separated by
generations;
fleeting calls
of the chickadee
echo from the past

They knew their place.

Robust deer
frolicked on grassy skirts,
nibbling on earthy pastures,
resting in the crimson sun

They knew their place.

In the twilight,
one could here the lonesome
cries of the wolf;
calling to his own,



He knew his place.

This place
is where Kokum knelt with hardship
to arrange her offering;
weak from determination,
her breath labored.
inhaling
the unmistakable perfume
of the Sweetgrass that grew
with unending purpose, poised,
waiting to be caressed,
and gathered with highered hands;

She knew her place.

Wanda Marie John





Robert Pictou



Can you hear it
She calls to her pod
mournful echoing
against the vast
mountain walls
through the valleys

I hear her call

She slaps the calm water
with her sleek, merciless tail.
Tear drops of the sea
fall upon her shiny, black head



Luna

Mist encases
the mountain breaks
and sets its blanket
across the empty space

She bellows once more
than twice
than three

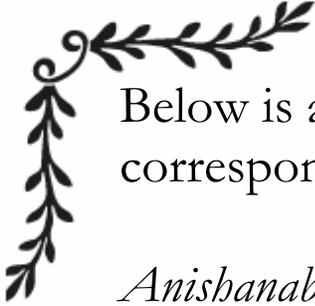
To this day
when you're all alone
you can hear her
mournful cry
echoing against
the mountain valleys
through the mist
clotting the air with loneliness.

Wanda Marie John





Robert Pictou



Below is an introduction to the next five poems from personal correspondence with published poet Rolland Nadjiwon.

Anishanabehmowi Poems

“I taught in an isolated, fly-in community, and all of the reading material was so totally foreign, such as *Heidi the Little Swiss Girl*. The children I taught all spoke and wrote *Anishanabehmowin* in both phonetic and syllabic form. We wrote our own textbooks and ran them off on one of those old gum rubber indelible ink copiers, many of you may not even know what I am talking about. We did our own books complete with poetry and stories relative to the community, surrounding familiar communities and their world and cosmology.

Unfortunately, the priest who did not like my methodologies came in when I was away and burned everything.

I did manage to salvage a few of the poems. There are attached here, written in 1967.”



wabjeh

Rolland Nadjiwon



Robert Pictou



Poem

I heard someone
calling, so I turned
around and know one
was there, so I went
walking, and I heard
someone whispered, he
was saying, I made
the sky, trees, and
everything nice, I
made people and
the rocks, and I heard
him saying, I make the
sunshine and I make
the rain.

Lac La Croix, 1967
Thursday, June 3





Robert Pictou



Indian Lullaby

I think in this poem- there are stars shining . And the moon is very bright outside you can hear the sounds of the wind flowing through the leaves and the sounds of the water going by and the animals are all sleeping you can hear the owls call and the lonely sounds of the frogs croaking along the river banks And the loons call far far away and dogs barking in the village. There are no clouds in the sky and--that's what I think in this poem.



Wednesday, April 11, 1968
Stanley Ottetail





Jackie Timothy



Rain

When ever the clouds are grey
When we don't have a gay day
Down comes the roar of thunder
And raindrops making puddles.
And when we go outside to
play we put on our raincoats
And rubbers.

Splash "Splash" Splash" goes
our feet in the puddles
While we play and shout.

Tuesday, May 21, 1968
Stanley Ottertail





Jackie Timothy



Northern Lights

I think the Northern Lights are
beautiful.
dancing up and down.
and dancing below the stars.



And Northern Lights have all
Kinds of colours

Northern Lights look like
Indians dancing around the
drum.
Till all at once they stop to
dance and disappear in
blue sky.

And like fire burning wood.
on the fire place

Thursday, June 13, 1968
Stanley Ottetail





Corbin Harney



Poem



lonely calls at night
owls calling at night
bats flying almost all
night long. the dog barking
at night wolfs crying angels
flying all over the place
I like to hear sounds at
night my hart beading
slower little babies sleeping
at night I wonder what bears
would think at night
stars starting to go up at
early morning little bit of rain
drops falling from the skys
the wind starts to blow
And leaves falling one by one.



Thomas Whitefish
Friday, May 17, 1967





Chapel Island Home, Circa 1940s
Pictou Family Photo



A note of introduction from Carmen Tom



***N'kwala* School, Upper Nicola Band**

“N’kwala school students have an exceptional opportunity to learn how to speak Okanagan. As most of the students that attend N’kwala are of Okanagan ancestry and having these valuable experiences of language and culture are truly empowering. This is shown through some of the poems that have been submitted as each poem has a unique outlook on how traditional history and contemporary hip-hop have influenced them today.” Carmen Tom, N’kwala school

List of the students, ancestry & grade

Denise Jack-Mushuau Innu, grade 4
Vera Charlie- Okanagan, grade 4
Samuel Tom- Okanagan, grade 5
Adrian Alexander-Okanagan, grade 6
Shaylene McRae-Okanagan, grade 6
Trevor Lindley-Okanagan, grade 6
Annie-Joe Gottfriedson-Okanagan, grade 7
Autumn Dennis-Okanagan, grade 7
Calvin Dunn-Okanagan, grade 7

Colton Gottfriedson-Okanagan, grade 7
Geneve McRae- Okanagan, grade 7
Michael Desjarlais- Metis, grade 7
Travis Tom-Okanagan, grade 7
Kelli LaCerte- Thompson/Carrier, grade 8
Kristin Piwas-Mushuau Innu, grade 9
Cody Dennis-Okanagan, grade 10
Selene Peters-Ojibwa/Shuswap, grade 10
Lisa Moses- Thompson, grade 11



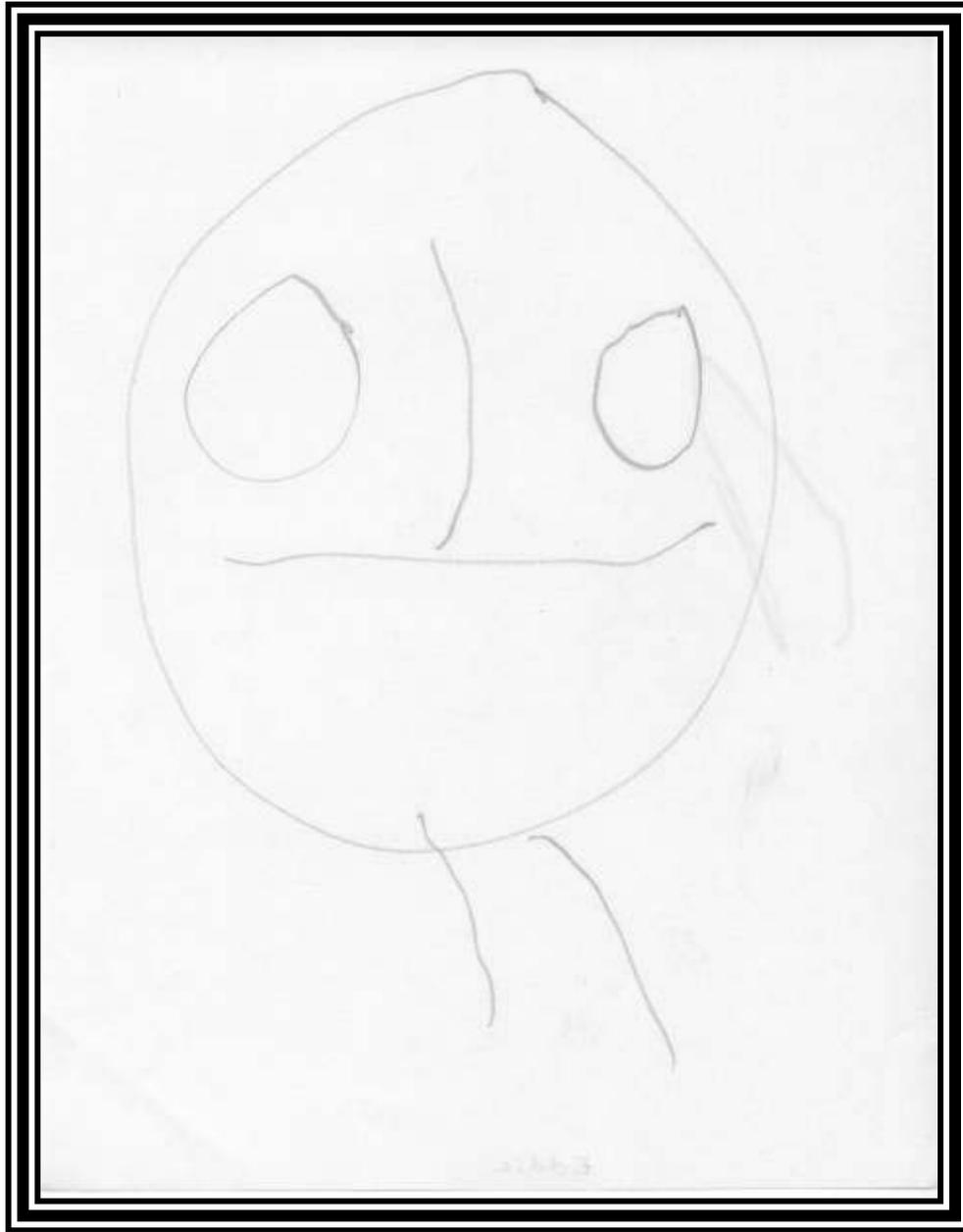


Horse

Horses are beautiful when they are running
Because I would like to ride a horse of course.
White horses, black horses, gray horses and bay horses

Denise Jack





By Edward, Sundance Daycare
"Drum with a Hand"

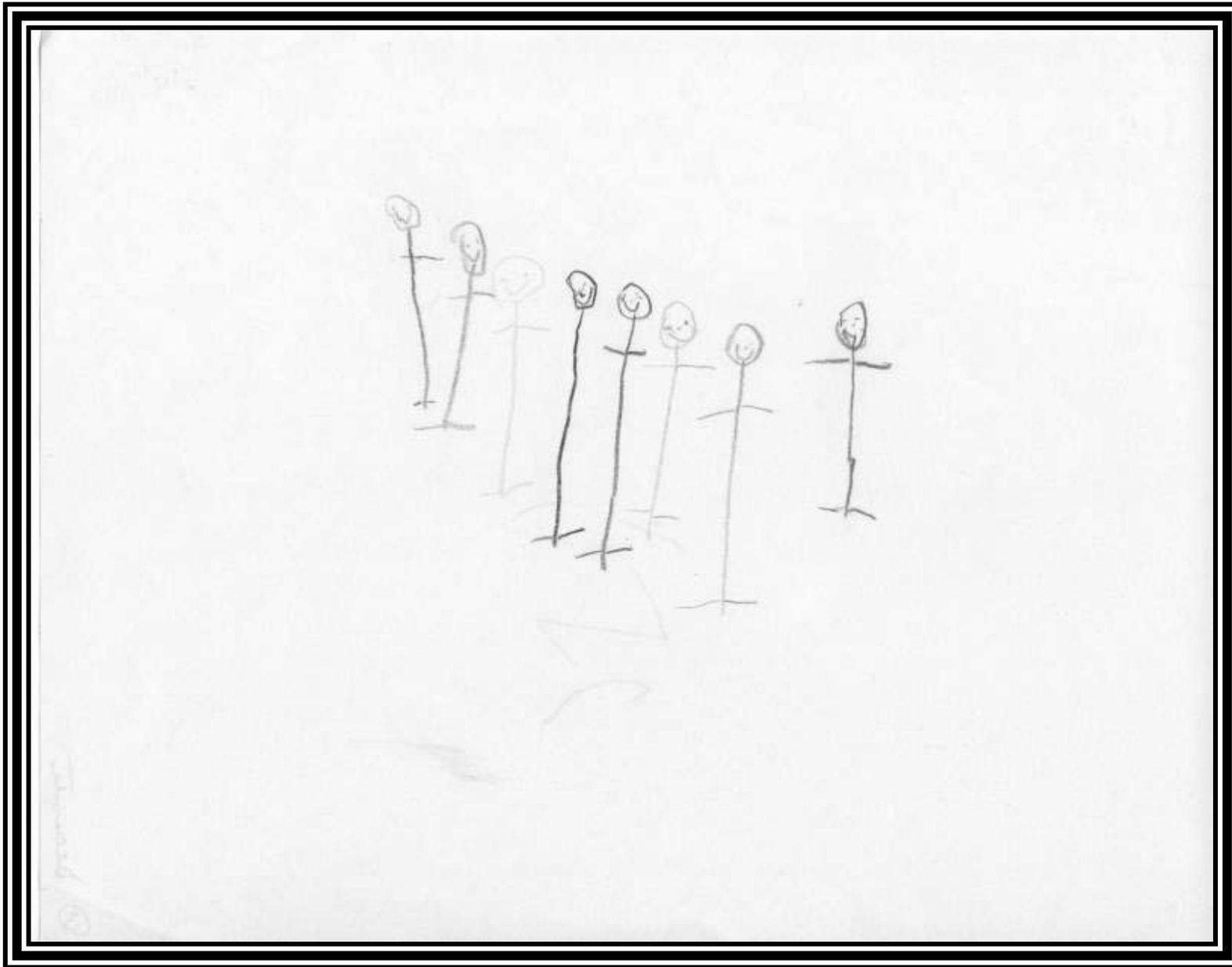


Home

My homeland is Labrador
I lived in *Natuashish*
I had a lot of friends in Natuashish
I wish I were back in Natuashish
Labrador.

Denise Jack





By Deaunte, Sundance Daycare
"All the People Dancing"



Seasons

Winter is cold and everything on the earth is sleeping.

Spring is warming the earth and making everything wake up.

Summer is hot and sunny and everything blooms.

Fall is when the leaves fall and we thank the creator for all good things.

Vera Charlie





By Jordin, Sundance Daycare
"The Monsters 2"



Owl and Coyote

Chipmunk was picking *seya*

Owl woman said your grandmother wants you

Owl woman fooled chipmunk

Chipmunk died

Coyote came

Owl woman died

Coyote set the children free



Samuel Tom





By Jordin, Sundance Daycare
"The Monsters"

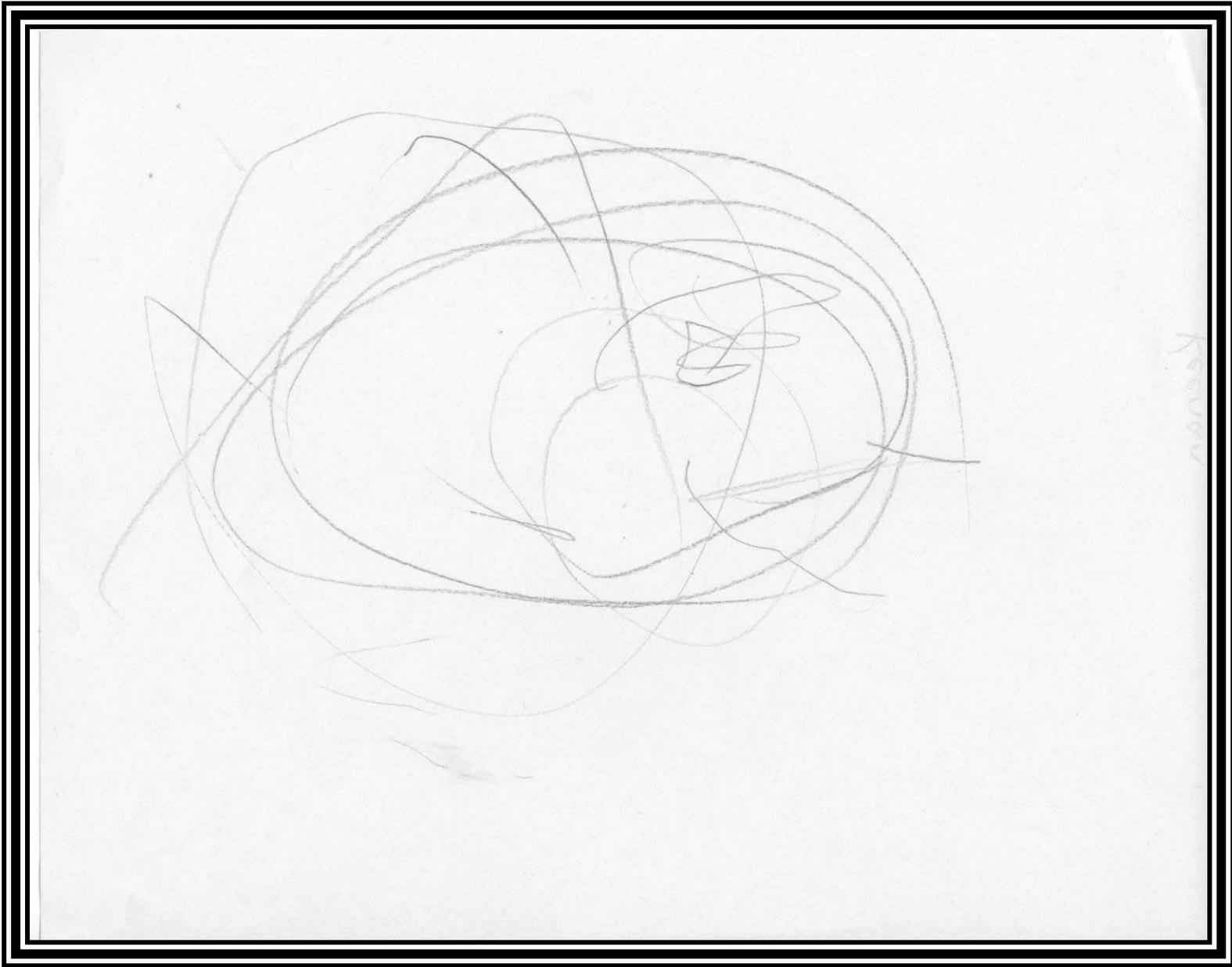


Our mother earth

Mother earth is special to us it is like freedom to us everybody loves freedom like us and freedom is like a gift from the creator and we like to be free and that's why everybody loves mother earth.

Adrian Alexander





By Keenan, Sundance Daycare
"Big Ship in Water"



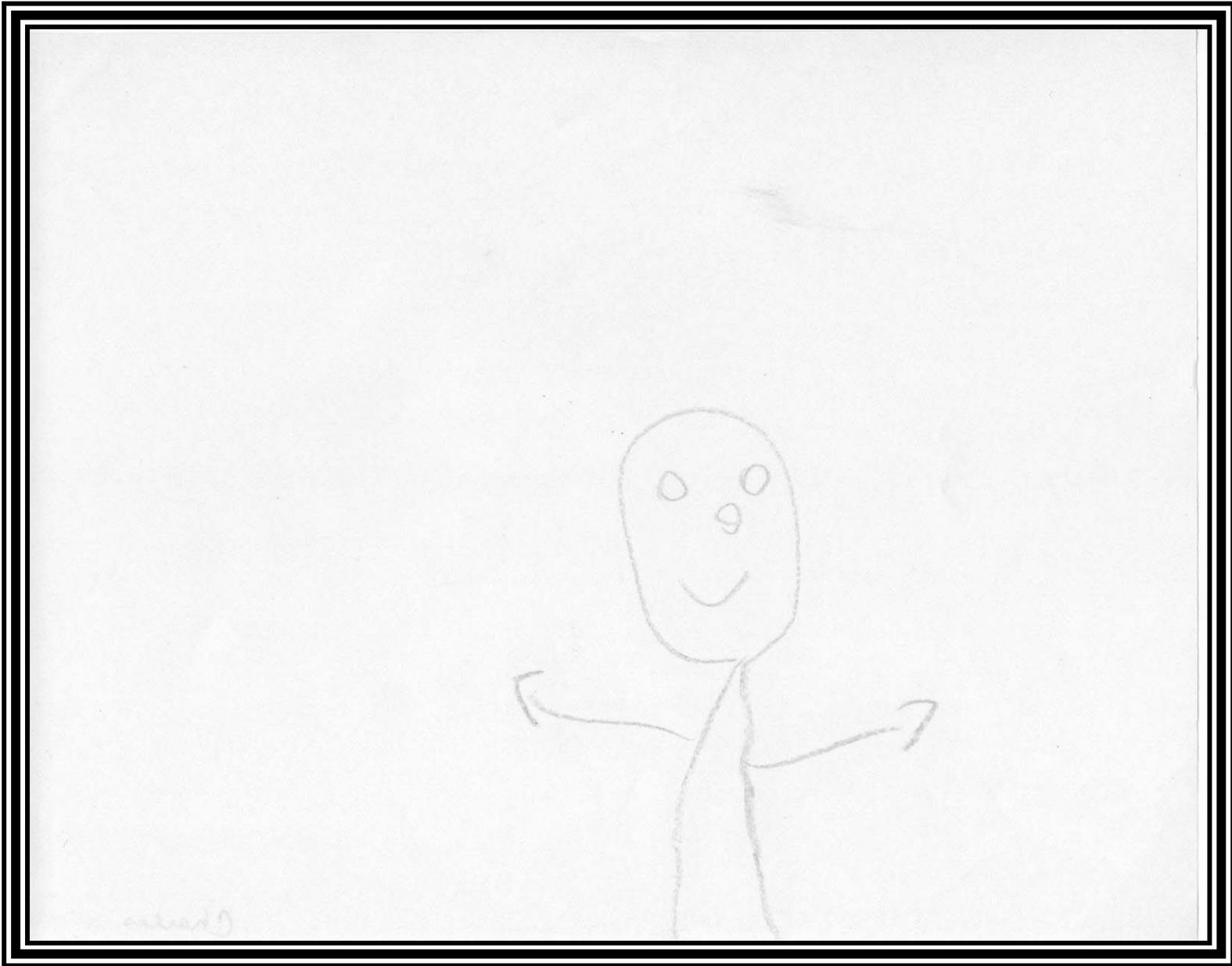
My cat

I have a cat whose name is
Maximus he loves to be the
My cat loves to hang around
The house being lazy
My cat has a cat friend's name
Kitty who lives at my sister's
House and the other cats
Name is dollars who ran away
My cat is loved by my family
Each and everyday



Shay McRae





By Charles, Sundance Daycare
"Indian"

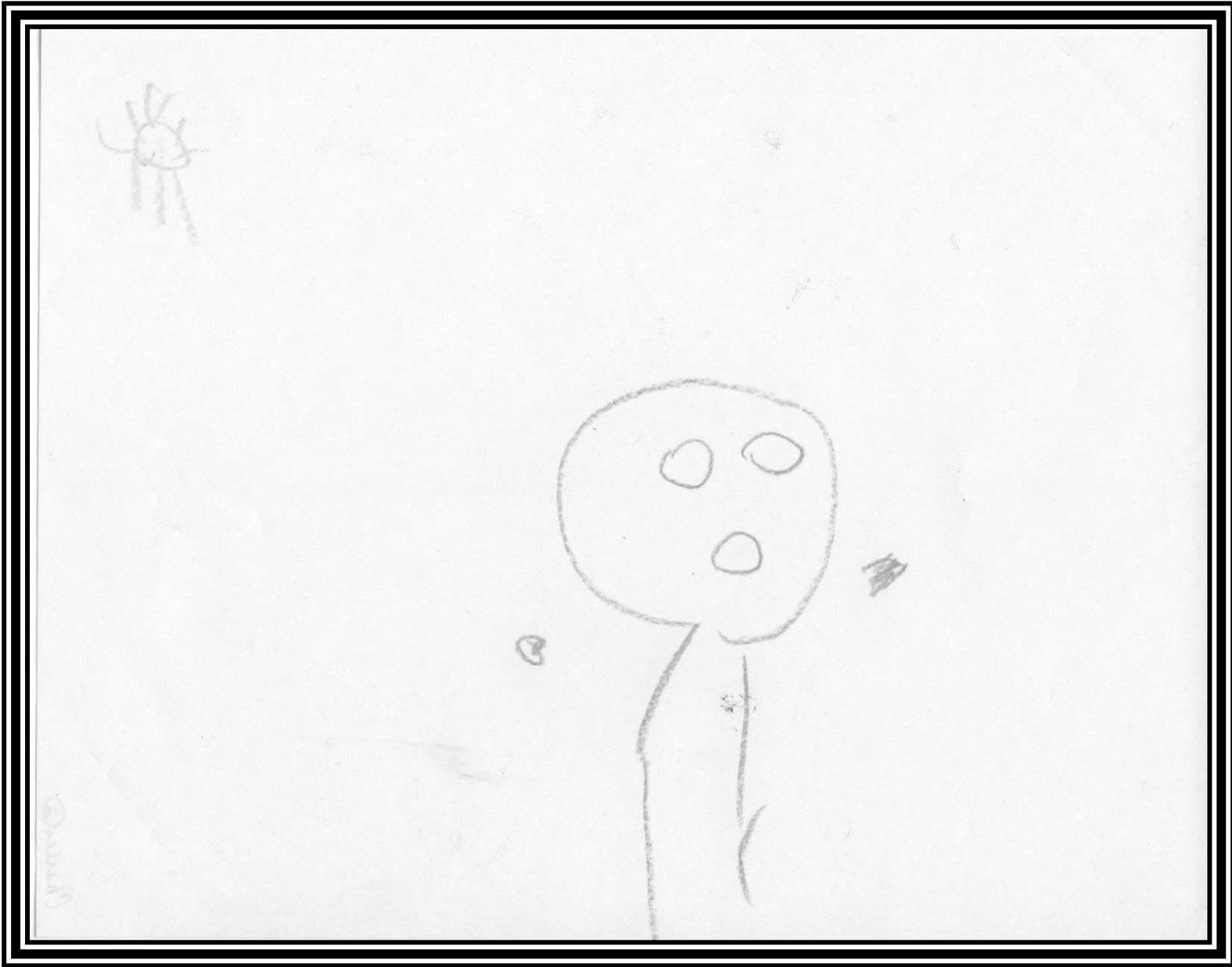


My family

I have a nice family who loves
And cares for me I love them
The way they love me that's what's
Great about my family in my family
I have a nice mom and dad, three
Sisters, one brother, one niece
And two nephews and I am happy
I have them to care for me

Shay McRae





By Charles, Sundance Daycare
“Indian Throwing Balls in the Sun”



Horses

Horses are beautiful
Horses are amazing
They come in different kinds of color
There is black ,white, brown and dark blue
My favorite color is dark blue
There are a lot of horses in the world
Colts like to run jump and play fight
They chase each other
They are beautiful when they run
When I ride a horse I'll think of this poem and how beautiful
horses are



Trevor Lindley





By Charles, Sundance Daycare
"Land of Mountains"

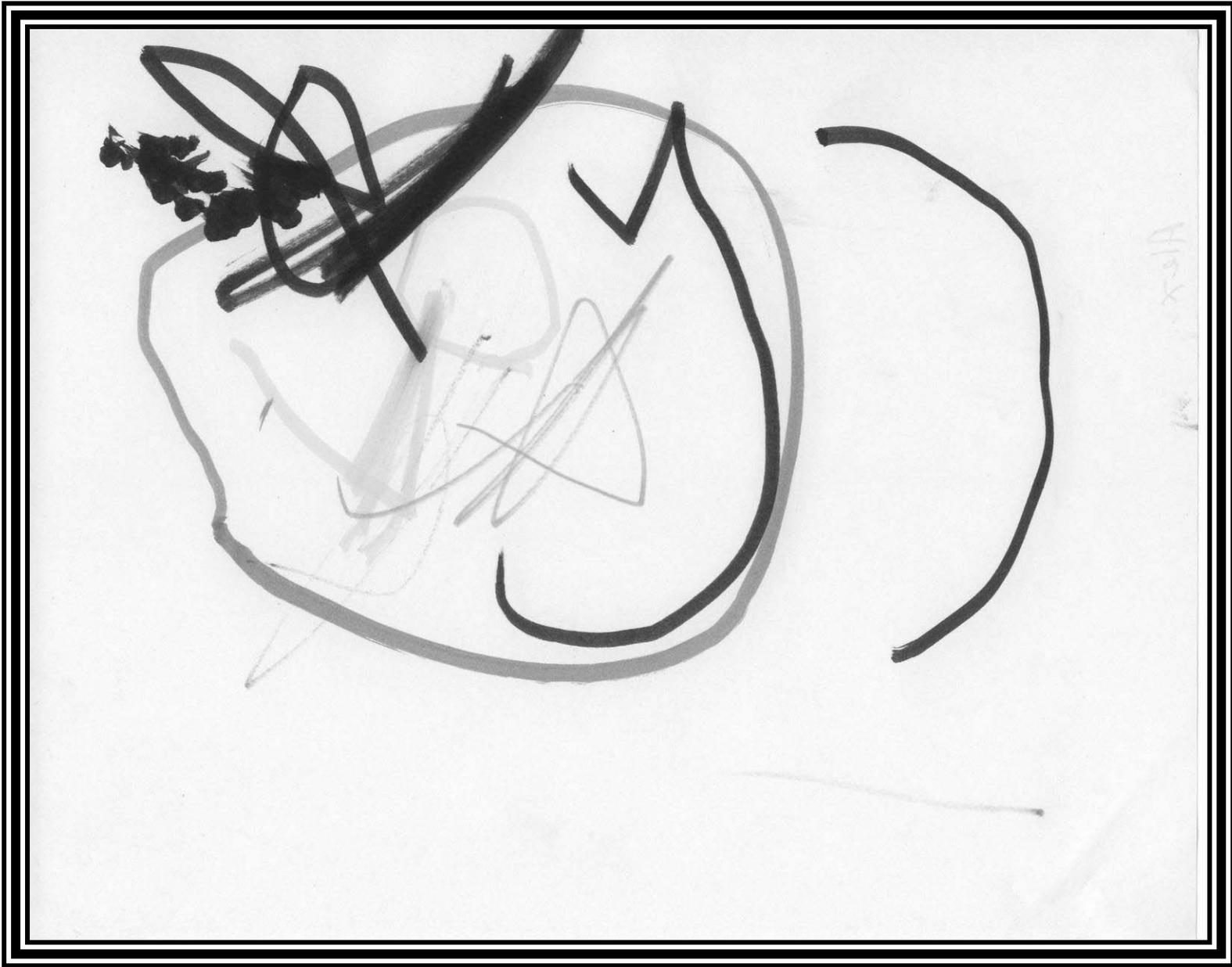


Mother earth

Mother earth has good clear air to breathe in.
She lets you run and play, sing, dance,
laugh and pick plants like tea and *sxusum*.
Mother earth gives us power to walk around.
There is a lot of people filled with joy and happiness.
Water gives you strength and power.
And that is why we love Mother earth.

Annie-Joe Gottfriedson





By Alex, Sundance Daycare
"A Big Whale with a Tail"

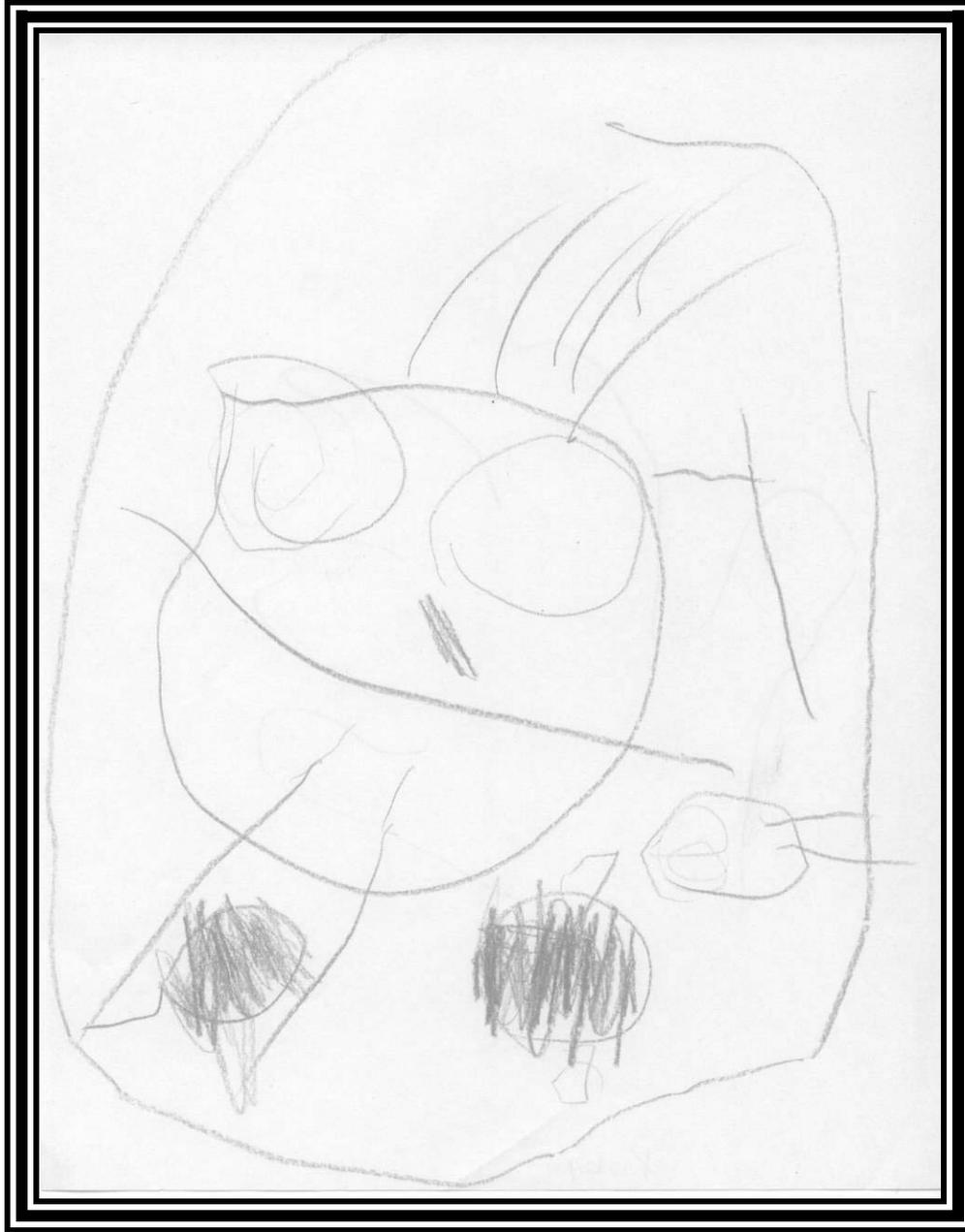


Moon Light

When the wolves howl through the night
And the water is calm and when the
Moon is bright the eagle flies
Above the moon and makes a shadow
Down to the earths ground the deer run
Through the field
Then the wild horses gallop through the grass
These are the things I dream about our homeland

Autumn Dennis





By Koby, Sundance Daycare
"Indian Acorn"



The Five Senses

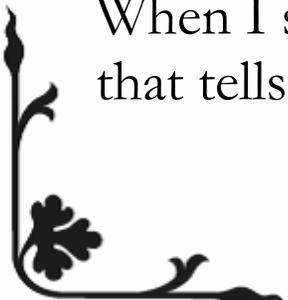


When blue berries and raspberries form together they make a taste that will last forever.

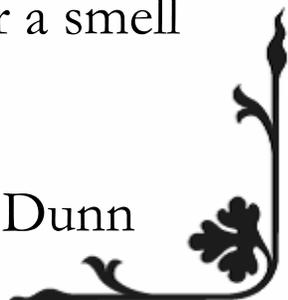
When you hear the hoot of an owl or a howl of the coyote the sounds go together and last forever.

When you see a sunrise or see the mid night moon put them together and it's a sight that will last forever.

When you feel the breeze hit your face or feel the mist touch your skin it's a feeling that will last forever.



When I smell the bannock and the stew they form together a smell that tells me this is my homeland forever



Calvin Dunn



By Deaunte, Sundance Daycare
"Coloured Grass, Indian and a Bird"

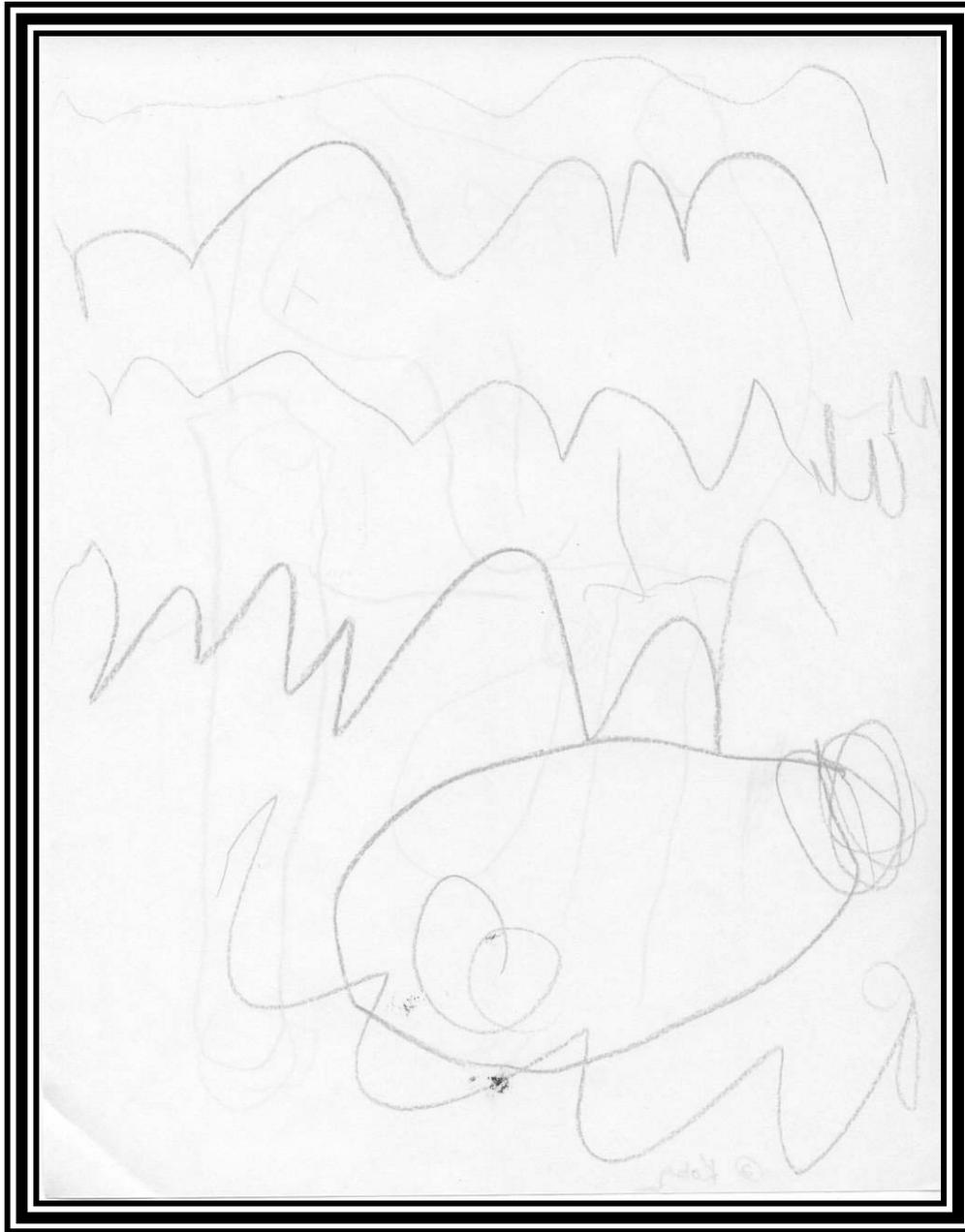


Pow wow yesterday

Tired today because of yesterday
I danced so hard my breath escaped
My feet said stop
But the drums said go
I tried my best to keep up to the beat
But my feet failed to complete the way of the drum
I felt so bad but in my heart I know I tried my best
And that's why I'm tired today

Colton Gottfriedson





By Koby, Sundance Daycare
“Whale Popping Out of the Sea”

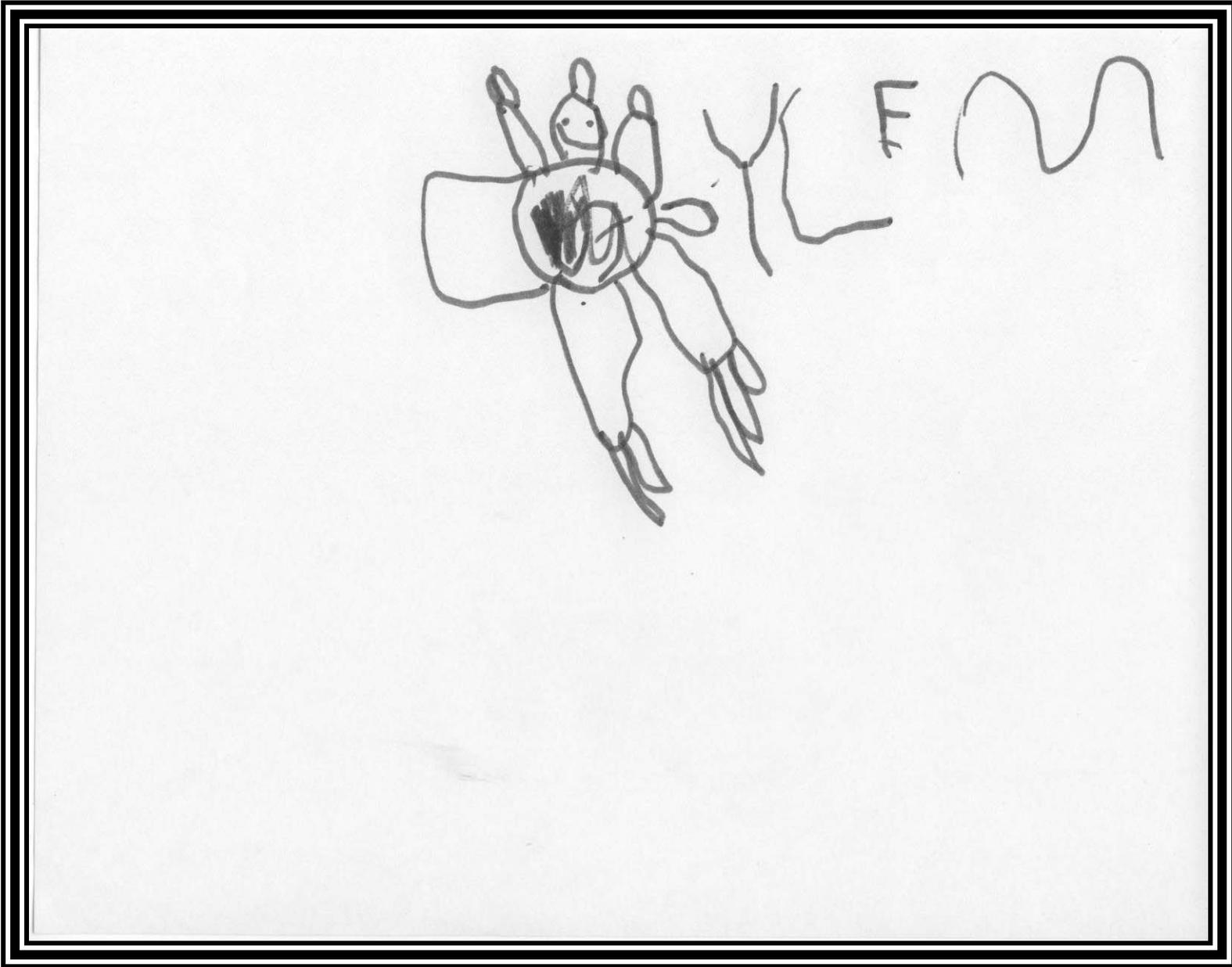


Wild Animals

I like all kinds wild animals like foxes, spring salmon, polar bears, Blue jays, eagles, coyotes, grizzly bears, wolfs, cougars, and a whole a lot of kinds pretty animals and some of them help us too, that's why we all love our aboriginal animals.

Geneve McRae





By Emily, Sundance Daycare
"A Bird Egg He's Happy with Wings"

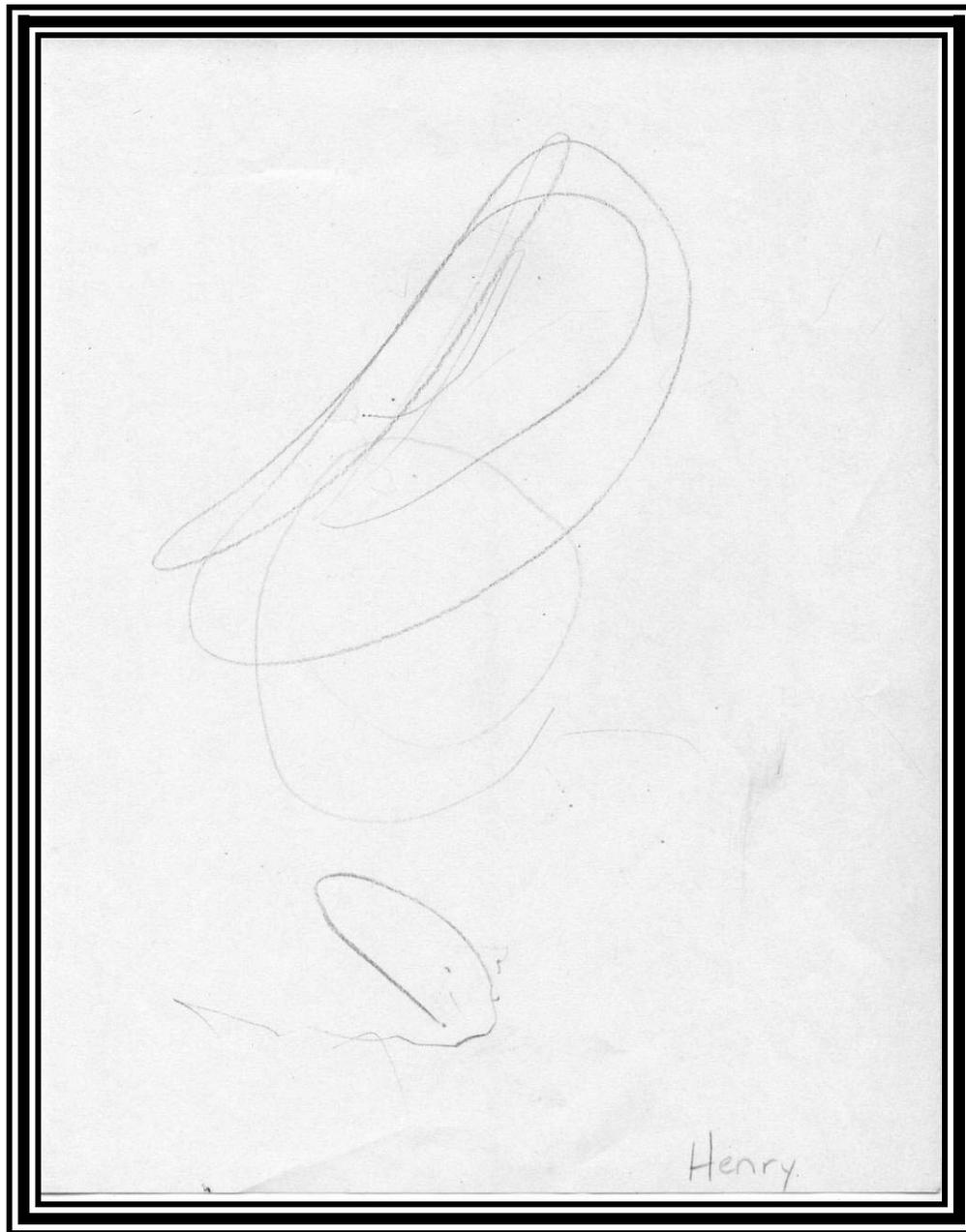


Bannock

Bannock is the native peoples' bread
It has been made since the beginning of the red skins.
It has a rich taste and goes with almost anything,
like Indian tacos or it will go with a bowl of deer meat stew.

Michael Desjarlais





By Henry, Sundance Daycare
“Eggs”



Coyote Flies

Coyote flies like his brother fox.
Coyote dies because he was foolish.
And fox said leave the flying for the people to be
As it was said we do fly to day
Good old coyote.

Travis Tom





Robert Pictou



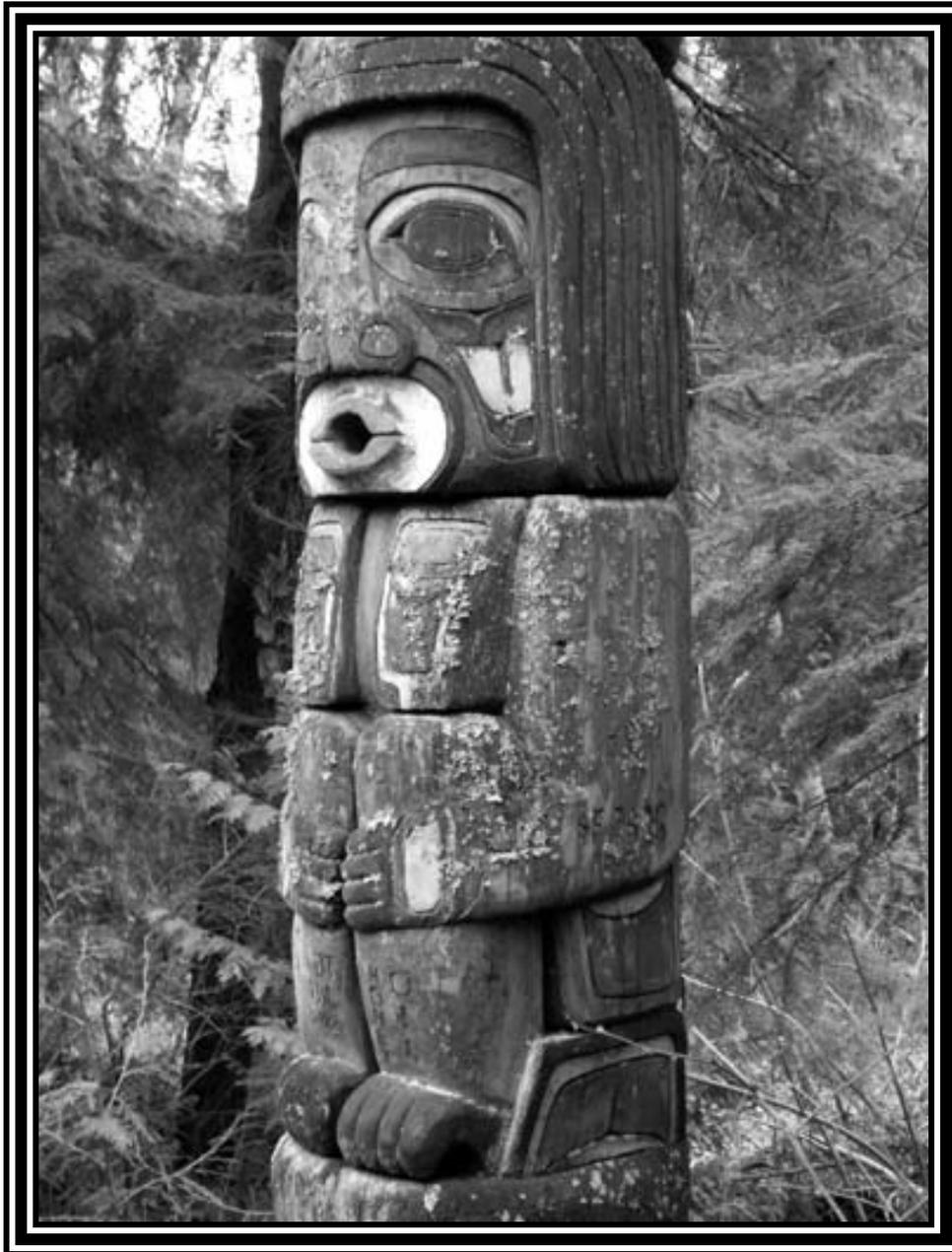
Homeland

The smell of pine trees
The big oaks the streams
Fresh from the mountain
The peaks of snow and trickling rivers
The sun in the morning
Bright with life
To start the day with such a breeze
The wind in my hair
The calming in the morning
The eagles fly free
No boundary or worries
Our legends and songs
The many teachings and learnings
The powwow traditions
Dancing and singing
The traditional gatherings
The bannocks stands and stew
The homeland of our people that I know

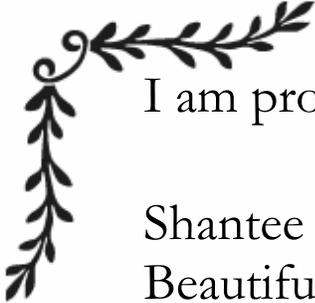


Kelli LaCerte





Robert Picou



I am proud to be *Mushuau Innu*

Shantee is the country

Beautiful place to be

Smell the trees

Stand on the rock

Staring at the sunset while going down and listen to the birds chirping

While the wind blows

Spirits I cannot see

Standing behind me protecting me from harm

Sweats pray and listen to the legends

Inside the cozy tent

Beading and knitting

Drinking tea, feeling comfortable

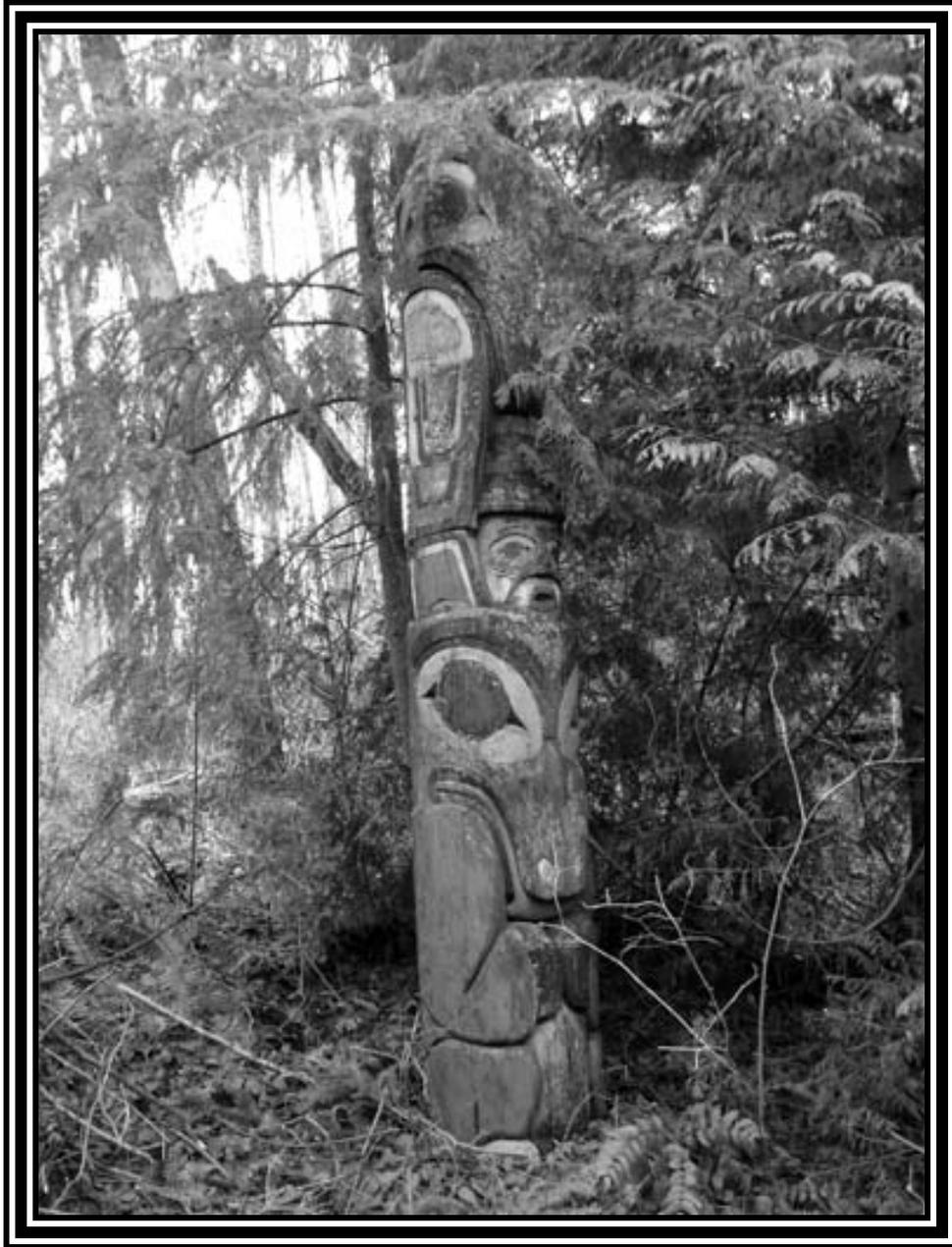
Talking my language to my people

I am proud to be Mushuau Innu

And I am proud to talk and speak my language Innu *Aimun*



Kristin Piwas



Robert Pictou



The Traditional and hip-hop

When traditional and hip-hop form together
When you hear the bang of a drum it is the beat of life.
When you hear that drum beat the dancers are the one who complete
the beat
When they dance like no one is watching
They dance from their hearts
Just like hip-hop
It's just like traditional dance
Just different beats
It's like a heart beat
When your moving to the rhythm you can't stop
This is the life of traditional dance and hip hop that from together



Cody Dennis



Brandon Bob

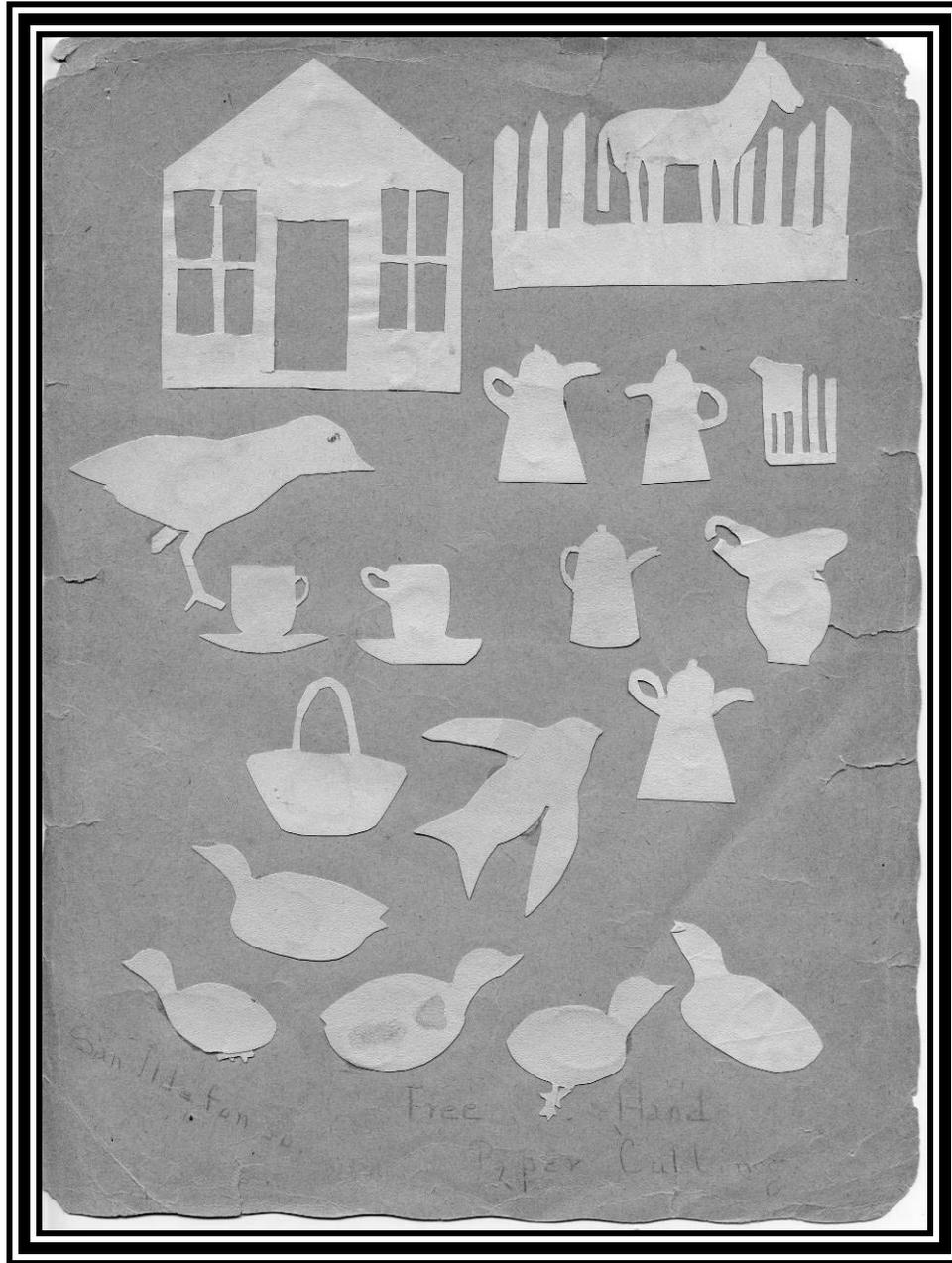


Coyote

Coyote that trickster
He plays his games
He hides and seeks
Through the midnight breeze
Coyote goes all season long
Looking for the people-to-be
Searching near and far
Protecting and fighting yet running away

Selene Peters





Elementary Class 1942



Spirits of life

Spirit of the mountains
Are the stallions that graze,
In the meadows and valleys
Where the Indians stay,
Near the trees and rivers,
Where they hunt and spear,
For the hides of a buffalo
And horns of a deer,
That is traded for knives
With other tribes,
And the eyes of an eagle



Watching down on their sides,
For their wisdom and strength
That will keep them alive,
As they live in their life,
With the bears and his claws,
The wolf and his howl,
The moon and the sun
And the fox and his brother,
Coyote will stand,
Looking down all the
mountains
At the spirit of life.

Lisa Moses





Brandon Bob

Appendix A: Original Call for Poetry, January 2007

CALL FOR POETRY:

FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITY OF POETIC VOICES

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY (SFU) POETRY EXCHANGE 2007

Call for poems: SFU Poetry Exchange is gathering of poetry from First Nations people, speaking about their/our relationship to HomeLand (this is First Nations environmental logic).

Love Mother Earth Poetry Exchange will gather First Nations voices/poems to discuss the relationship one has with Mother Earth. A selection of these will be publicly displayed through a simple printed volume and at a community event at the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Center (April 2007).

Poets: The call is open to First Nation's people all over Turtle Island. One does not have to identify themselves as a poet. Submissions of poetic work are open to all ages. The main goal is to establish a community of poetic work, and in a community there are children, adolescents, adults and elders.

Ideas: First Nation's peoples' relationship to land/Mother Earth can have many meanings and hold many insights. Some topics are....

- * First Nations people taking care of the land
- * Land Claims
- * Relationship to HomeLand; how do we take care of the land?
- * Traditional practices with the land; how do we continue grandmothers/fathers practices in modern life?
- * Traditional poetic forms (First Nations songs, old stories), that influence you
- * Traditional HomeLand; where is it, what is it like, why do you love it, or miss it?
- * Traditional First Nations stories about the HomeLand
- * Technology, resource extraction, and Mother Earth
- * Supernaturals and the land
- * ...anything you can think of pertaining to First Nations HomeLand....be creative! ☺

DEADLINE: March 15, 2007

