

IN OUR WORDS

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Peggy Anderson
Sammera Asaff
Joyce Baker
Sarah Burke
Rita D. Campbell
Cheryl Canning
Barbara Chiasson
Julie Chown
Carol Cirtwill
Pam Cooper
Heather Croke
Gregory F.P. Cromwell
Margaret Crouse
Wanda Davis
Holly Daye
Anne Marie d'Entremont
Lynette d'Entremont
Patrick Duffy
Lori M. Dunne
Cathy Fleming
Joey Gosbee

Donald Hall
Susan Hamblin
Andrea Hancock
Ronnie Holesworth
Joy Janes
Brenda Joudrey
Ann Kelly
Tracy Kuhn
Adéline Marie Leblanc
Anne LeBlanc
Mark A. Lewis
Lyndia Lombard
Angus MacDonald
Billy MacDonald
Kathy MacIsaac
Tera MacKenzie
Claudette McCallum
Beverly McIntosh
Vera Miehm
Siobhan Migel
Dorothy Parsons
Curtis Pelly
Sandra Plehn
Delores Porter

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Ksenia Pychko
Sharon Riches
Pam Ring
E. Robicheau
Robyne Slauenwhite
Nathan Smith
Tracy Smith
Brenda St. Jean
Aileen States
Bonnie States
Ellie States
Michael Stephen
Jill Sutton
Jeffrey S. Wentzell
Judy Ann West

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In Our Words

Canadians Reading Together



National Literacy Secretariat
Human Resources Development Canada

In Our Words, a portion of the “Canadians Reading Together” project, gratefully acknowledges the support of National Literacy Secretariat through Human Resource Development Canada for their financial contribution towards this project.

THE WORD ON THE STREET

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About the project...

The Word on the Street is thrilled to present an exciting, new project in Nova Scotia for adult learners – *In Our Words*. This program is a part of a national program, *Canadians Reading Together*, created by The Word on the Street. Through the regional Word on the Street festivals a series of programs was developed to directly benefit adult learners in our communities. In Nova Scotia, the committee for this project is comprised of Board members from The Word on the Street Halifax, and representatives from Frontier College, the Halifax Literacy Network, the Department of Education, and the Provincial Literacy Coalition. The project was co-ordinated and facilitated by KHG Management.

There are three major components of the *In Our Words* project:

- Creative Writing Workshops with adult learners from across Nova Scotia
- Publication of the learners' creative writing
- Launch of the publication, with the opportunity for learners to read from their work, at The Word on the Street Festival in Halifax on Sunday, September 29, 2002.

The project presented nine creative writing workshops throughout Nova Scotia communities. Workshops were held in Truro, Antigonish, St. Ann's Gaelic College, College L'Acadie in Metaghan River, Lawrencetown, The Mi'kmaq Friendship Centre in Halifax, Sackville, Dartmouth, and Lunenburg. The workshops were hosted by a local published author and attended by adult learners from the area. The learners received positive feedback and direction for their creative writing. To attend the workshop the learners were required to submit their work to a committee for selection for the publication.

The project had three major goals. First, to bring learners and local authors together in an educational and interactive setting through the creative writing workshops. Second, the project

aimed to provide the learners with a forum within which to showcase their work and the opportunity to be in a bona fide publication. Finally, the project will allow the Word on the Street to interact and strengthen its ties with the literacy community.

In our inaugural session, 74 submissions were received and sixty were published in this book. Several learners were given the opportunity to read from the book onstage at The Word on the Street festival in Halifax. The Word on the Street is very pleased to have received such an overwhelming response and support from the participating communities. We hope you enjoy this book as much as we enjoyed bringing the program to adult learners across Nova Scotia. Enjoy!

About the authors...

The authors who have contributed to this publication come from across Nova Scotia and are all attending adult learning programs in their communities. They are at various stages of their education. The In Our Words authors range in age from eighteen to sixty years old and have one fundamental quality in common – they love creative writing.

The Birth

PEGGY ANDERSON

Late one night the neighbour knocked on the front door and asked if he could use my phone. "Yes", I said as I led him to the phone in the kitchen. It was late and I wondered what could have been so important that he needed to use it at this time of night. He needed to call an ambulance because his wife was in labour and was about to give birth. He was shaking so bad I had to do it for him.

By the time the ambulance arrived he was a nervous wreck. Soon the mother-to-be was in the back on her way to the hospital. Everyone waited with anticipation to see if it was a girl or boy. To our surprise it was both.

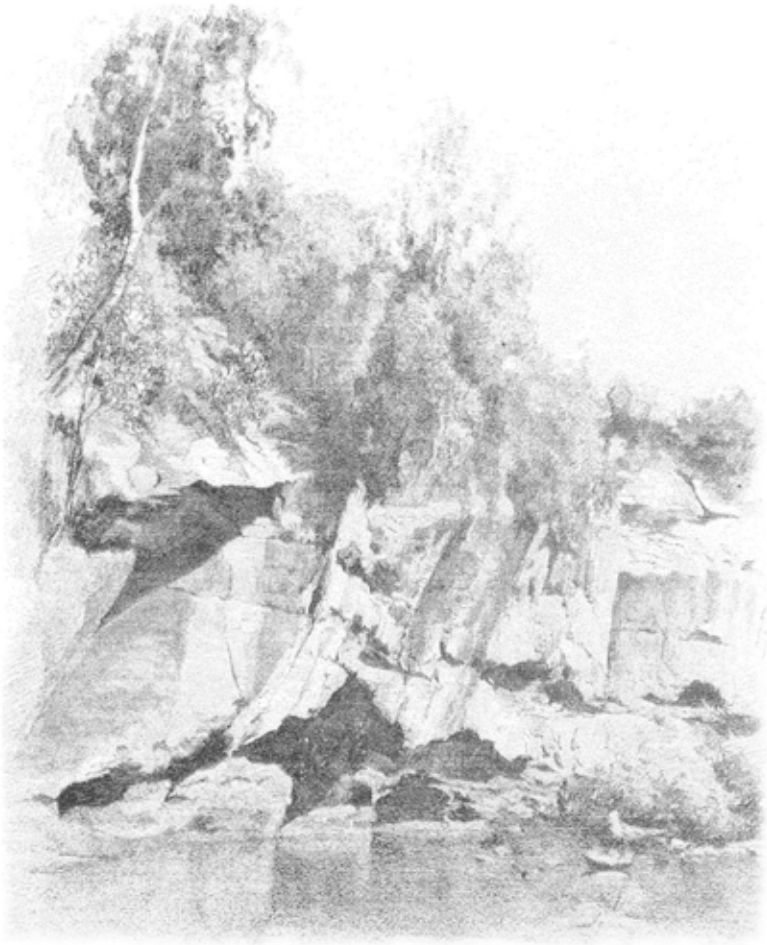


Illustration by Ksenia Pychko

Animus?

SAMMERA ASAFF

Shall I Sleep?
He comes to me in dreams,
Some other part of me,
And I know what he means.

He shares in my soul,
In what destiny planned.
I am playing a role,
Yes, I understand.

I might wish to stay,
Just to hear his heart beat.
But night becomes day
And I feel him retreat.

Where does he go?
My loving one;
Where does he go,
When the dream is done.

The Elevator Encounter

JOYCE BAKER

I am alone in an elevator with a man when suddenly the elevator gets stuck! I realize immediately that this person is getting uncomfortable: he is starting to sweat and fidget. It is very quiet. I ask him if he is OK and he looks at me suspiciously, as if I am to blame for the elevator stopping. So before he can reply I say it will be all right, someone will fix the elevator and we will be out soon. I tell him to calm down and try to breathe slow and easy. He lashes out at me saying, "Why did you cause the elevator to stop? Start it up right now or you will be sorry." I can tell he is getting agitated and may become aggressive. He is bigger and stronger than I am. Will he try to choke me or hit me? I try and show him I am not afraid. I look him straight in the eye and say, "It's OK, just calm down. I will not hurt you. I will help us both to get out of here. Now let's think of how we're going to do that."

I see a panel of some kind and there is a screw in the centre. "Look, what's this? Perhaps this will help us to escape!" I can see he is focussing on something besides wanting to kill me, a good sign, I think to myself. I find a nail file in my purse and ask him to use it to remove the panel. There is a phone inside so I say yes, "Great! We can call 911 for help!" I pick up the receiver and discover it's dead. I think Oh no! What do I do? If I say the phone is dead, he might panic again. I pretend to call and start to say, "We are stuck in an elevator-", when suddenly he grabs the phone from me and yanks it from the wall. If it wasn't broken before, it sure is now. "Now look at what you've done." I say angrily "Maybe you are the reason we are stuck here after all. Who are you and what do you want?"

I am surprised when he suddenly looks very sad, like a little child. "I'm sorry" he apologizes, "I didn't mean to break the phone. I just panicked."

"Maybe we are both overreacting", I say with a smile and we both relax a little.

"Maybe I can explain why I have been acting so strange", he says. "I am on my way to a safety meeting to give a speech on safety in the workplace and I am so scared. It's been a long time since I've spoken in front of a large group of people and I can't help remembering something that happened many years ago. When I was in grade five, I was asked to tell the rest of the class my favourite Christmas story from memory. Well, when I stood up in front of the class, my mind went blank. I couldn't remember a thing. All of my classmates started to laugh and I just wanted to run away. Ever since then, I have been terrified of speaking to a big group. I keep thinking of what happened all those years ago and I just know I will freeze up. That's why I am so nervous and tense."

I smile and say, "I am sure you will remember everything today if and when we get out of here. I was supposed to meet a friend for lunch and now I think it will be supper instead!"

We both share a laugh and reassure each other that someone will soon realize that the elevator is stuck and come to help us. We hear a noise and realize it is someone calling out to us. I answer to tell them that we are OK. Suddenly the elevator door opens and we discover that we are in between floors. We have to climb out very carefully. My new friend climbs out first and then turns to pull me up as well. People gather all around us to make sure we are all right. In the confusion, I lose sight of the man who has shared this adventure. We end up going our separate ways and I realize that we never exchanged names. I wonder if I will ever see the mystery man again.

Our Special Little Friend

SARAH BURKE

Ever wake up and know instinctively that there's something monumentally different about the day, only to go and find the rest of the world acting like its just another morning.

Especially when you've lost a family pet. My fiancée and I knew our day was going to be a different one. The day was a happy one until our little hamster Emily died. So the day turned upside down for us. There was loss of sleep and minds drifting into another world. There were a lot of inner self-thoughts and quiet moments spent wondering how we were going to cope with the remaining of that day.

Ronnie and I kept ourselves busy by going to our friends' house to visit and talk about happy thoughts. The happy thoughts about what Emily meant to us all and how lovable and affectionate she was.

Ronnie and both knew that Emily lived a happy life and of course she will be missed. We just have to move on and be happy with what we had during that time when Emily was alive. It's like a broken record stuck in place while we try to get on with our lives.

Vacation Camping Trip

RITA D. CAMPBELL

Sara starts walking along the stream. Looking down, she sees part of the lake through the woods half a mile away. The smell of the trees is strong for it has rained lightly all night. She hears the birds and other forest animals. The sky is blue and there is a light breeze. Sara decided to go for a walk before the sun set and it started to get dark. She has already eaten supper and cleaned up so the wild animals would not be attracted to her campsite by the smell of food.

Sara takes her backpack with her in case of any minor accidents or some other incident. Sara is in good shape, so it does not take her long to walk the half-mile to the lake.

Sara stands looking out over the calm placid water when she sees movement off to the side not 100 yards away in a campsite. The man at the campsite starts running away from his tent yelling and screaming, he trips and falls.

Sara immediately rushes over, jumping tree roots along the way. She reaches the man, who is sitting on the ground rubbing his ankle, looking intently at his tent.

Sara takes her backpack off, crouches down beside him and says, "Are you alright? Do you hurt anywhere?"

He replies, "My ankle is a bit sore. I was running when I tripped over something and fell."

"Let me take a look at your ankle. I'm a paramedic. I heard you

yelling from over there. Is there a wild animal in your campsite? Oh, by the way, my name is Sara. And your name is...?"

"Yes, there is a skunk in my tent and I did not want to get sprayed so I ran. My name is John. Do you think my ankle is broken?"

"No, you did not twist it too much. The soreness should only last a little while. The skunk in your tent, is it big or small?"

"It is a big one," says John.

"I have something here that should make it go away," says Sara. Sara reaches in her backpack and takes the carefully wrapped container out. She opens the container and takes a couple of mothballs and carefully approaches the tent and gently rolled the mothballs inside.

Sara returns to sit beside John, who was now sitting on a tree that had fallen down over the winter. "We will just have to wait until the skunk leaves. They do not like mothballs. How did the skunk get in your tent, John?"

"I forgot to close the flap down when I was cleaning up the dishes. It must have smelled the food that is in the tent."

Sara asks John where he lives and works. John replies, "I work in a camping equipment store in Truro. I am glad you came along when you did." John says, touching her arm gently.

Sara notices the tattoo on his left arm had a name with a little heart beside it. The name says Sara. She asks him about the tattoo and he tells her about it.

About 20 years ago I met this young lady in Toronto who worked there. I was quite taken with her. We dated a couple of times. On the fourth date, we decided to get tattoos. I would

have her name, and she would have mine. She had blond hair, and was very smart.

Sara sits there in total shock, realizing now who this man was. Before, he did not have a moustache. "Do you know where she is at now?" Sara asks. John interrupts and says that the skunk is leaving. He walks over to the tent and gets the mothballs from inside.

John starts back to where Sara is sitting, and notices part of a tattoo on her upper arm. Most of it is covered by the sleeve of her T-shirt, but he does see a little red heart in the lower corner of the tattoo. "What does your tattoo look like, if I may ask?"

Sara smiles and shows him her tattoo. They sat up all night talking about what they had done over the last twenty years.

One month later, they were married.

Inside the Gate

CHERYL CANNING

The gate groaned as Margo lifted and pushed against it. The wood had swollen into the earth and stuck to its decaying bottom and had begun to weather away at its red paint. Margo searched her pockets until she found a whistle. She often used a whistle to sound the attention of her horses. They would know to come for the grain that awaited them. It held more gut-appeal than even the lush green pasture they were so used to. Houdini came galloping first, then Martingail. Star came in a distant third, only because her advanced age would not allow her to over take the rest of the herd. Margo had to rush to remove the strand of electrical fence wire that separated the pasture from the riding paddock. Once inside she would secure each animal to a post with a lead and halter. They would be well enough away from the other before being given their grain, assuring that their greed would not interfere with the safety of her routine which she had worked hard to maintain, especially when she taught riding to a new student. Today only she and the horses were present, and she was glad for the fact.

Margo considered herself enormously blessed in the presence of her hooved compatriots. She considered Houdini and his enormous stature, the way in which his long gray mane flowed and tapped her knee when they rode together. His neck was gracefully arched by the nature of his Arabian - Percheron blood which also accounted for his large stature. Together they were magnificent. Margo would tie her long blond hair and it would pony in the wake of the breeze that she and Houdini would create. There seemed to be no dark, biological stirrings

that "her condition" as it were, caused when she rode. She felt safety among those marvelous beasts.

She knew internally that the pain of her depression was lessened when she was with her horses, and sometimes had to fight to remember the hell her life had been before prescriptions. Never was she anxious to return to the human populous outside of the rickety old gate. More importantly never to the helplessness and turmoil's she and her family had endured. Weeks on end she laid in bed unable to find a way out of the darkness, pushing the people who loved her farther and farther away. Margo even tried to convince herself that the anti-social behaviour she was exhibiting was normal and must be part and parcel of her true character. She had faced a possible divorce without any real emotion, unaware that her condition was destroying them as well. Not until Margo heard about an acquaintance who had a break down of sorts and discovered the symptoms were strikingly familiar, did she seek professional help.

Margo took the feed buckets away when the horses were done eating. Star, a no-nonsense quarter horse, meandered slowly beside her as they made their way back into the pasture. Margo stretched her hand over each horse as it went by and inhaled their coupled scent, a smell that is both musty and sweet and loved by all good horsemen the world over, few of which would apologize for wearing it. Margo thought to herself. "Go on you slow pokes. I'll see you all tomorrow. Be ready to ride," was all she said, as she hooked an orange handle, with wire in toe, back onto the live electric fence. They would ride the wind and would willingly endure the weight of her and the cues from her legs and hands. Her body would squeeze and encourage each horse she rode with only enough pressure to gain the desired reaction, until the harmony of rider and mount was realized.

It was beginning to cloud over and Margo's small frame shivered inside her canvas jacket. Spring weather had not yet arrived in Cape Breton and although the fields had managed

to grow enough for the horses to forage on, the air on many days remained bone-chilly and damp. Margo began walking the path to her farmhouse. She didn't mind the solitude of time spent alone. In fact she reveled in it, feeling only a little guilty. Only when chemicals became unbalance within her, did she become fearful of becoming despondent. Her family deserved the wife and mother that the medication allowed her to be. She would go home and down the needed pills that sometimes she would try and do without, only because she would feel a false sense of control brought on by an increase or decrease of imbalances within her.

Margo knew that if she could muster the courage to pick up the phone and talk to someone, she would gradually climb out of darkness created somewhere inside her, by whatever forces, she did not know. She resented the medication that gave her back power to maneuver through the days as a valued member of her community. 'Why can't I manage myself?' It was a question Margo often asked herself and no matter how she tried, only specific, doctor contrived, concoctions made the significant difference. Clinically depressed, they had diagnosed her as. She remembered how insulted she felt by the term, and she could not see past the negative connotations the term clinically depressed implied. Accept for the fact that life was now worth living, and she was willing more each day, to accept that fact that along with the help of others she could now cope and deal with the affects of her illness.

She considered each horse as they moved together into the distance. Each horse had come to find it's own unique place of belonging in the herd. She saw their pecking order now as a compromise, and their instinctive abilities to socialize as a way of self-protection. Here, she too had come to see her life, with its many tough compromises, as lessons of discovery and healing. Those qualities we all find necessary in our efforts to contribute and belong.

Selina's Job

BARBARA CHIASSON

I was walking along a dark street in Southern Alabama, the heat so intense that it made your skin so hot and clammy you just wanted to go somewhere, anywhere you could catch even a breath of fresh air to cool your body down. As I walked along one of the side alleys, I could hear music in the distance. I continued to walk further and got closer to hear the sound of clapping and hollering. It was a strip bar. As I continued to proceed with inquisitiveness to the building, I also started to feel a little unsure of my surroundings. I did not recognize anyone. There inside a blue, smoke filled room, dancing on a runway was this dark complicated girl in her early thirties. I thought from looking at her that she would have been from these parts. Her skin was so shiny with the oils that had been rubbed all over her body, and from the glow of the coloured light made her skin glisten. I asked another patron, "Do you know what her name is?"

"It's Selina, a young girl who lives with her parents just down the next block from here..." Selina was a very beautiful southern girl with shapely long slender legs, a voluptuous bosom and a petite waist. Selina's husband had died of cancer just short of three years ago. This was the only kind of job that she could get, as she had not finished her schooling and did need to support herself. She appeared to be a smart, happy-go-lucky person. She was a very agile and strong willed girl also, and very alluring to the male population. It was St. Patrick's Day here in Alabama. While other girls changed costumes and walked out onto the stage, Selina strutted onto the walkway wearing a costume made from the leaves of a philodendron,

cut out in the shape of shamrocks and held together with pieces of string. She even had a top hat to go with the occasion. As she began to dance around the tables, she encountered what she thought to be a familiar looking face through the blue smoke filled room. The lights lent a strange, almost eerie aura. While looking, Selina spotted Shawn, a friend she had gone to school with about 12 years ago. His face looked the same; he was a nice looking guy, her age, tall, sexy. Their eyes locked together as she started to perform her act. So as she moved, hair swaying, rolling body to the sensual sound of music, she noticing Shawn moving to the beat with her. Her heart started to race, and she felt her blood pump to all the areas that would have so excited. The crowd hollered and clapped as Shawn joined her on the stage. They danced and swayed to each other's moves and both ended up doing a duo strip dance that sent the crowd crazy. There was definitely something there between them. Now they are there working at the same bar in Alabama enjoying the fun and excitement with each other.

Amy's Challenge

JULIE CHOWN

Amy the new maid approaches the big, old 1900's Victorian home to begin her new challenge. She is a single attractive, outgoing woman of thirty. Amy hadn't worked in a long time because she had to look after her mother.

Laura is a charming, loveable and kind woman in her late forties enters the morning room. She walks over to the huge bay window to open the huge green curtains, which look like the rest of the 1800's furnishings in the rest of the room. Laura soaks up the sun and the peaceful view of the waves on the sandy beach.

Amy walks through the beautiful garden and in the French doors of the morning room to start her new job. She's never worked for many years because she had to look after her mother. For being very nervous about taking on a new challenge that she's never done before, she is eager to jump right into her work.

After, Laura tells Amy about how Mr. Smith is very strict and things have to go right or he will be angry. Amy begins her job by bringing in the tray for tea and coffee in the room, still thinking about how Laura told her things had to be in order. She wasn't paying attention and suddenly drops the tray when Laura and her husband enter. Laura told her not to be nervous where it was her first day. Mr. Smith had an extremely cold look on his face when he mentioned they were having a party in about a couple weeks. Then is where you can prove that you can do this job well.

Two weeks of planning and trying to be prepared for the fancy party is in full swing now and she is very confident because she seems to have the hang of things. Amy sees Mr. Smith and he gives her a wink but still no smile on his face. After the party she cleaned the room where the party was held. She was on her way out when Mr. Smith approaches her to give her a yellow envelope. Amy wonders what is in there, so she opens the envelope to find Mr. Smith had gave her a bonus. When she looked up to thank him, he was gone.

Early next morning Amy got everything ready for breakfast. Laura and the kids were waiting on Mr. Smith, which is always on time for everything. Mr. Smith finally enters the room to apologize for being late. He asks everyone to be silent for a minute because he would like to say something to Amy. He looked at her with a serious look on his face when he told her that she did remarkably well at the party with a smile on his face.

Amy finally feels well accepted being a maid and a good friend of the family. She stays on as the maid for many years and is treated very well in the home of the Smith's.

When Old Friends Meet

CAROL CIRTWILL

On a recent trip to the Cabot Trail, John and Mary were having lunch in a small out-of-the-way restaurant. Mary saw two people over in the corner and thought they looked familiar. She started to tell John, when out of the corner of her eye she saw the two people coming over towards their table. John jumped up out of his chair and said, 'Oh my! It's Bill and Anna! We haven't seen you in over thirty years!'

John said, "Where have you been? We lost touch with all our old friends, with all the moving around we did in the Armed Forces." Bill said that he and Anna were retired and living in Baddeck. Bill asked where they were living. They told him, "We are camping around the countryside until we find a place we want to settle down in." Bill said he and Anna had done the same thing, but were now settled down in a small house in Baddeck. They invited John and Mary to visit them on their way back.

Bill said, "Maybe you would like Baddeck so much that you might decide to become neighbours like we were thirty years ago!"

Who knows?

John MacIntosh At Work

PAM COOPER

John wakes to the sounds of the alarm. He gets up and does his usual routine. He has a shower and gets dressed. Then he leaves for work.

John arrives at work and gathers up his notes. He has to attend a union meeting in about ten minutes. John knows the President of his local union. He has to try to defend the employee, regardless of his own values.

The employee, Phillip, is charged with theft. John has to try to get the employer to be lenient. In his heart he knows Philip should be fired. Six years previously John lost his job through a layoff. With no income, he knew all too well the hardships.

When John was growing up he had three older brothers. John was always small in stature even when compared to children his own age. Growing up for John was at times very rough and tumble. At an early age John learned to defend himself. I guess that's why he can always relate to the underdog.

John walked into the large meeting room and sat next to the employee, Phillip, who is charged with theft. Don, the company Representative, took his place at the head of the table. The meeting began with a statement from John. He tells the employer "Phillip is very sorry for causing a problem and regrets his action. He has been a long term employee with no previous problems." Don, the Personnel Manager, states that the company wants to fire the employee. From the look on his face John's blood pressure is raising, his cheeks are flushed.

The meeting becomes very argumentative. It appears John is using the adage a good defense is a good offence. The Manager is emphatic that the employee be fired. John asks for reimbursement and a suspension for the employee. The employer wants the employee to be suspended for two months without pay. John manages to get the punishment down to one month with pay. The meeting is finally resolved.

I passed John in the hall and he's still fuming. He tells me that he was in a union meeting for most of the morning. John says, "I have to try and calm down! I have my own job to do and the paperwork keeps piling up, meetings or not!"

A Healthy Lifestyle

HEATHER CROKE

We didn't have a lot of money but that was ok. But most of the time pride was enough to carry us through. Sometimes you can have money and your health and still not be satisfy and happy with what you have. It's an easy trap to fall into that's why I count my blessing every day. I have my health, a roof over my head and food to eat. I turn my tap on, clean water comes out where there are other people in other countries who have there water polluted and they watch their children die because they don't have enough food to feed their families so they get undernourished and get very weak and then they wither away. Also not having a lot of luxury things is ok too.

Gentle Eyes

GREGORY F.P CROMWELL

My you have gentle eyes
 or is it a disguise for the element of surprise
 eyes are windows to the soul like the sense of touch is to
 something cold.
 I've been told that I have gentle eyes.
 Eyes that have seen the "Heavens"
 Why do eyes change their look once overcome with emotions.
 I've been told my eyes are wise
 as if I have lived for ages
 I've been told my eyes are cold
 holding secrets like ice ages
 I've been told my eyes are watchful
 Told I'm over protective
 I've been told my eyes are strong
 Seen tragedies, never forget them
 I've been told I have eyes of rage
 So red they look as if they were bleeding
 When ever you look in some one's eyes
 REMEMBER
 Eyes can be deceiving.

Treasured Memories

MARGARET CROUSE

She was a young, 25-year-old woman who lived in Connecticut with her husband Jeremy. Sue was small featured with long brown hair and a light complexion. She loved spending time with her family and being outdoors working in her flower garden. She started planting flowers with her grandmother, Pearl, when she was a young girl.

It was a beautiful day in Connecticut on the morning of May 21. The sky was blue, the sun was shining and the birds were singing. Sue awoke at 7:00 a.m. and got up to start her day. She was ready to go out the door when the phone started ringing. She was just going to let it ring, but something in the back of her mind told her she better answer it.

Before she answered the phone, she had a weird feeling go through her. She knew something was going to be wrong when she answered it. She picked up the phone and said, "Hello." On the other end was her mother full of tears. She was calling to tell Sue that her grandmother had had a heart attack the night before and was in the hospital. Sue was devastated. Before she hung up she told her mother she was on her way, she'd be there in a little while. On the way to the hospital so many things went through Sue's mind. She was very upset and very scared. When she finally arrived at the hospital, her mother and father were waiting for her at the front door. She ran up to the door and gave both her parents a hug. She asked how her grandmother was doing and her mother said, "Not very good," They went up to her grandmother's room and when they walked in, Sue was

overcome with grief. Her grandmother was hooked up to so many machines that Sue was shocked. Sue stayed and visited for a while and then went home.

Once Sue got home, she started her housework to try and keep her mind off everything. She was in the middle of her work when the phone rang. She answered the phone knowing it was going to be bad news. On the other end was her mother calling to let her know her grandmother had passed away. Sue expected this news, but she still was very upset.

In Sue's house she had an attic where she packed away stuff she didn't use anymore. The other day, Sue decided to go up in her attic to reminisce and go through old boxes and trunks from years past. As she went up the steps to the attic and opened the door, the darkness of the room and the musty smell gave her a funny feeling inside. She reached around the corner and turned on the light. There, in front of her, were so many old boxes and antiques that her mind filled with memories, and tears came to her eyes. Her attic was filled with boxes and tons full of old toys, clothes and pictures from her past. There were a lot of cobwebs and it was very dusty up there in the attic. The floor was made of rough wooden boards and there were spiders on the walls and mouse droppings on the floor. In one corner there sat an old wooden rocking chair that belonged to her grandmother.

As she sat and looked at the chair, in her mind she pictured her grandmother sitting on her porch and rocking in her favorite old rocking chair, knitting and sipping a cup of tea. As she looks around the attic, she eyed an old antique trunk that belonged to her grandmother. She went over and lifted up the lid of the trunk and tears filled her eyes. Inside were so many things that belonged to her grandmother that she just sat there and cried for a while. She had come across a few books that were her grandmother's favorite ones to read. There were a lot of old pictures of her grandmother and grandfather and of the family together on different occasions like Christmas and Easter. But the one thing that caught Sue's attention the most

was this book that had a floral cover.

She picked it up and opened it and to her surprise she had come across her grandmother's diary. She read a few pages and closed it. She held it close to her chest and whispered, "Grammy, I'll love you forever and I'll miss you a lot." Then she kissed the book and laid it back down in the trunk and closed the lid.

The Apartment Zoo

WANDA DAVIS

The Apartment Zoo is full of all kinds of people. Some are old, some are as young as small babies. There are animals such as cats or birds.

Some nights it's quiet while, other nights it's party hardy. When it's party time, sometimes the boys in blue are called and things are quiet again.

Sometimes through the week you hear yelling but mostly it's just small children overly excited.

With most apartments you have problems with parking. What do you expect when you live in Truro?

The Apartment Zoo has two busy bodies. One is on the first floor and one on the second floor. The one on the second floor always worries about what goes on in my apartment. When my phone rings she runs toward her wall trying to hear my conversations.

If someone is knocking on my door you can hear her sigh as if my company was supposed to see her first.

Sometimes I just feel trapped in my Apartment Zoo.

My Daughter's Hockey Team

HOLLY DAYE

My daughter's favourite sport is hockey. Hockey season was just beginning, so the coach wanted all of his hockey players to get a physical check-up, just to make sure everyone was healthy enough to play. My daughter Hanah's health was very good and her physical went well.

The first game of the season was on a Friday. I will never forget it. The forum was cold and the ice was shiny. Everyone was in high spirits. It was the third period of the game. One of the other players hit the puck and it landed and hit my daughter right in the chest. As an ambulance was called, I kept asking God that she be all right. When we got to the hospital the doctor said she will have a few bruises but she will be all right. Her chest padding had protected her from any real damage. God had heard my prayers.

Un Certain Été

ANNE MARIE D'ENTREMONT

Quand j'avais dix-huit ans, ma soeur et moi, nous sommes parties à Boston en bateau (Bluenose) pour travailler dans un foyer de personnes âgées. Mon père m'a dit de prendre garde à ma soeur qui avait seulement quatorze ans.

Arrivées à Boston, ma soeur a travaillé dans la cuisine et moi dans la buanderie. Après un mois, je me suis retrouvée dans la cuisine avec ma soeur. J'ai beaucoup aimé les deux travaux.

J'ai passé un bel été parce qu'à cet âge-là, c'était un très bon défi. J'ai eu des responsabilités et j'ai appris beaucoup d'autres choses, comme travailler avec des personnes âgées et leur sagesse où j'ai été beaucoup récompensée. Aussi, j'ai appris à voyager dans les autobus et les passages souterrains. J'ai beaucoup aimé travailler à Boston et depuis ce temps-là, j'ai continué de visiter ma tante et maintenant je visite ma cousine une ou deux fois par année.

Maintenant, quand je passe à cette même place où j'ai travaillé, il y a seulement une chose qui reste de cet endroit. Ils ont démoli le foyer et ils ont bâti des hôpitaux pour les enfants atteints de cancer.

Aujourd'hui, je fais beaucoup de bénévolat avec les aînés à "La Villa St-Joseph Du Lac", et je pense que mon étape à Boston m'a fait choisir de faire mon bénévolat avec des aînés. Je les aime beaucoup.

L'endroit idéal

LYNETTE D'ENTREMONT

Les ondulations aquatique sont mon berceau
Entouré de liquide amniotique
Je fleuri comme une nénuphare

Au beau milieu de l'utérus
de notes rythmics vêtues
de tendre chaleur invariable
envahissement mon esprit

Un repos incroyable
Je me vois étendue
sur une plage sableuse
De la Jamaïque

Les cris d'oiseaux tropicales
s'accordent avec le sifflement
d'une petite brise qui se glise
À traver de palmiers

Excusez-moi! Il faut repredres
mes senses
Peut-être sur une côte rocheuse
au bout de la pointe
de Pubinco-Ouest?

Les goélands flottent danse les airs,

Les sternes de Dougall, en voie d'extinctions,
 Tourbionnent pour enfin plonger
 Danse les eaux peu profondes
 Afin de pêcher de minuscules barbeaux

Ops! Mon petit!
 Attend! Il faut que je me redress
 A L'intérieur de mon ventre
 Y habit-il les sternes
 Donc que je viens de te parler?

Un petit aile, une petite patte,
 Une culbute j'en suis sur
 Mes côtes son sensibles
 Enfin j'ai même de la difficulté
 À m'endormir

L'oeuvre d'art du Créateur
 S'empare dans un tunnel coincé
 En route pour sa destination
 Quelques sons aigues perce l'anxiété

L'accouchement est réel
 De lumières éblouissantes
 Éclairent le visage de ma mère
 Sans perdre de temps je suis
 Soigneusement emmaillottée dans un
 Tissue rose pâle et embrassée
 L'aventure m'attend.

Untitled

PATRICK DUFFY

Je me souviens de marcher dans l'bois et pi j'me dit combien
que c'est beau la vie.

Le ciel bleu coumme un garde-de-pluie (taché). Les aubres
avec leux feuilles vartes qui chantent leurs chansons d'été.

La mousse éparrée à tarre coumme si a l'avait poins de soucis,
rinque entrais de vivre pour asteur.

Le ptits auseaux qui sautent de place en place coumme si sont
entraient décider cėti bouin, cėti poins bouin?

Les échureaux qu'on diraient qui diraient qui se disputent et
les painque qui pratiquent leurs voix pour leurs prochaines
chansons.

Mais même dans tous ça eiu su dans le silence de la forêt.

Je me souviens du silence de la forêt et poins le tantam de la
ville. Les bandes de mondes robotiquesqui va et vient de leurs
travaillent.

Les grous camions et autos avec leurs moteurs qui grondent et
leurs beurgots qui heurlent incéssants.

Les senteurs forte qu'anment les pleures aux yeux.

Les batisses en siment mort et raide, sans caracté res.

La rue de 'pave' noir et sans pitcher qui sembleà envaler tousse
que n'y'a autour d'l'yelle.

Je me souvien du silence de la forêt et poins d'la solitude d'la
ville.

A Butterfly from Sarah

LORI M. DUNNE

Sarah's picture big and bright
butterfly wings set for flight
beneath the colours that vary
lies the sad truth of the unhappily married

Laying there in her dark room
we all wonder if she will bloom
crying and frightened late at night
as she listens to them fight

Now she's married with a girl of her own
and she nervously sits by the phone
hugging the cord with all her might
we all wonder if she make it through another fight

Oh, my daughter blond hair blue eyes
very smart, and full of smiles
your heart so pure, your spirit free
we will walk out of this picture "just you and me."

Our Love

CATHY FLEMING

My heart fluttered,
so full of joy.
When you asked,
"Will you marry me?"
As tears of joy,
Trickled down my cheeks
All I could say was,
"Yes I'll marry you."
August 1st. 1987,
was the day we wed.
My father holding my arm
the fluttering returns in my heart.
Smiling you recited your vows,
tears stinging my eyes.
Smile on my face,
As you say, "I do."
Full of joy I profess,
"I do too."
As the minister pronounces us,
man and wife.
Bound forever by our love,
Sealed for eternity with a kiss.

Ricky's Nightmare

JOEY GOSBEE

The young boy was sixteen years old, and his name was Cory. He walked with a limp and had blonde hair that shone gold as the sun glistened down on him. Cory was a large boy for his age, looking like an action super hero with his rippling muscles and height of six feet. Cory always had a passion for guns, as he and his father were always hunting together. Cory had decided to get the stainless steel Colt .45 pistol and go out to the family's abandoned trailer in the field at the back of their property. His parents were not home at the time, so this was a good time to get the gun. Cory was going to the trailer to kill groundhogs and rats that were moving in on it. He was having a rough time at school the last while because of the other children bullying him about his ailment. Cory just wanted to get his anger out by getting some target practice in. Just in the distance as Cory gazed through the broken glass window in the kitchen, Cory saw his father walking up the field. Cory knew he had done nothing wrong. As his father, Ricky, got closer to the trailer, Cory noticed the sweat beading off his own forehead. Ricky hollered for Cory but there was no answer. As Ricky walked on the rotten boards on the step, he heard a clicking noise. The noise was the hammer being pulled back on the pistol. The gun went off and Ricky heard a thump. He hollered for Cory again but heard nothing. A shiver ran up his spine as he entered the spooky trailer. As Ricky looked down the gloomy hallway, he noticed scarlet blood oozing out from beneath the door. Numbing thoughts started going through his mind as he edged himself down the hallway. He creaked the door open, and there lay Cory in a pool of blood. Ricky was devastated as he took a piece of paper from Cory's

lifeless hand and began to read. Sobbing, Ricky read these words: "Dad, sorry for all the problems I've caused you, Mom and Stacy. I can't handle being teased at school any longer and I figure this is my only way out. Sorry, love Cory."

Ricky tried to regain his composure as he left Cory's body. He headed back to the house to break the terrible news to his wife and daughter, and then he called 911. Arrangements for Cory were made, and his ashes were spread across the property since the family thought Cory would have wanted that. Cory lives in their minds every day, but as time goes by, the days seem to get easier.

Family Friendships

DONALD HALL

A couple years ago, my brother in law, Wayne, came to visit me in the hospital where I had been for over a month waiting for heart surgery. Besides being relatives we are also very good friends. My wife, Betty, who is Wayne's sister, was also there along with my daughter, Krista. Little did we know that the evening would turn out to be something more than a simple hospital visit.

While we were talking and laughing my phone rang and I answered it to find out that it was Wayne's daughter-in-law reporting that "Mom" had an accident. She had fallen down the stairs and was in great deal of pain. Wayne is a very emotional person and upon hearing the news he was so upset that he thought it was his 100-year-old mother in law who lives with. When he realized it was actually his wife, Gloria, who had the accident he was so shaken up that we had to get a nurse and a wheelchair for him. He wanted to go home to be with her but we talked him out of it because we learned, through my daughter calling his home, that she was coming in an ambulance to the same hospital where we were. It was going to be a long night.

It's amazing that one phone call can change a relationship or a view on life. Gloria had broken her arm in five places and was operated on right away. Wayne came back from seeing her and he was much better. We started talking about different things, that we never talked about before. I spoke to him about my problems, together we shared our problems, and we helped each other out by talking. It helped both of us.

When Wayne left we hugged each other and I could see tears in his eyes. There were tears in my eyes too. That was a good sign that we loved each other. I felt better when he left and still feel better. It was a long night, but a good night. We were able to laugh about the situation later on when Gloria teased me about her being special enough to get an operation while I was still waiting. Eventually I did have my heart surgery and today both of us are doing fine.

Road Side Assistance

SUSAN HAMBLIN

It was a typical summer morning drive to work. The sky was a vivid blue and I could hear the birds chirping and singing, as my windows were rolled down in my car. Everyone always seemed to be in a rush, darting in and out of traffic, passing, then cutting back and forth in front of others.

Suddenly the traffic slowed down tremendously and I had to brake quite quickly. As I slowed down to a crawl, I discovered what the problem was. There were two cars pulled over to the side of the road, a minor fender bender had occurred. I realized I knew the man involved, so I pulled over and got out of my car. I noticed the woman was in tears and obviously upset about the situation. Ralph was totally out of line and losing his cool moment by moment. I observed that nobody was apparently hurt.

I thought to myself as I got closer, "Ralph, Ralph, you're always making mountains out of molehills!" I spoke up and said, "What seems to be the problem Ralph?" Ralph lashed at me, screaming, "What's the problem? You ask, what the problem is?" "Can't you see, this woman is not competent enough to be behind the wheel of a vehicle!" "Now, now", I said. "Try to calm down for a moment, I'm sure we can work this out in a reasonable manner."

Ralph responded angrily, "I'm already late enough for work, and now this!" I reassured the woman that everything would be just fine, then tried to console her and make her comfortable.

Having known Ralph Geo as a neighbour for twenty years I became accustomed to his many moods and gruff manner on a daily basis. Ralph's behaviour originated from childhood experiences he had with his father while driving. On numerous occasions, Ralph had witnessed a display of impatience, inappropriate slurs and a fierce temper to the point of negligence. There were quite a few incidents and traffic violations from adolescent years. Due to these circumstances Ralph experiences major anxieties while driving, which in turn contributes to his road rage and carelessness.

Ralph was still grumbling and complaining. "I hate being late for work and to top it all off, my car is a wreck!" "Your car is not a wreck Ralph. It is drive-able and can be fixed when the insurance is settled. I've got my cell phone. Would you like me to call your boss and explain what has happened? This is a circumstance your boss will understand." Ralph responded, "You're right Shelly, give him a call, while I compose myself and apologize to that poor woman."

Ralph appeared calmer as he looked up at me, "I'm sorry for any trouble I've caused you." As Ralph stood there with his disheveled look and tousled, fuzzy hair, I saw a smile start to develop. "Phone call is made, now lets go take care of the insurance information." "Sure Shelly, let's get this done, so we can all get to work." Ralph thanked me by saying, "You always seem to be there, when I need help! Thank you again." "No problem Ralph, anything for a friend." I got back in my car and continued my drive to work with a smile on my face, taking in the blue, blue sky and the sounds of the birds.

Who are We?

ANDREA HANCOCK

A turban of white upon your head.
 A terrorist group you have lead.
 Eyes as dark as the dead of night.
 It took the darkness to show the light.

Men in the west see you as an evil doer.
 Men in the east see you as something truer.
 Why is the world so full of hate?
 Did God know this would be man's fate?

For greed, hate, and above all war,
 Is this what he had in store?
 For the people of this time,
 A world of evil and of crime.

Silence our voices, silence your words.
 Listen to the cries of those unheard.
 With all this killing over land,
 Is the hour close at hand?

Sisters and brothers left there to die,
 As I keep asking why oh why?
 Is it over land and greed for wealth?
 It was said man would destroy himself.

Killed in so called friendly fire,
 Four men from CANADA we will admire.
 Who gave for this country the very best,
 Are brought back home and laid to rest.

Makes no sense to me at all,
 You think man would sit back and recall
 The ten commandments God given thee,
 Until we listen no-one's free.



Illustration by Andrea Crosby

The First Time Sarah and I Met

RONNIE HOLESWORTH

The first time Sarah and I met was in Baddeck Cape Breton during the time we were both in Special Olympics together.

Sarah and I both were dating someone at the time but we seemed to always have our eye on each other.

From day one I was going to make sure I was going to get Sarah for my own and I did just that.

Today Sarah and I are engaged to be married and the wedding is going to be held here in Halifax.

Sarah and I dated for 4^{1/2} years and then I popped the question to her and she accepted.

I dreamed of having Sarah for as long as I can remember and now my dream has come true.

A Walk in the Park

JOY JANES

It's early in the morning. The sun is just coming up. She needs time to think. She throws on an old, worn-out T-shirt and a pair of shorts, feeling a little low inside. She leaves the house and starts walking, thinking of the life she left behind- wondering if she made the right choice.

The further she walks the better she feels. She clears up a lot of things that were bothering her. She knows she has a lot going for her; she is still young, she has a good career, and she knows things can only get better.

After walking for quite a while, she decides to find a nice place in a park to sit, make plans for her future, and enjoys one of the most glorious days of spring.

She comes upon a park that's very busy. It seems that everyone had the same idea: to get out and enjoy the warm morning sunshine. As she finds a park bench and sits very quietly, she gently closes her eyes listens to the sounds of the birds chirping, and people talking in the distance. At that moment, feeling very at peace with herself, as the sun's rays gently caress her body, she drifts off into her thoughts...

Across town the traffic is busy with the hustle and bustle of the vehicles going this way and that, people going in and out of doors. As she comes out of her apartment door, she's dressed in a beautiful light blue business suit. Her makeup is very carefully put on, looking like she has just walked out of a magazine.

Feeling the sun's rays on her face as she walks towards her small red sports car, she decides to take a couple of hours to herself before going to the office. As she sits in her car she takes out her sleek little cell phone and calls her company to tell them she won't be there for the next couple of hours. She decides to go to a park.

She's driving along, not noticing that she has already passed one park. She's just enjoying the warm morning breeze blowing through her hair, when she sees a park. She pulls over to the side of the road, parks her car and gets out. She looks around and wonders which path to take, then starts walking straight ahead.

She walks for a short distance when she realizes that walking in high-heeled shoes is not so comfortable, so she starts looking for a park bench to sit on. She's just not ready to start her workday yet. Just a few steps ahead she sees a bench with someone sitting there: a young lady dressed in a worn-out T-shirt and shorts, with her eyes gently closed. She was just about to ask if she could sit there, when she noticed that the young lady looked very familiar.

As she looked down towards the young lady, the words left her lips without thinking. "Carman? Is that you?" Carman very slowly opened her eyes, looking upward, taking what seemed forever to recognize the person standing in front of her. With a very surprised look on her face, she says, "Beth? Is that you? Where did you come from?"

Beth sits down quickly beside Carman, so happy to have run into each other, after coming from the same little town, growing up just down the street from each other, going to the same school, and parting after high school. Beth moved to the city to further her education and become an interior decorator and now own her own company. Carman became a bank manager in a small town, where she has just gotten out of a relationship with someone. They had just grown apart from each other and she needed to start over, so she decided to transfer to the city.

After Carman tells Beth about her life after high school, and Beth tells Carman about her life, they both know they made some right choices in life.

They were so glad to have found each other on that beautiful warm spring morning, to rekindle their long-lost friendship.

The Curious Kids' Castle Adventure

BRENDA JOUDREY

It was a dark and foggy night. Four kids decided they wanted to know what was over in the far away castle. They told their parents they were staying with their friends for the weekend. They took some food in a backpack. The kids were travelling along the railway tracks. Johnny drove the trolley and Peter controlled the sails on the trolley. Johnny and Peter sat in the back and Lizzy and Della sat on the front of the trolley. The wind was blowing hard that night. The kids all hung onto the trolley as they were crossing a long, wide harbour. They were going along when it started to rain. Then suddenly it started to thunder and lightning. The kids were scared, but they had no way to turn back on the railway tracks. They held on tightly so they would not fall off into the water. They thought the storm was over. They were going along the tracks when the waves started to come up over the rocks and onto the tracks. The rocks on the side of the tracks didn't help break the waves from the harbour. The kids looked up at the sky and the night was as dark as coal. The kids wondered what they would see over there in the castle so far away from home. They thought maybe the castle was haunted.

The kids were so curious to get there to explore the castle. Then the wind blew hard and ripped off the sails of the trolley.

Lizzy and Della started to cry. "What will we do now?"

Johnny and Peter thought about it and said, "We will have to

go down on our hands and knees and crawl the rest of the way."

It was a long and rough journey, but the kids had no other choice. They had come too far to turn back. The kids crawled slowly across the railway tracks. Daylight had come when they finally got the other side. The kids were tired and hungry so they decided they would eat the food they had in their backpack.

Lizzy asked, "Peter, where is the backpack?"

Peter looked around and Johnny said, "I forgot to take it off the trolley."

So the kids started to walk along the road and over the field to get to the castle that was up on a cliff surrounded by water. They followed a long old stone walk up to the drawbridge. On a stone it said, 1398. Then the drawbridge opened like someone knew the kids were coming. The kids went in and their eyes looked all over the entrance room. The castle looked so spooky and there were cobwebs over everything. The room was huge and it had a fireplace and torches on the walls. The windows were small and there was a suit of armour standing in the corner. The kids examined it and then they went and looked through the other rooms in the castle. There was a big ballroom too. When they got to the kitchen they were shocked to see food on the table. The kids were scared because they felt someone was in the castle. The kids took off running out from the kitchen. When they stopped running Lizzy and Della said they saw enough and wanted to go home.

Johnny said, "Are you scaredy-cats?" and he laughed at the girls.

Peter said, "We are not going home till we find out what is going on here."

So the kids decided they would stay all night at the castle. They went upstairs and the girls went in one room and the boys went into another room. Around 3 a.m. the girls woke up. They heard music playing. They went over and knocked on the boys' door and asked them if they heard the music playing downstairs.

The boys said, "Yes."

So the kids went down the winding staircase to the room they heard the music coming from. It was the big ballroom. When Johnny opened up the door they were surprised to see that nobody was there. The kids looked around and Peter found a loose brick on the fireplace. He pushed the brick and the fireplace turned around. The kids were in a long, gloomy hallway. They walked down the hallway until they came to an old stone bolted door. Johnny opened the door and they walked in. They found that it must have been a dungeon at one time. On the walls there were chains hanging. Long ago there must have been prisoners fastened to the walls. The kids came back out into the hallway and found another door. When Peter opened the door they saw a shadow disappear through another door. So they followed the shadow through the door and it led into the kitchen. They didn't see the shadow but there was food missing off the table. The kids decided they would play a trick on whoever it was. They went out of the kitchen and left the door open a crack. The kids stood quietly outside the door. They saw the shadow again. It was a little boy that came from the closet. He sat down at the table and then the kids came in and the boy started to run.

Lizzy said, "Don't run; we won't hurt you."

So he stopped. Johnny asked, "What is your name?"

"My name is Albert."

Della asked Albert, "Why are you here all alone?"

Albert said, "I got no place to live since my parents died. So I found this castle and stayed here."

The kids turned around and walked to the table and when they went to talk to Albert he was gone. They thought it was strange that he disappeared. So—was he a ghost? As of today, they still wonder what happened to Albert.

Spring Fair

ANN KELLY

Jordan and I went to the spring fair. It had things like the fishing pond and books and plants for sale. There was a cakewalk and Jordan won. A cakewalk is like musical chairs: when the music stops a number is drawn and if you stopped on the number taped on the floor you win a cake. The fair was better-organized last year because there were more activities to do. There were slides, the titanic ride and a house that the kids could play in outside.

Hopes and Dreams for My Children

TRACY KUHN

Hi my name is Tracy I am a single mom of two boys. My son Jack is 14 years old and my son Jessie is 10 years old. Jack is an ADHD child. He likes anything that has to do with computers. I hope he sticks with it; that's my dream for him. I hope he gets a good job. So far he has been staying out of trouble. I hope it stays that way. Jessie has a weight problem my dream for him is to help him lose some weight because if not he may become very ill. He is not really into anything yet. But I hope he gets a good job too. I hope both of them stay in school and go to college. I hope they can find someone to make them happy when they get older and live happy lives.

Je Me Souviens

ADÉLINE MARIE LEBLANC

Je me souviens quand j'avais dix-neuf ans, pendant les vacances d'été, mon frère Jérémie et moi visitons notre grand-mère. Nous y sommes allés avec un monsieur du nom de Luc Comeau.

Luc avait un camion bleu avec une cabane blanche placée en arrière qu'on appelait 'la shop à Luc'.

Dans la shop 'petit magasin', il y avait deux étagères de chaque côté avec des bouteilles et boîtes comme du lait, soupes, confitures, des oeufs, pommes de terre dans des sacs bruns de cinq livres, farine et sucre dans des petits barils vendus à la pesée d'une à cinq livres, des biscuits au sucre et mélasse et des bonbons variés.

Mon frère et moi nous assisions chacun sur un petit banc rouge placé entre les deux étagères. Luc nous donnait à chacun un petit sac de papier brun avec un assortiment de bonbons. Ceci devait nous satisfaire jusqu'à notre arrivée à la pointe à Major. Luc arrêtait avec sa shop 'magasin' là où il y avait des personnes debout sur le bord du chemin qui voulaient acheter des provisions de son magasin.

Ma mère nous répétait à chaque fois qu'on allait en visite; "ne touchez pas aux bonbons!" Je pense que c'était pourquoi Luc nous en donnait, ça l'aurait été très tentant.

Le voyage se déroulait pendant plus d'une heure pendant que Jérémies et moi dégustions notre petit sac de bonbons. Nous aimions beaucoup cela aller chez notre grand-mère avec la shop à Luc.

Ma Vacances Chez Tante Maguitte

ANNE LEBLANC

L'été approche vite. L'année scolaire est presque fini. Je crois que je réussirai avec de très belles notes qui me rendra en 4^{ième} année. Je suis tellement inquiète de ce qui va se passer dans ma vacances. Ma mère, accablé par un mal de dos, que je ne comprend pas trop bien, a besoin d'une chirurgie. Son rendez-vous à l'hôpital es une semaine après la terminaison de l'école. Elle est très nerveuse et m'en parle pas beaucoup. Parce qu'elle est veuve depuis deux ans, ayant perdue mon père dans une accident, il n'y a personne pour me garder chez nous donc il faut que je me rende chez ma cousine Lise s'intéresse aux mêmes choses que moi. Qu'est-ce qu'il y a pour s'amuser dans le petit village de Concessions? Je ne peut pas di á maman que je ne veut pas y aller mais j' ai hâte de voir le mois de septembre retourné.

Le jour de mon départ est venu. Triste et ignorante de l'avenir, je quitte ma mère et je monte dans l'auto de ma tante Maguitte qui est venue me chercher. Les yeux plein d'eau je regarde Maman sur le trottoir pendant que l'auto roule au bout de la rue semblant être vers la fin du monde. Tante Maguitte me raconte combien je va avoir une belle été avec Lise. Elle essaye de me réassurer durant notre voyage mais je ne vois aucune belle image de cela dans ma tête.

Après quatorze heures de voyage en auto et un traversier, je vois l'enseigne de Clare et finalement j'arrive aux Concessions. À ma surprise, je vois une énorme maison blanche avec des

grosses colonnes sur le porche. Mon Oncle Nastace et assis dehors avec le chien, les trois chats et les poules. Il a préparé u souper au poulet barbecue avec des patates roties, et de la salade. Que c'est bon! Je n'ai jamais mangé du poulet si juteux et savoureux.

Après souper Lise me montre ma chambre à coucher qui se trouve sur le 2ième étage. Je vois en arrière de la maison le jardin qui ne semble pas avoir de fin, les pommiers en rangs droites et l'étang au bout du ruisseau qui dévisse les deux. La noirseuse est venu. Fatiguée, je m'endors sans trop de malaise.

À l'aube un cri me réveille de mon profond sommeil. Le cog est sur la clôture juste dessous ma fenêtre. Quelle grande été ci je dois me lever à 6 heures tous les matins. Calmée, je fais ma toilette et je descent à la cuisine. Tante maquitte est occupée a faire cuire des oeufs et du jambon. Mon Oncle lit le journal et Lise dors encore. Ma Tante me dit que je peut dormir plus longtemps, mais comment, avec le cog de l'enfer dessous ma fenêtre? Deux heures plus tard, Lise se lève et après déjeuner m'annonce que c'est le temps de ramasser les oeufs dans le poulailler. Je ne peut pas croire mes oreilles. Elle prend deux paniers et m'en donne un. Avec une peur affreuse, je la suis. En entrant dans le poulailler, elle envoie les poules dehors et ferme la porte Lise me montre les oeufs. Quelle merveille a voir. Il y a des oeufs dans tout les nids et beaucoup sont encore chauds. Nous remplissons nos paniers et les ammenons à Tante Maquitte qui les met dans des cartons. Je me sens contente d'avoir fais ce travail. À Montréal on expérience jamais cette beauté de la nature. Là les oeufs sont froids dans les réfrigérateur des gros magasins.

Dans l'après midid, Lise prend de petit habits de poupée, de petits carrés de tissu et de épingles de suretés. Elle me dit de la suivre. Nous marchons dans la petite route derrière la maison qui se rend jusqu' à l'étang. Je n'ose pas demander ce qu'ont fait ici. Lise attrape une grenouille et me le donne. Elle avance dans la boue et en attrape une autre. Nous leurs metton les petits habits et des couches avec les carrés de tissu.

Mescamarsdes d'école n'ont jamais faitent rien comme ceci. Je suis excité et nous nous amusons toute l'après midi avec les grenouilles.

Au coucher du soleil je monte à ma chambre et je réfléchit sur la journée. Je conclus qu'elle était la plus agréable de ma vie. J'espère que la nuit passerait vite pour que je puis aller cueillir les oeufs tot demain matin et attraper des grenouilles. J'ai hâte de savoir quelle aventure Lise a pour moi ensuite et avec cette idée je m'endors.

Le coq chante et je saute debout. Après déjeuner ma mère téléphone pour dire que la chirurgie est un succès. Je lui assure que je suis bien et très contente de passer mes vacances entièrement ici. Elle ne parle pas longtemps parce qu'elle est encore faible mais elle est plus à laisse mes nouvelles.

J'espère que le mois de septembre serait tres loin dans le futur et que je peut rester aux Concessions longtemps.

The Island of Utopia

MARK A. LEWIS

Long ago on the island of Utopia, there was an advantageous girl named Marion. Marion was liked by most of the townspeople. But the ruler of Utopia Lord Fehr did not always agree with the advantageous ways of Marion. Now Marion's dream was to travel beyond the land of Utopia. She was always told as a child of the lands far away from the island of Utopia.

So on the end of the sun's term in the sky she set out. The journey was about to begin. She picked up her father Zippo and she was off. So the journey began to the world beyond. Marion always knew there was more to the world than just the island of Utopia. So as they traveled across the waters and through the forests. Marion came across a sign however she could not read it. So she asked her father Zippo if he could. Zippo said yes it is a lost language of our land. Zippo said the sign reads City of Long View. As they traveled through the forests and came to a city.

They knew that this must be Long View City. There were so many people there but not one of them spoke the language of Utopia. So they traveled around the city looking for someone who might speak her language. Finally they met up with a man named Robert. Thankfully he spoke Utopia's Language, he told us that he used to live on the island of Utopia. We both said that's where we are from and they continued walking through the city. They were all talking about where they lived, and had such a very interesting conversation.

About two sun cycles had passed when Marion and Zippo arrived back home to Utopia. When they got there Lord Fehr was waiting for them, he told them that for disobeying the Utopian law (he who leaves must never come back). They would die by public execution. Fearing for their life they fled the home they always knew. So they traveled back to the City of Long View and meet up with Robert and told him what had happened.

So you might say that Marion got what she always wished for. Now living in the lost City of Long View.

Butterfly Wings

LYNDIA LOMBARD

How beautiful your colours be
As your wings flutter
Away from me
Red as blood, Yellow as butter
Black of night, Green of a pea
All the colours of the rainbow
Leaving me.

Untitled

ANGUS MACDONALD

Doing my time in Afghanistan
Towing the line
Through this barren land
Knowing in my heart
There must be a reason
So I play my part
In this war torn season
When my unit and I
One cool clear night
Hear a plane in the sky
See a bright flash of light
An errant bomb dropped
From high overhead
Four lives stopped
Comrades now dead
Friendly fire how odd
To give it that name
When I think my god
It kills just the same.

Billy's Story

BILLY MACDONALD

Jennifer is twenty-one years old. She is an attractive looking lady. Jennifer is so friendly. She always has something to say. She always tries to help people out if she can. She used to drink a lot. Billy got her to stop drinking as much as she used to. She's not that tall- she is only 5 feet tall. She only weighs 105 lbs. Jennifer has short blond hair. She has two kids, and they are not Billy's kids. Jennifer always takes a walk downtown, and Billy goes and picks her up.

Gordie is twenty years old. He has a drug problem. He gets in trouble with the law. He has short black curly hair. He has a tattoo on his right forearm outside. He is only a short person. He only stands 5'4". He only weighs 150 lbs. He is known for wearing a ring on his right hand if he is looking for a fight that night. He goes to the bars looking for fights, and to see if he can get some drugs. The tattoo on his right forearm says his mother's and his father's names. In the other tattoo on his upper arm says his dead sister's name. Her name was Lynn. Gordie and Lynn used to hang around together until she got sick and died.

Jennifer is at Tim Hortons sitting having a cup of coffee. She is looking out of the window, wondering where Billy is. He was going to pick her up at Tim Hortons. She is getting madder by the minute. She is sitting there when Gordie walks up to her and asks, "May I sit here?"

She says, "Yes, but I am not going to be here long because I'm waiting for my drive to come."

So he sits down and starts to talk to her. Gordie tells Jennifer, "I'm having a bad day. I just buried my sister." Jennifer doesn't know what to say to him. Jennifer doesn't know that Billy and Gordie's sister used to go out together.

"Where is that Billy?" She doesn't know what else to say. Just when Jennifer gets the words out of her mouth, Billy drives in the parking lot. Jennifer asks Billy where he was. Billy tells Jennifer he took his time so she can have some quiet time for herself. Jennifer tells Billy about Gordie- that his sister died. Billy was a pallbearer for Lynn when she died. Later that day Billy and Gordie go and get drunk. When Billy gets home, she won't speak to him at all. So he goes and gets her some flowers. Billy is trying to make up with her. She will not speak to him for two weeks.

The Hunt

KATHY MACISAAC

About a hundred miles inland from Table Mountain on Africa's south shore, sat a tiny village. It lay timelessly among sparsely treed hills, for few trees were suited to grow in this extremely hot and dry climate. The hard packed earth was so dry and powdery that tiny puffs of dust rose in the air as you walked upon it. This small village and surrounding area gave meaning to the term dirt poor. Very little would grow here except the wild grasses, which were waist high and quite sharp to the touch. A few scrub brushes and clumps of wild grass grew among the mud huts. At this time of morning when most were still asleep, the early morning sun gave a lazy peacefulness to the tiny village. The howling of the early rising hyena in the distant hills added an even more eerie calm.

Far above the village, barely visible to the naked eye, crouched a young man behind a thorn thicket. The man was tall for his age and would easily hit six feet when he was through growing. He was not an overly handsome man but neither was he ugly. The man had a high forehead, a broad, slightly croaked nose and a strong straight jawline. The man's neck and face were tattooed with the intricacy and detail reserved for those with royal blood. The tattoos started in the center of his forehead in a uniquely designed circle symbolizing the circle of life and ran down both sides of his face depicting every inch or so an animal from the African continent. So skillfully and detailed were those tattoos that they ran from a circle in the center of his forehead and blended into each other without a break in design. They were so eye-catching that people were not prepared for what they saw when they looked

eyes with the man. His eyes were dark brown, almost black. They were slightly larger than normal, but the strangest thing that you noticed was how emotionless his eyes appeared to be. When the man's eyes focused on you, you felt as if you were in the sights of an animal hunting its prey. On the man's left arm, starting just below the elbow and running down to the top of his hand, was a very white and jagged scar, a souvenir from a previous hunt. In his right hand he held a spear, a simple, basic, yet deadly weapon, the weapon of choice for most hunters.

Patiently he sat, searching the surrounding area until his dark eyes caught a slight movement far to the left of where he sat. Very slowly and carefully he raised his well-muscled body into a half-stance as he began to move out from behind the thorn thicket. The combination of sweat and early morning sun made his dark body glisten. He continuously searched the area with his steady gaze not only to identify what had made the movement but because he himself could very quickly become the hunted instead of the hunter if he were not extremely alert. At least the wind was in his favour and whatever was down there would not get his scent, at least not right away, and this might make the difference between eating and not eating. Slowly he started to go down and towards the left.

He was getting very close to where he had seen the movement and he had now slowed to a snail's pace when the first sounds reached his ear. He stopped and strained to hear. The noises he was hearing sounded like wild boar. The thought of hunting one of those animals made his stomach muscles tighten in mild fear and trepidation. Even a skilled hunter like himself didn't relish the thought of hunting wild boar. The animal was not overly intelligent, but it could be relentless and vicious in its attacks. It seemed not to have the fear of man that other wild animals do, and it would attack without hesitation. The smell of blood, even its own, would send it into a vicious killing frenzy that nothing short of death could stop. The long dagger shaped tusks could tear a man to pieces in seconds.

Slowly he moved toward the sound. Nervously and perhaps unconsciously his hand tightened around the spear in his right hand. If he accidentally dropped his spear, the only weapon he would have left would be the bullhorn in the leather sheath around his waist. This also doubled as an instrument when one needed to call for help, if anyone were close enough to hear.

The attack came so close from the side that all he saw was a blur out of the corner of his eye. Only his survival instincts and his natural athletic ability saved his life. He crashed forward into a half somersault and half leap to clear the boar's razor sharp tusks. He was back on his feet so fast that it was hard to believe a man could move that quickly. The grass was waist high here, and the boar had disappeared into it, so he had no way of knowing from which direction it would attack next. Swiftly he turned in a circular motion, his eyes frantically searching for the slightest sign of movement, his ears straining for sound.

The second attack came from behind. It was so swift that he barely had time to turn and strike with his spear. As a result, the pig was cut from the side of the neck across its shoulders and onto its side. The blood sprayed freely from the open wound. Squeals of pain could be heard from the pig as it disappeared into the wild African grass. Then there was silence. Quickly the hunter was on his feet again desperately trying to figure from which direction the next attack would come. His face and chest were covered in the boar's blood along with his own, for the boar had cut him across the right hip with one razor-sharp tusk. Although the wound was hanging open and stinging quite horribly, he gave it little notice.

As brave as he was, he felt fear rise in his stomach for he knew that a wounded animal is a dangerous animal. Luckily for him, the boar came straight at him from the front. He did not throw his spear at the boar, which was his first instinct, but instead held it firm in front of him with both hands. The beads of sweat ran down his face and sleek body. He was a skilled

and experienced hunter, so he stood his ground. Of course in his present condition he really had no other choice because he was incapable of running. The boar lanced itself onto the tip of the spear. The bald entered just below the animal's neck and came out between its shoulders. The board thudded heavily to the earth, its hooves flailing wildly in one last attempt to attack before death sucked the life from it.

The stunned hunter could only sway back in a kneeling position and say silent prayers and thank yous. He did not stay in this position for long, for the pain in his hip was becoming unbearable. Slowly he took the bullhorn from around his waist and gave the signal call for help. He was not that far from his village and it would not take long for help to arrive. He was in no condition to carry or even drag the animal back to the village by himself. Soon he heard the signal from his village that help was coming. As he waited and stared at the boar's body, he tried to slow the bleeding from his hip. The attacks had been so swift that other than the boar's grunts of rage and a few groans from himself, everything had happened under fifteen minutes in almost complete silence. Once again he thanked the powers that be for protecting him. Slowly the pain from his wound cut across his silent thoughts. He knew the women would stitch his wound, and at least his village would eat a little better today than yesterday. Any type of food was a welcome addition in a village as poor as his, so he smiled to himself as he waited for help to arrive.

Opposite Beliefs

TERA MACKENZIE

People that kill people, or want to kill people might feel scared or alone somewhere in the darkness thinking nobody in the world would ever give them a chance in their life and they might feel trapped inside the darkness somewhere believing that there is no way out and there's always a way out of anywhere somewhere.

I don't really know if angels have feathers, but I do believe in real angels and I believe that they are around us everywhere watching over us everywhere, every day of our lives. I also believe in God and I believe that he sends angels to the people on earth to help out people that need it or just needs a friend. Just believe in God and anything could happen. I also believe in the strong words Body, Mind, Sprit, Strength, True Character, and strong at heart.

Jill's Quest

CLAUDETTE MCCALLUM

Jill was only four years old when her mother left. She then lived with her father, little brother and two older sisters. Jill had one memory of her mother, that never left her mind. The memory was of her mother getting Jill dressed to go on a trip but dad wouldn't allow this, so mom left alone.

Ever since that day she never saw her mother again. Jill always wondered why her mom left and often wondered was it her fault. I guess I will never know she thought to herself.

Going to elementary school was kind of hard for Jill, because kids would say, you don't have a mom, why? Jill would tell them "she left, but I have a dad he takes care of me." Jill was mad at the mother she didn't know, she wasn't around to give her Mother's Day cards to, and have her mother hug and kiss her when she needed it.

Every night Jill would pray, Dear God bless my family and, please bring my mom back because my brother, sisters, dad and I really need her here Amen! No matter how much Jill prayed her mother never came back.

Even though Jill didn't have her mother she had a good life. There was a couple that lived across the street from Jill, their names were Marilyn and Brian they didn't have any kids. Marilyn and Brian would invite Jill over a lot and spend time with her. They took her to the beach and other outings. Jill really liked spending time with Marilyn and Brian, they were very nice people. Jill was content with her life.

One day when Jill went over to see Marilyn and Brian, they announce their plans to travel the world; it was something they always wanted to do. Jill felt sad, Marilyn and Brian said they would keep in touch and, send postcards from every place they stopped. Jill wondered why they would stop sending the postcards, but could never figure it out.

One day while Jill was at home watching TV, the phone rang, Jill answered it, to her surprise, it was her mother. She said that she was coming to visit. Jill was so happy she cried. She told her father, sisters and brother "mom's coming to visit, let's go to meet her at the bus stop!" Jill and her sisters went to meet their mother. The bus came in but mom wasn't there. They waited for the next bus, she still wasn't there.

Jill felt broken hearted again, she cried all night. As she prayed she said dear God how come my mom didn't come? Did she get hurt or does she really not care about me? She cried herself to sleep that night like many other nights.

Through the years Jill's mother did visit a couple of times, it was during the visits, Jill found she had another little brother. She couldn't understand why her mother left her life and had another baby. Jill felt her mother gave the new brother all of her love, and didn't have any for her, she didn't understand.

Even after all the heartache her mother had caused, Jill still loved her mother. She still wanted to know and feel what a mother's love was like. When Jill was thirteen she left her father's and moved in with her mother. There was still some distance between the mother and daughter, but they became friends.

A Joy to Behold

BEVERLY MCINTOSH

Flowers blooming all aglow
Colours reflecting in my soul

Butterflies flutter in my garden
Flowers flourish all around them

Is it the sweet smell that attracts them?
Or the colour in transaction

Changing form from day to day
What a marvel these blooms create

In all the world
There's none so grand
As flower growing on my land.

Did you see my dog

VERA MIEHM

Did you see my dog?
Prince is black and white
He sleeps by the log
I don't know his height

Prince is black and white
He's short long and wide
I don't know his height
And he knows to hide

He's short long and wide
Don't know why he runs
And he knows to hide
Guess he wants some fun

Don't know why he runs
He sure made a mess
Guess he wants some fun
He's giving me a test

He sure made a mess
That's him in the house
He's giving me a test
I hope that's not a ghost

Pitter Patter

SIOBHAN MIGEL

I heard a pitter patter sound in the hallway. Wondering what it was, I got up to investigate. I saw that it was my cat, Snowball, making that noise. The pitter-patter sounds were the padded parts of her paws hitting the floor when she walked. She is a beautiful cat with her bushy tail. She had the kind of beauty that caused muscles to go tense, breath to go shallow. Much more than a distraction, a definite command. Look at me! You can she knows her beauty, the way she holds her tail high and struts around with a smug expression on her face. As she walked away, her paws going pitter-patter.

Trying Our Wings

DOROTHY PARSONS

A letter in the mail which read
Your presence is required
If you fail to comply with this
Your monthly cheque will expire

With fear, mistrust, and anger
Not to come we didn't dare
Of all the places we wanted to be
It certainly wasn't there

With Gladys and Mary on our side
Saying "It's all right", "Calm down"
They helped build our self-esteem
Hope and encouragement was found

Sometimes our feelings would get hurt
In a circle we would gather around
When we shared our thoughts and feelings
New friendships from our hearts were bound

Although we didn't want to
Good things we were taught and told
That we can hold forever in our memories
Things that cannot be bought with silver and gold

As we begin our life's journey
And we reach our new goals
We will always remember the WINGS program
Because it was a learning experience that has touched our souls
I thank you God for you my friends, tried and true to the end.

Truro to St. Peters

CURTIS PELLY

Early in the morning a young man named Bill Short was trying to hitchhike to Cape Breton to visit his uncle who offered him a summer job. Bill was a young man about 22 years old, brown curly hair and brown eyes. The clothes that he was wearing were ragged, and the running shoes he had on had no laces in them. Also, on his back he was carrying a knapsack with a broken zipper that didn't keep his few possessions dry if it started to rain.

Bill was up early in the morning because he was so excited about getting to Cape Breton, and starting a summer job with his uncle. Bill's uncle ran a tackle shop for fishing supplies. Bill was standing beside a highway that ran along between fields of planted crops. There was a slight breeze blowing, and the sun was beginning to shine brightly. There were several small brown sparrows flying back and forth across the highway, landing on ears of corn planted in straight lines across the farmer's fields. In the distance Bill could see a big tractor trailer coming up the highway towards him.

It was a quiet morning—not much traffic passed him by. Standing with his thumb pointing towards Cape Breton, the big truck approached him. To Bill's surprise, a signal light came on, and he noticed the big truck pulling over to the side of the road. Bill was amazed to see the tractor-trailer pulling over. He began running along the ditch and shoulder of the road, along the length of the truck's trailer, toward the cab of the big truck. When he opened the door of the truck, and

climbed up on the running boards, he was greeted by a bald-headed man who appeared to be a little overweight. The truck driver introduced himself as Hank Willis, and Bill replied that his name was Bill Short from Truro. "How are you going?" Bill asked.

The truck driver replied, "I am going to Cape Breton. To a place called Troy."

Bill was amazed. "That's where I'm going too. It must be my lucky day, to get a drive right to Cape Breton," he replied.

Hank Willis began telling Bill that he's a long-hauler of goods, clear across Canada, and Bill replied that he's going to work for his uncle in a fishing tackle shop for the summer. Bill and Hank talked about a lot of things on their drive to Cape Breton. They talked about family members, things they liked to do in life, and other topics of interesting things. When they arrived in Cape Breton it was about noon. The trucker pulled over right after he crossed the Canso Causeway. Bill thanked Hank for the drive, and also wished him a safe trip to where he was going.

Bill spotted a pay phone, and called his uncle up like he was told to do when he arrived in Cape Breton, and his uncle would pick him up. Uncle Fred picked Bill up about twenty after twelve. He was glad to see Bill, and was very happy Bill took him up on the job offer for the summer. Fred and Bill talked about the job he was going to do for the summer on their way back to St. Peter's: that is where Uncle Fred lived. Bill was very pleased by Uncle Fred's words, and he knew he was going to have a large summer living, and working for Uncle Fred.

The Bear Truth

SANDRA PLEHN

It was just breaking dawn when Mary opened her eyes, to the start of a new day. With a ray of sunshine beaming in the window, she knew it was going to be a beautiful day. After finishing breakfast and straightening the den, May said "Hey! George, would you like to go for a stroll?"

George replied, "Yes Mary. I would." Mary suggested going around the block. "Good idea" replied George. "We might run into Lester. I need to know what time the gen's meeting is tonight. This week the topic is on the environment."

Mary placed her blue bonnet on her head and George put on his ball cap. As they opened the door to leave they could hear the birds singing in harmony. A warm wind blowing had the leaves on the trees dancing in tune with the birds' songs. Walking out of the door a soft breeze kissed their face.

George and Mary started on their walk, and before long Mary said: "Look George is that a new family in our neighbourhood?"

"Yes", answered George. "They moved here a week ago."

"What's their name?"

"Never heard what they are called," said George, "but I think they are interesting."

"What are they wearing?" Mary asked with a questioning voice.

"Don't know what you would call those things." George said puzzled. "They look like they want to say something, but are not sure how to start. Maybe you should talk first Mary, and that might break the ice."

Ok, I will give it a try answered Mary.

"Roar!"

The family didn't answer.

"Try again Mary, they may not have heard you."

Mary spoke again and started to move towards the family, but they turned and hurried away.

George said, "I think they're shy, Mary."

"Well, I will try again tomorrow," Mary said with a positive voice, as they continued on their walk. Walking along a wooded area, they heard what sounded like splashing. As they got closer they could see it was trout jumping in the stream. They stopped and watched for a while. The colour of the trout was like a rainbow falling to the earth. With the sun shining through, it made them feel as if a blanket was wrapped around their bodies.

When leaving the stream, Mary said "We're almost home George, and the new family are the only ones we saw today. Let's go home and have lunch."

"Ok," replied George. "I'm getting hungry."

When they got home Mary took off her bonnet, washed her hands, and made tuna sandwiches and tea for George and herself. As they were eating their lunch, Mary said happily to George "I knew it was going to be a beautiful day."

The Family

DELORES PORTER

As the storm raged outside, Nicki sat in front of the fire in her mountain cabin and hummed contentedly. The screaming wind didn't seem to effect her as she rocked and sewed. Her long auburn hair hung down her back in a thick plait and her emerald eyes glowed from her alabaster face. Her golden retriever, Buster, lay on the hearthrug that her grandmother had made. Nicki was reaching for the kettle that was suspended over the fire when Buster jumped and let out a low growl. Her heart pounding, Nicki went and opened the door. At first she believed that she was seeing an apparition but when the form moved closer to the door Nicki realized that it was a woman.

"Oh, come in" Nicki ordered, "You must be nearly frozen." The woman staggered in out of the swirling snow and passed a bundle into Nicki's arms. "Please help" the woman whispered as she crumpled to the floor. The bundle in Nicki's arms squirmed so she pulled back the blanket to reveal the most beautiful baby she had ever seen. A groan escaped from the unconscious woman's lips, so Nicki gently laid the baby in her sewing basket and went to the mother's aid.

After wrestling the mother's prone body on the cot, Nicki hurried to the kitchen to fix a painkiller and something to clot blood. The mother was seriously in labour as Nicki had felt the powerful contractions rippling across the mother's abdomen when she had placed her on the cot. Returning to the front room, Nicki administered the medicine to the mother with an eyedropper. Buster sat by the sewing basket watching the child

as it played with scraps he had pulled from beneath himself.

Slowly the mother opened her fear filled eyes and gazed around her until her eyes fell upon Nicki. "Please help" she begged again. "Don't fret now," Nicki soothed. "Everything will be fine. How is the pain?" The woman stared at her, "Please help" she repeated. "You must destroy the child." Nicki gasped, "I cannot. I will help you to deliver your new baby and everything will be just fine." The mother shook her head. "You don't understand. It is the devil's pawn. I have lain with no man and the first child was born after only three months. Now again it is happening. That one had teeth when it was born and when I placed it on me to eat it bit me and sucked the blood. Please they must be destroyed."

Nicki realized that the woman truly believed that what she was saying was true so she smiled reassuringly to the mother. "It will be alright. I will make a potion for the children. Now you must rest this child demands to be born soon." While mixing the new potion she could hear the mother's moans getting louder and when the screams began she returned to the front room to help ease the mother's pain with another painkiller. "Take this" she held the small cup up to the mother's lips and watched as she sipped.

The labour was long and hard but the baby was born an hour before sunrise. "They are always born in the night" the mother whispered before she slipped back into unconsciousness. Nicki picked up the new baby and went to the other child who had played quietly in the basket through the whole ordeal. Even the screams of his mother had not affected him. Lying the two babies together, Nicki was stricken by their exact likeness. They could have been twins, identical twins. Identical eyes shown brightly from identical little faces. As she walked over to the table to retrieve the potion she had prepared for them earlier, the two babies began to gurgle and coo softly to each other. Smiling, she returned to the children. "Don't fear my darlings." Nicki cooed soothingly, "You have come home now and I will take care of you."

Carefully she lifted one and then the other from the basket and sat in her rocking chair. Buster rose and went to sit beside the mother's prone body on the cot. After administering the potion, she unbuttoned her gown and placed the babies at her breasts to suckle. The mother stirred on the bed and Buster let out a low snarl. Nicki turned and smiled, "Thank you for bringing my children to me." Nicki's smile grew as she watched the horror fill the mother's face. Even from the other side of the room the mother could see the babies growing into toddlers. "The potion I conjured is working. See how healthy and strong they become." The mother shuddered and placed her hands on her abdomen. "Can you feel him growing already?" she laughed out loud, "He will be a strong one. Now, now, none of that." She cooed softly as the mother started screaming. "We will be a very large, happy family soon. You'll see. You're going to have to stop that screaming sooner or later you know. It's not like it will do you much good way up here."

The mother stopped screaming and glared at Nicki. "I came here for help. The people in the valley village said that you were a witch and that you could help me. Please" the mother begged. Nicki smiled, "I am helping you. I sent out a spell for a lonely, older virgin to mother my children and you appeared at my door. Tell me, did you begin to feel pregnant around mid-summer's eve by any chance?" The woman's terrified gasp was her only reply. "Yes, I could never have given birth to them myself, so I sent for you and you came. It will all work out, you'll see. And in a few months when Three is born you will feel better. If you behave I might even let you rest awhile before giving you Four." That was the last thing the mother heard before her horror filled brain began to shut down and she quietly slopped into a welcome oblivion.

Nicki calmly sat One down on his feet to watch him take his first steps, while Two struggled to get down also. "Patience my darling. Let One find his feet then it will be your turn." She gazed down lovingly at the seemingly four year olds. "Now our life will be complete."

Sweet Taste of Spring

KSENIA PYCHKO

The very act of eating watermelon was just so alien to what seemed right and proper in the world.

They were sitting on a beach, on a spring beach. Nothing in the ocean was different, nothing even looked like the rebirth of the world but they knew that it was.

It really didn't matter that the wind blew stronger and stronger, that seagulls were crying more and more pitifully for a boy and a girl who just enjoyed the sweetest taste of that watermelon on their lips, their cheeks, fingers and hearts. The first March sun just started to heat rocks on the beach and the sweet couple felt a great tide of energy coming.

Everything seemed to be just perfect for them as if the world was love and they were pure children of it.

Free to Be Me

SHARON RICHES

Once I was a happy little girl
I was born in forty-four,
Although I had dresses and curls
I was a tomboy outside playing war.

Around the age of four my childhood was cut short,
When my mom would down the 'Old Port'.
I became the little maid from the start,
I guess I was never meant to play in the park.

Skin and bone, tummy aches and head pain,
Even seven doctors could not explain.
Mon moved away because of her bad ways,
Peace and contentment finally came my way.

Teenage years were not much better,
Military rules, in another house with a Stepmother.
Church clubs were a Godsend to me
Lord help to make through this life to be.

At sixteen I left home and went out on my own,
Moving in with Grandmother back in my hometown
I learned how to work hard at my first job, be happy and
strong,
With lots of love and respect, good times all year round.

For five short years I lived on my own,
Free to go dancing or to a movie downtown.

Then I married and HE was the boss,
And for twenty-five years, I was lost.

My past is behind me, all the troubles and trials,
The children are settled in lives of their own.
And now I can see a ways down the road
When I'm through school and on my own.

Now I am divorced and very happily,
I'm striving to be thrifty.
I am studying hard and learning quickly,
Trying to get my Diploma before I'm sixty.

I think I'll make it, with a strong desire,
If my mind stays in line, I'll be just fine.
And I'll soon be there standing in the line,
Receiving that diploma right on time.

The Learn Save Training is helping me too,
I'll be going to college to take a course or two.
And in the near future I'll soon be
Forever and ever FREE TO BE ME.

Andrew's Summer Vacation

PAM RING

School had been out only a few days and already Andrew was becoming bored.

"Oh dear, what will I do all summer without my friend?" asked Andrew.

Andrew's mother was sitting close by and heard what he was saying. "Andrew," replied Mrs. Kelly, "Why don't you visit your Grandmother and Grandfather Kelly on the farm?"

"Could I really?" asked Andrew.

"Yes", replied Mrs. Kelly. "I'm sure they would be glad to see you."

Andrew went to bed that night and all he could think about was going to the farm.

The next morning when he woke up, he asked his mother if his friend Tommy could go with him.

"No," replied Mrs. Kelly. "Tommy has gone to summer camp and won't be back for a month, but there will be plenty for you to do on the farm."

Mrs. Kelly drove Andrew to his grandparents. They were so happy to see him.

Grandfather Kelly told Andrew that he was there to spend time

and have fun with them, but he would also have chores to do everyday.

Andrew was excited.

"Chores! May I take care of the animals for my chores?"

"Yes," said Mr. Kelly, "your chores will be to feed and look after the animals."

"Oh goody! I can do that Grandfather, you just watch and see."

It was bedtime and Andrew was tired. Andrew dreamt about taking care of the animals all night.

The next morning when Andrew got up his grandmother had pancakes ready for him and grandfather was already in the field working.

Andrew asked his grandmother what he was supposed to do.

Grandmother Kelly replied, "You have to start out by feeding the cows, chickens, horse and goat, but be careful with the goat. Make sure he doesn't get in the garden."

"Ok," replied Andrew. "I can do that Grandmother. Watch and see."

Andrew started with the horse. First he named the horse Flash because he could run fast. Andrew fed Flash and gave him some water.

Andrew then named the cows. The biggest cow he named Susie and baby cow he named Miss Moo because she mooed a lot.

Andrew fed Susie and Miss Moo and gave them water then he went to feed the chickens.

Andrew thought, "Hmmm, I cannot name all of these chickens." There are too many. I'll just call them chick chicks."

Andrew fed the chickens and gave them water.

Andrew then had to feed the goat but grandmother had told him to be careful, so Andrew tiptoed into the barn real quiet. There, asleep on top of some hay, was the goat.

When the goat heard Andrew, he picked up his head.

Andrew started laugh, "Ha ha ha, you look so funny with that beard I'm going to call you Mr. Whiskers."

Andrew fed Mr. Whiskers and gave him some water.

It was time for lunch. Andrew told Grandmother and Grandfather Kelly that he had all of his chores done.

"Good job Andrew," they said.

Andrew ate his lunch and asked if he could go play. "Yes," said grandmother. "You've done such a good job. You may play until supper."

Andrew went outside to the swing but after awhile he was getting tired of playing by himself.

Andrew thought "I could get Mr. Whiskers to play a game with me. I'm sure it would be all right."

Andrew went to the barn, but the barn door was already open.

"Oh no!" said Andrew. "I forgot to close the barn door."

Andrew went inside and began calling "Mr. Whiskers, Mr. Whiskers where are you?"

Mr. Whiskers was not there.

"I'm going to be in trouble for not shutting the door," said Andrew.

Andrew ran toward the house to tell his grandparents when suddenly he saw Mr. Whiskers.

"Oh No! Stop Mr. Whiskers! Get out of grandmother's garden." Mr. Whiskers lifted his head but soon began to eat the vegetables in the garden again.

Finally Andrew got Mr. Whiskers back into the barn.

"How am I going to tell grandmother and grandfather?" Andrew began to cry, "Now I'll have to go back home and summer just started."

Just then grandmother came along. "My goodness, Andrew. What's wrong?"

Andrew replied, "You told me to be careful with the goat and I forgot to shut the barn door. Now Mr. Whiskers is in the barn, but not before he got into your garden and now I'll have to go home."

"Slow down, Andrew" said Grandmother. "You are not going home. Anyone can make a mistake. I told you to be careful with the goat so he wouldn't hurt you, and I told you not to let him in the garden because he would eat the vegetables. I made the same mistake. Now part of your chores will be to make sure that the door is always closed when you are done. I would never send you home because of a mistake."

Andrew smiled and said, "Really grandmother? I feel much better now and I'll make sure the door is always closed."

Andrew's first day was really bad, but from that day on, Mr. Whiskers never got into the garden again.

Soon it was time for Andrew to go home and he couldn't wait to tell his friends about the fun he had had with Grandmother and Grandfather Kelly and his adventure with Mr. Whiskers.

Une Larme

E. ROBICHEAU

Une larme goutte roule
Une larme s'écoule

Une larme de peur
Une larme de douleur

Une larme de regret
Une larme sans respect

Une larme pour picquer ma vanité
Une larme pas camouflé

Une larme descend
J'la sèche en tremblent

Une larme trace ma figure
Je suis gêné, humilié, sans allure

Une larme peut être spontanante
Une larme peur tomber sur demande

Une larme peut grossir
T'envahir

Une larme peut être pour le mieux
Joyeuse, consolante, curatif

Ma larme est pénible, décevante, honteuse
Ma larme est pleine de remord, réprobateuse

Pour asteur, ma larme est singulier
Ma larme est isolé...

A Tear

E. ROBICHEAU

(Translation of french)

I cry a tear
A lonely tear

A tear
Of fear

A tear of sorrows
For all tomorrows

A tear of regret
A tear with no respect

A tear to prick my pride
A tear impossible to hide

A tear falls
Swipe it with my palm

A tear runs down my face
I feel embarrassment, humiliation, disgrace

A tear can sometimes be dammed
A tear can also fall on demand

A tear can grow
To form a flow

A tear, I'm told, can be a good thing
Joyful, comforting, healing

My tear is frustrating, disappointing, shameful,
My tear is remorseful, reproachful

My tear, for now, is a one and only
My tear is lonely...

An American Hero

ROBYNE SLAUENWHITE

As the sun goes down, on one of the world's biggest tracks
Some call him the Intimidator, others call him the man in
black.

February 18th is when he lost his life, going around turn four
with his two cars in sight.
He owns both cars that were in the lead. One driven by Michael
and one driven by Little E.

Turn four is where it happened, two cars went spinning.
Little did we know what to take place.
The look of terror on the crowd's face.

I still hear the words that were said, I can't seem to get them out
of my head.
He is a hero in many eyes. Some say he was intimidating, but
he had a soft side.

Although most of have never met him, we wish we had more
time to spend.
Watching him drive around the tracks, his fans wish they had
him back.

If you look closely you will see, the man that drove the black
number 3
Watch closely, don't hesitate, because you can see him in the
red number 8.

His son will carry on without his dad.
A fan of his own is who I am.

An Afternoon at Mader's Cove

NATHAN SMITH

Fixated with the idea of life,
 The basics and the essentials of life
 There are many answers,
 Reasons even
 For the Goings on of all that goes on in this world,
 And of course you can't have the answers and the reasons
 without the questions,
 Go on, you might say to me,
 But it is a fact, no matter how confused we might be,
 There are going ons going on at this very moment in time,
 But now those going ons that were going on in the last line are
 in fact history,
 History that went on but will not be going on any longer
 because what went on has no longer the need to go on,
 For the going ons that went on could no longer go on,
 The questions we know, but the answer to why it couldn't go
 on we don't know,
 So we forget about it,
 And it becomes Ancient history.
 The second type of history,
 The kind that went on and is still going on,
 Because the going ons that went on weren't finished going on
 when some asshole decided that the going ons of what was
 going on were finished and weren't to go on any longer,
 But in fact, what was going on and what went on will never be
 finished,

So the going ons that went on and are still going on becomes
the second type of history,
On going history,
But that doesn't matter now so forget about what just went on.
We are now in the future,
Which was built up by the going ons of what just went on,
But what went on is still going on so I guess this story in on
going history,
It is going on history and the future that went on and has not
stopped going on and has yet to go on,
The future, you should have guessed this was coming on,
The future yes did go on and has been going on for quite some
time now,
The future is always going on,
You might say it is on going
But it is not easy to know what went on in the future because
the going ons that went on have not yet gone on,
In fact they have yet to go on,
And when will we know when the goings on of the future have
went on, will the stop going on, have they already gone on,
Come on,
There can't be a future
Has anybody ever seen a future, can they tell me what's going
on,
What's going to go on rather.
If you were to ask me what's going on
My answer would be,
If you want to know the future it's not hard because it has
already gone on and is going on, which would make it history
and the present.
So what I am going on about is the past, present and the future
are but one...Life.

Lost

TRACY SMITH

It was a beautiful summer's morning. A beam of sunlight warmed Jill's face as she lay in bed. She rolled over and looked at her husband, he was still asleep. She kissed the back of his head softly and tried to get out of bed without waking him.

Jill tiptoed out of their bedroom and peaked into the room next to theirs. She looked down to see if her little angel was still asleep, she was, but just as Jill turned around to leave the room her three year old daughter opened her eyes and said, "Mommy, time to eat now?"

"Yes, baby", Jill answered.

Those were the first words that Kayla said to her mother every morning.

Kayla hopped out of bed and followed her mother down the hallway to the kitchen. Jill got Kayla's favorite cereal and some strawberries, which Kayla always loved on her cereal.

Picking at her breakfast Kayla asked, "Daddy still asleep?"

"Yep, but if he's not up before you're finished eating you can go in and wake him up," Jill said.

Jill started to make a lunch for a picnic they were going to have today. Kayla wanted to go on a picnic for a while now, and this would be the perfect day to do that. The weatherman said it was to be no rain today and just a little wind.

"All done", squealed Kayla.

"You can go wake Daddy now," Jill laughed.

Kayla ran down the hallway and jumped up on her father.

"Oh my, what a pleasant surprise" Brian exclaimed!

"Get up Daddy, we going on picnic", Kayla said cheerfully.

"Yes ma'am" Brian replied.

Jill got Kayla's clothes out and got her dressed. She grabbed her bathing suit and a change of clothes in case Kayla wanted to play in the river. Jill and Brian got ready and got the things they needed. They all jumped into the car and started on their way.

When they arrived at the little campsite it was beautiful. It was a place about half a mile from the road. There was a path through the woods that lead them there. It was an open space with a river to the right of them and a picnic table next to it. Along the riverbank stood beautiful wildflowers that waved through the air in the light breeze. There was a sandbox by the river now. Neither Jill nor Brian could remember that being here before. Someone must have put it there.

Kayla was very excited to be here. She didn't know whether she wanted to play in the sandbox or in the water.

"I have a bucket in the car if you want to build a sandcastle", Brian said.

"Ok, I make big one", said Kayla.

Jill got out their lunch as Brian made his way to the car.

Kayla was on her way to see the sandbox when she saw a butterfly. She followed it, hoping to catch it.

Jill turned around to see what Kayla was doing but she didn't see her. She yelled for her but she didn't hear anything. Jill knew that Kayla did not go with her father.

Jill ran to a path that led deeper into the woods and yelled. No answer.

Jill looked around and saw Brian coming back.

"Brian, Kayla's gone, I only turned my back for a minute and she was gone", yelled Jill in a panic. Brian ran to the river but there was no sign of her.

"Kayla come here", he yelled.

Still nothing.

They started looking through the woods around the campsite, but they couldn't come up with anything. Jill ran back to the picnic table, hoping that Kayla went back, she not see her anywhere. Brian was just about to go back to see if Jill found Kayla yet when he heard a soft sobbing voice. Brian ran towards the cry. As the cries got louder he saw Kayla sitting on a rock. Brian ran over to her and grabbed her. His eyes filled with tears of joy as he hugged her.

"Thank God you're okay," Brian cried.

"I tried to catch butterfly and got lost", sobbed Kayla.

"That's alright honey, but never run off like that again, okay," Brian exclaimed!

"Sorry Daddy", Kayla cried.

Brian yelled for Jill that he had found her.

"Oh my God is she okay", cried Jill.

"Yes, she's fine," said Brian.

Jill embraced her daughter when she got to them.

"I'm so glad you're okay baby, " Jill cried, happy that her daughter was back in her arms.

As they walked back to the picnic table Kayla asked, "Can we still eat picnic here?"

"We sure can," Brian said.

They ate their lunch and spent the afternoon playing in the water and making sandcastles.

"Let's pack up and get ready to go home before it starts to cool off Kayla", Jill said.

"One more castle Mommy."

"I guess so, we'll make that big one you wanted", Jill laughed.

As they drove home that evening Jill realized that she was very lucky that things turned out to be good today. That Kayla was safe with her mommy and daddy and not scared in the woods.

Brian leaned down and kissed his wife on the hand.

Jill looked at him and smiled, glad that her family was safe and together.

The Apartment Building

BRENDA ST. JEAN

Where I live the day is very noisy. The living arrangements are crampy but cozy. On the weekend there's always some kind of parking problems. The weekend always holds the odd party and the noise level tends to get a bit out of hand. We have the young and the old people both partying together, sharing good times with jokes and stories of life experiences. Then you get the odd one busy body who complains about the level of noise.

The children in the building all play together. They all tend to treat each other more like family. There are a lot of kind, caring people in this building. Who all look out for each other, and really care a lot about each other. The day is not really complete until you hear the yelling of the children in our building, and the laughter of folks as they share their day's end.

Nights are quiet here as everyone is either asleep or at work on the graveyard shift. As morning approaches and a new day fast arrives, the apartment building is noisy again.

Not the Only Child

AILEEN STATES

This story is about a little girl by the name Betty Boo. Now Betty was a very strong and out going person who always wanted the best for everyone. One day as she was out playing she found an old box inside it was old letters and pictures. So she looked around to find a cozy spot to sat and go through the box. When she open the box and looked inside she found some pictures and she looked at them one at a time very closely.

There were pictures of three girls and one boy also the letters were from the mother of the four children. Little Betty she could read and write so she understood what was wrote in the letter. But her eyes started to fill with water as she wipes them and keeps on reading. The mother talks about the four children. It seems she was a single mother who got pregnant very young.

She had her first two children at the young age of sixteen one boy and a girl set of twins. Their names were Brandon and Breanda. They were eight months old when she found out she was pregnant again lord and behold she had two at the age of seventeen. This time two girls. Their names were Chelsey and Kelsey. So this made Betty Boo very curious and she wanted to know more about this woman. The next letter she read talks more about the mom.

She had no education because she had to stay home to try and raise her children and with no help she didn't succeed. The children were taking away to never see her again. Betty kept

reading more of the letters to get a name or something. The letters were always signed Love Mom. So Betty kept this box sometime, she's now twelve years old. The people that live next door were planting flowers and her best friend was there so she asks if she could come out to play.

Her name was Brandy and she had a brother named Danny. They were also twins except they were almost a year older than she was. But she was very fond of the twins and close because there were no more children for another mile or more. So they spent a lot of time together. A few days pass by and Betty still had her box hidden outside so she decided to show the box with the letters and pictures to Brandy who is almost thirteen.

They go through the box together then all the sudden Brandy looks at Betty with the look of disbelieve. Her eyes cross together then she looks back at Betty. The story starts. Once Brandy seen the pictures she knew that Betty Boo was her little sister and how she knew was when she was small she had a birthmark on her bum and she remember when looking at baby picture she knew just then that there were two sisters were missing. But had no clue one sister live next door all her lives.

When she seen the birthmark she cry and hug her sister. Betty still doesn't understand why her friend was so upset. So they go home to Brandy house to wait for the parents to come. The door open the family is all-together. Now they're waiting for little Betties mom to come over. So now the truth comes out. The three children living next door to each other for fifteen years are brother and sister and never knew. Now we all want to know where the box came from. They check into everything to get all the information on the mother and the other sister. Well the searching was over the family down the road that had a child was the mother and the other sister, which was Betty Boo twin. The meeting day came for all the children and their real mother. They walk up a long road to a small house.

A beautiful young girl came to answer the door. Come on in

and as they enter into the living room there in a wheel chair sat a woman with no legs. This was the mother and it was her that drops the box off. What a way to fine out about your family roots. But some questions had to be answer. The sister who lived down the road was the one to put everything together.

She found her mother brought her to the house now to take care of her. The mother lost her legs in a car accident and had a memory loss so she didn't know about her own children and now she does.

Modern Day Lady Who Lives In A Shoe

BONNIE STATES

In a small town in Digby, lives this lady who is raising a child of her own and six of her nieces and nephews. She is a single parent and has been doing this for twelve years now, with only two income sources, Social assistance and Family Allowance.

She was born in a little town, Windsor Hants County, Nova Scotia. Her name is Betsy Jane. She had an older brother and sister and when she was two years old her parents moved to another small and very secluded area in Weymouth Falls. It was an all black community; she was African Canadian. Betsy lived and went to school in Weymouth until she reached the age of nine, by then she was the third oldest, and all close in age.

At the age of nine Betsy and her family had moved to Digby. Betsy's oldest brother had run away at an early age and her father left when Betsy was about five years old. Betsy's mother raised them alone. So being brought up in a large family, they learned to go without things that everyone else was getting, like a new bike, brand new shoes or clothes, or sometimes just a treat from the store. Betsy and her brothers and sisters didn't understand too much at the time as to why they couldn't have some of these things, even though their mother explained it to them.

As the years went by and Betsy got older, she started to realize why they could not get some of those things they wanted. It was hard for her mother to keep up with the bills, food in the house, clothes on their backs and a roof over their heads. Betsy's mother was a very hard worker to keep the family together giving them lots of love. They were happy with just that.

Later through the years, Betsy started having health problems and was taken out of school for a while. She had not completed grade ten. Being out of school for some time, Betsy did not bother to go back. Betsy soon got job in Digby at an Arcade, where her mother was a manager. After about a year Betsy decided to move to Toronto, Ontario. There she got a job right away. Betsy stayed with a cousin of hers who had a two-month old daughter. Betsy soon became supervisor at her job. She started to save her money for her own apartment. In the year of 1986 she got her wish, her very own apartment. It is hard when you live with family. She also got another job that paid more money. By 1988 Betsy was twenty-eight years old, working at a great job and in her sixth month of pregnancy.

On January 29th, 1989, Betsy had a beautiful baby boy. She took a year off work to spend with her son. In April of 1991, Betsy's sister, who was the mother of six children, moved to Ontario. The three oldest lived with their grandmother in Nova Scotia, the three youngest she brought to Ontario. Things did not go well for her and after a month, the children were placed in foster care.

Betsy did not want to see the three of them end up in foster homes, so she went to the courts to fight for custody of them. In the month of June, 1991, Betsy got her niece who was one year and four month old, her two nephews, one just turned a year old, and the other one was three going on four, and Betsy's son was one year and five months old. So you can see how they were all just babies; two were still in diapers.

Betsy talked everything over with her boss at work. She was not able to go back. She had no one to watch over the kids if she went back to work. Her boss said the job would be there if she ever decided to come back. She was working for Regal's Greetings and Gifts, making \$10.43 an hour.

Her mother, who lived in Digby, Nova Scotia, was sick with health problems, while also bringing up the three oldest brother and sisters of the younger three that Betsy was raising. In October of 1991, Betsy and the four kids moved back to Digby, NS. She moved into a small three-bedroom apartment, was so small that she could not set up her bedroom suite in her room. So Betsy had to sleep on the couch. Her rent was \$395.00 a month, and hydro was about \$300.00 every two months, the check that she was receiving from social assistance was about \$700.00 a month plus what she for family allowance. It was very hard to keep a high self-esteem for her, when trying to keep up on bills and everything else. If it weren't for Betsy's mother she would never have made it. She had to wait until six months before she got on the Federal Budget.

Betsy put her name in for Low Income Housing and in September of 1992, she got accepted. She had to wait for the guys to paint the whole place before she could move in and they were working on another place at the time. Betsy and a friend of hers got the paint and everything they needed from housing and went ahead and painted the house themselves. It was a nice, spacious place it had a full basement, two bedrooms and a full bath downstairs, two bedrooms, kitchen and living room upstairs. She finally got to set up her bedroom.

In January 1994, Betsy's mother got worse and passed away. She died of a cardiac arrest. Betsy and her mother were very close; they shared a lot with each other and they were good friends also. That was really a devastating blow to Betsy. About a year after her mother's death, Betsy's stepfather could no longer care for the three older kids that they had raised, so they

came to live with Betsy. In 1995, Betsy was back on the couch again to sleep, as she had to give up her room for the other kids. Now there were seven children and Betsy living in the four-bedroom house. Betsy was trying her best to keep up with her bills, make sure they always had a good lunch for school and plenty food to eat, clean clothes to wear, decent foot-wear, a warm comfortable house to live in, and lots of love to around for them all.

Betsy's stepfather moved away and remarried so the house her mother had worked so hard for and pair right up front with her hard earned money, was just standing on the corner lifeless. Instead of letting it go, Betsy and the kids moved into the house in October 1997, Halloween night. It was a really horrible nasty day to move, as it was raining that stinging rain and the wind was blowing some of the things off the truck. But they finally got moved in. There were only three kids that came to the house trick-or-treating that nasty night.

This was a small house with only three bedrooms, a living room, a small narrow hallway by the front door, a kitchen and a little dinette that was big enough to put a fridge, deep-freezer and a china cabinet. This was the downstairs. Upstairs was a little bathroom, and three small bedrooms with no closet space, no where to put clothes. The rooms all had those old-time slant ceiling walls.

By now Betsy's children were growing and getting older, and Betsy wanted to do more with her life. She took a program called W.I.N.G.S. (Women Investigating New Goals for Success). That was in August 2000. She graduated with about eight certificates, and went on to Adult School to further her education. She started in Level 3 program and last year graduated with her G.E.D. This year she is in the process of finishing her last Level 4 and hopes to graduate, to be very proud to walk out on the stage one last time to receive her Level 4 Diploma, and to have all the children to watch and hope that one day they too will make it to the stage to receive

their grade 12 Diploma. Betsy will sit back proudly with admiration and satisfaction of what she accomplished with the upbringing of all the kids, and will hope that they will continue on in life with that same family spirit and drive.

What Do You Know Now That You Wish You Knew When You Were Younger?

ELLIE STATES

I am a 38-year old individual. For the last 17 years I have been involved in a life of drugs and crimes. I was never abused as a child and we were brought up in a very Christian environment. We did not have much but we had a lot of love. I have four sisters and four brothers. I had six kids by one man and they are all well taken care of by my sister Bonnie. In 1982 the tables turned and drugs took over my life. It went from partying, fighting, drugs to cops, lock up and then in and out of institutions. My life was going nowhere in a hurry. I was not looking for any handouts, just one soul to understand. Over the years I learned a lot. I took a CPR course and upgrading. I went back to school. But I did nothing about my drug uses. I just kept on using. I would not keep in touch with my family. I did not want anyone that I loved to see me. My drugs of course were crack cocaine. In 1999, I was introduced to CA, which was just like AA but I did not drink. I went to my meetings once a week. I now look at my Life with a whole new outlook. I am a mother, a sister, an aunt, a daughter, and most of all I AM SOMEBODY'S FRIEND. I wish I had known what I know now and if I did I know, I would never taken that first puff. I have been in recovery for going on 3 years and I am having a hard time. I say my prayers every night. I know God will take care of me. Everybody makes mistakes. It is never too late to start over and that is what I have done. I moved home and I went back to school. I still go see

my drug counselor and I have a lot of support. I still have a substance abuse problem and I'm working on that. I will come through with flying colours. The kind of work that I am looking for is talking to the young ones. If I can talk to just one kid and tell them my story, maybe they will not touch drugs. I would not give them to my worst enemy. If I could turn back the hands of time, then I would take one day at a time. Thank you for taking the time to read this.....ELLIE...STATES....

Opening Day

MICHAEL STEPHEN

John was wide-awake as soon as his feet hit the cold floor. He didn't need an alarm or a cold floor to wake him. Tomorrow was opening day of the lobster season and he had been waiting for this day for the past month. It didn't seem like a month had passed since his dad had taken him and brother Simon to town to pick up the gear they would need this year. They picked up some netting to repair the wooden traps his grandfather set (tradition held that you set at least a few of these no matter how efficient the new wire traps were). They also picked up some new sets of 'oilskins'; orange or yellow sets of pants and jackets designed to allow water to run off. They also needed some new lines and buoys for the traps; the lines were coiled and measured in fathom lengths (6 feet 1 fathom) and were nylon so they floated on the surface. John's dad also needed some parts for the boat motor.

After the trip the preparations really speeded up. In October they put out to sea and set their mackerel nets, which they would check on a daily basis for two weeks. The mackerel would be used for bait in the traps and would be frozen whole until they were needed. Repairs had to be made to the traps, they were allowed to set 250 of them, and they would all have to be 'tagged'. The tags were plastic and had the license number of the fisherman who owned them. Each year the tags were a different colour. The penalty for fishing with untagged traps could vary from a warning if there were only one or two traps (it was understandable that you miss tagging a couple) to loss of license and a stiff fine for more than that.

They spent a day painting and cleaning the boat and as well they had made a trip to the local fish-plant for more bait. John could remember the first time he had gone on this trip with his dad. He assumed that they would go there and park at a loading dock and load some boxes of the bait on their truck. Well this turned out to be his baptism by fire! The bait was redfish (sea bass). They arrived at the plant and made their way through a number of alleys between the buildings. Soon they were in front of a door with a sign that simply said "Bait Sales". He would never forget the sight that greeted him when they went through that door. The first thing he was aware of was bloody water that went up past his ankles. The second was four conveyor belts that seem to come from nowhere. This room was the last stage in the process of preparing fish to go to market. Below the end of each belt was a large plastic bin and from each belt dropped fish-heads and spines, all that was left when the processing of the fish was complete. John's dad knew the man who was in charge of this day so he knew they would do well. They were here for the heads, which would supplement the mackerel they were catching.

On most days you were told to shovel the stuff into bins and you had to take what you could get, but if you knew the person in charge (his main job was to replace the bins when they filled up) you could take your time and pick out only the heads. When they were finished they would take the bait to the local lobster pound and put it in a giant freezer room with the mackerel. John's dad knew the man who owned the pound and he charged for this service but they were allowed to keep their bait here for free. In exchange they sold him all their lobsters.

The last job they had to do was something completely different for them this year. Until now they used bait bags in the traps. These were small mesh bags that held the bait and could easily open up if they were not tied properly. It was just the other day that John's dad had come home all excited about 'baitboxes' that his brother Buckey had made. These were wire mesh and were 6 X 4 inches high. They had a lid that was

attached to the box and closed with a bungee cord to ensure a tight fit. To understand how these would be used you have to know how a lobster trap works. The traps used nowadays are 4 X 2 and are 2 feet high. They are made of plastic covered wire and have a large brick attached to each end for extra weight. The trap is separated into two compartments. At one end is the 'funnel' which joins one compartment to the other. This is made of mesh which is attached to all four sides of the traps and tapers into an O ring at the top of the trap. In the other side of the trap is a steel spindle over which the bag of bait is placed. The lobster smells the bait, crawls up the mesh and falls into the other side of the trap from which it cannot get out. John, his brother Simon and his dad spent four days making the baitboxes. When they were finished they had five hundred of them. This meant that when they set out to check the traps they simply took one box out and put another one in. The boxes also meant they would not lose any bait. If a baiting opens up inside the trap, the lobsters don't have to enter the trap to get the bait.

Everything was now ready; tomorrow was the first day of the season. Today they would be taking the traps down to the Government Wharf. The wharf would be a beehive of activity as there were eight boats that tied up there. Everyone knew each other and took their turn depending on where they were tied up and in what would seem like no time at all the wharf would be full of traps. Again this year John's dad best friend Elmer would be fishing with them. Elmer was widowed not ten years and four years ago he was laid off at the fish plant. There was no question that he would be working the season with them. In small communities loyalty is a given. John did not know what had occurred but he knew that Elmer had helped his dad some time in the past and they had been friends all their lives.

The day was now over and John would be heading off to bed early. They would be up at five in the morning, have breakfast and go into town for gas for the boat before they would be allowed to set out at eight o'clock. The local rep for the

Fisheries Department would be at the wharf to ensure that no boats left before they were allowed. Out of habit John checked the sky for any indication of foul weather which may be on the way. The Government weather channel on the radio said that wind was supposed to pick up overnight but as John headed off to bed there was no indication of it. Weather is something a fisherman is constantly dealing with, especially the wind. The main problem for a lobster fisherman is the fact that when a storm is forecast they must spend the day before taking all the traps that set close to shore and undo their lines and move them further out into deeper water. After a severe storm the water has a tendency to 'swell' (long rolling waves as the tide comes in) and they must wait for it to subside before the traps can be moved back in. If the traps are not moved they will be smashed on the rocks when the tide is high.

It seemed like John's head had just hit the pillow when he was jolted awake by his dad. A 'noreaster' was blowing! This was the worst wind to deal with. It was strong and cold and from where they were on the bay it would be blowing full steam when it hit them. John knew what this meant. They would have to go down to the wharf and lash down the traps. If they didn't they ran the risk of losing them over the side. His grandpa only set a few wooden ones now but John could remember the year, before the age of wire ones, when all 250 of his grandfather's traps went over bring up the incident as he knew the first two days of the season are the best so he knew his grandpa had lost a lot of money that year. He was finally back in bed and as he lay there waiting for sleep to come he thought on this life he was committing himself to. A lot of his friends were moving away and the village was starting to show signs of dying. Some would say he was foolish to stay when the 'big city' had so much more to offer. It was when he thought about these things that he felt proud of who he was. He was the son of a fisherman and a part of a traditional way of life hundreds of years old.

They are steaming down the bay just before sunrise. He feels the wind in his hair. He looks up at gulls swirling overhead

trying to get at their bait. He can taste the salty tang of the air. Then comes that moment that sends a tingle through him from his head to his feet. That moment when the sun creeps up over the horizon and a million jewels sparkle on the water. Nothing, absolutely nothing could replace this nor would he want it to.

Untitled

JILL SUTTON

A long time ago, I first heard a little voice, whispering from the depths of my soul, "come and seek me out, for I have many things to tell."

If I am still and all alone and let my thoughts go free, it grows stronger and louder as it reaches out to me.

At first I tried to ignore it for I did not understand, what it wanted or what it was saying, I became very confused. This nameless voice, it speaks in riddles and phrases, I am yet to understand. It whispers of ancient times and of things that have not passed...of trees and castles and a circle of stories and of sands that once were mountains.

This magical voice it makes me weary and unsure of what I see; I know it wishes me no harm, only just to see.

At times it shows me of a mystical place of fairies dancing and misty waters and seas.

I see and hear the sounds of battle and the smell of fear; of women singing in heartbreak and holding hands in prayer.

As the ancient one grows stronger and I spend more time in prayer and the shadows turn to light...my joyful completion is near for the ground has been fertilized for my deliverance.

Gone Fishing

JEFFREY S. WENTZELL

My alarm clock woke me up at 4:30 a.m. I hardly slept last night. It's finally here! Fishing season opens today. I picked up my fishing license last night, for fear the store would sell out early and I would have to wait another day. I paid my \$17.25 and headed home to get ready.

I got my fishing gear out of storage. I use a six-foot graphite rod and a number 10 hook, a Zipco reel, with a six-pound test line, and power bait. I feel this bait, which comes in different flavours, is best for catching rainbow trout.

While the coffee's brewing, I put all of my gear in the car. I fill my thermos with my coffee, and make some sandwiches. It is going to be a long day, and I look forward to it!

I drive to Sucker Lake, my favorite place to fish. It has the biggest rainbow trout. When I arrive at the lake, I set up my chair. I'm ready for my first fish. I get my rod out, put on my one-ounce lead weight, with a six-foot lead, add my hook and put on my power bait. I'm ready to cast off and try to get my first fish.

I sit back, have a coffee, and enjoy the world around me. I wish I could explain how I feel at this moment. The peace and quiet around me is incredible, the scenery beautiful! A family of ducks swims to the shoreline.

I see my line move! I've got a bite! My heart starts to beat faster as I get excited and try to get the fish to land. It got away! But

that's okay. It's about being out in the fresh air that is important, and to enjoy the peace and quiet that Mother Nature offers. I settle back down again with my coffee in one hand and my book in the other. Ah! This is the life! The sun is shining, the sky is blue and it is a cloudless day. The freedom that nature provides is sometimes overwhelming.

I meet some very nice people at the lake. Sometimes they are first-time fishers and are not really sure what to do. I enjoy showing them my tricks of the trade that help me catch rainbow trout. I know some people don't like to share that information with others, but not me. I will do whatever I can to make another person's day as pleasant as mine.

Well, soon time to go. There are days when you will not catch any Rainbow Trout at Sucker Lake. But what I feel is most important to remember is that experiencing nature really is a wonderful thing, and that you will get to see many marvelous things at the lake.



Illustration by Andrea Crosby

Spirit of a Dove

JUDY ANN WEST

My name is Cassey and I'm a believer. In the town where I was born, at the end of an old road, there was an old three-story house. When I was a child I always dreamed of owning that big old house. The house was creepy looking and still had a for sale sign hanging on a post on the front lawn. Everyone in town said it looked like something out of a scary movie. I liked everything about the house. Every time we went by the house, Mom would always rush me a long. I think she was scared as well.

When I grew up I finished high school and got a job as a real estate agent. One day I came across that old road. I felt a presence that was drawing me down that road, so I went to see that big old house. I used to love that house; when I was a child I dreamed of living in there. No one would buy it because they say it was haunted by an old man named Seth MacGillicutty. Now Seth loved animals; his favorite was doves. Townspeople say that they could hear a strange noise coming from the third floor. It sounded like birds' wings flapping and I could hear someone saying, "Let-go". My sense was really strong and I hadn't had that feeling since I was a child. Anyway, I had to leave to get back to the office to finish my work.

At 3:00 p.m. I was sitting at my desk and I heard someone talking, but I couldn't make out the voice. Again I heard, "let-go". I wasn't close enough. See, when I was younger I could feel things, but I didn't know what they were. 6:00 p.m.. Time for me to go home.

"My God, that house is bothering me!" I said to myself, "I should find out about that house. I should go; maybe I'll buy it."

I checked on my computer and it was listed on another web site. So the next day I got in touch with Chancellor Raffey who works at J.C. Realtors. I had an appointment with him to go and see the house. We drove up to the house. Chancellor looked really scared, like he didn't want to go in.

Chancellor said, "I can't go in, I'm afraid. I mean, I can't.

Cassey, can you go in yourself?"

"Ok Chancey, I will go in myself."

"Oh, Oh, Ok, Cassey. I'll just stay in the car."

I said to myself, "Damned man is scared of his own face."

I had to laugh.

I could feel the presence very strongly. I walked around. There were all kinds of nooks and crannies, old fireplaces and lamps. Later, I left and locked the door behind me. The presence was there again. I felt a breeze ruffle my hair and a voice said, "Let the-go." This time I heard three words. Strange. I went back to my car. I told Chancey, the scaredy-cat, that I would take the house. Monday was the final closing date. Chancellor wanted to get rid of it quickly. Later that week I took some time off to fix up the old house. See, I live in a tiny apartment.

Weeks passed; the carpenters worked hard to get it finished. All that was left was the third floor.

I said to John, "How long will it take to do the next room?"

"Well, I have another job to do. I can do it another time."

My senses told me that he was scared.

"John, can you come back and finish the barn for me?"

"Yes Cassey, I can next week."

"Great, John."

I went right to it, cleaning, dusting and putting new wall paper up to make the room nice. Saturday night I was finished, so I decided to make it my room. Oh excellent. Ready for my bed. Happy, excited and tired, I fell to sleep fast, and then it started. I had drunk too much water. Up every three hours. At 2:30 I was up. When I went back to the room, the wallpaper looked like it was covered with doves. One had a broken wing. It looked like it was in pain. I closed my eyes and opened them and the wallpaper was a floral pattern again. This went on for three nights.

When you feel the presence you aren't afraid.

On the fourth night, by the dresser drawer there was a foggy haze, and it started to take the form of a person. I said, "What do you want?" The figure was a man I knew. It was old Seth MacGillicutty, the man who loved doves. Seth was trying to say, "Let the doves go, please hurry!"

Rumour has it that Seth had this room for his doves and would leave the window open so they could fly out. In 1967 Seth passed away; the house was left to his nephew Bryce. Bryce never looked after the doves; they all died of hunger when he left the window closed.

Seth pointed to the window. He said, "If you let the spirit of doves go I can rest in peace."

"Please open the window, lady, I beg you."

My eyes grew large and I started to cry. I ran to the window and tried to open it. The window was stuck. I tried with all of my strength. No luck. I put my hands in my face. What was I going to do?

"Come on Cassey, you've got to get that window open."

I fell to my feet just then, the dove with the broken wing flew down in front of me. It was like the bird was giving me the

strength I needed. The dove started to flap its wings and all of the others started as well.

"Hurry lady, the window. Please, if you don't open the window all of the dove's wings will break."

"Hurry, hurry!"

I turned around, put my fingers under the sill, and with everything I had, I lifted the window. All of the doves flew out. I turned to my right to see Seth smiling and on his shoulder was the dove with both wings flapping.

Seth said, "We are at peace now. Thank you."

Just then the foggy haze appeared and they were gone.

It has been two years since that happened. I'm still there. Oh yes, I also have a new bar where I keep my new pets. My dove's names are MacGilly and Chance. I love my big old house.

Butterfly from Sarah A Healthy Lifestyle A Joy
to Behold A Tear A Walk in the Park Amy's
Challenge An Afternoon at Mader's Cove
An American Hero Andrew's Summer Vacation
Animus? Billy's Story Butterfly Wings Did you
see my dog? Family Friendships Free to Be Me
Gentle Eyes Gone Fishing Hopes and Dreams for
My Children Inside the Gate Je Me Souviens
Bill's Quest John MacIntosh At Work L'endroit
déal Lost Ma Vacance Chez Tante Modern Day
Lady Who Lives In A Shoe My Daughter's Hockey
Team Not the Only Child Opening Day Opposite
Beliefs Our Love Our Special Little Friend Pitter
Patter Ricky's Nightmare Road Side Assistance
Selina's Job Spirit of a Dove Spring Fair Sweet
Taste of Spring The Apartment Building
The Apartment Zoo The Bear Truth The Birth
The Curious Kids' Castle Adventure The Elevator
Encounter The Family The First Time Sarah
and I Met The Hunt The Island of Utopia
Treasured Memories Truro to St. Peters Trying
Our Wings Un Certain Été Une Larme Untitled
Vacation Camping Trip What Do You Know Now
What You Wish You Knew When You Were
Younger? When Old Friends Meet Who are We?