

Ottawa One Five 0

An Anthology of
Prose and Poetry
Celebrating 150 Years
of Canadian Confederation



Ottawa One Five O

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*An Anthology of Prose and Poetry
Celebrating 150 Years of
Canadian Confederation*

Foreword

I am honoured to provide an introduction to this special compilation of prose and poetry to mark our country's 150th birthday. The Sesquicentennial will be an important milestone for an entire generation, as we all take a moment to reflect on what it means to be Canadian. This special anniversary has particular significance for our country's capital. This anthology brings to life our collective creative spirit, whether through works of fact or fiction, and to have it showcased for everyone to appreciate. These pieces reflect on our country's history and heritage, on our present, and upon the potential and possibility of our future. Each work, in its own way, is a reminder of the unique beauty that is Canada and how blessed we are to live in the best country in the world. I hope you will enjoy *Ottawa One Five O* as a piece of celebration of our Canadian culture in this special year.

Jim Watson
Mayor
City of Ottawa
May 2017

Acknowledgements

*T*his book would have been impossible without the enthusiastic participation of all the OIW members who submitted their works for inclusion. This diverse group of writers presented me with the widest imaginable range of works which, in turn, presented an organizational challenge. So, this volume is divided into sections, dealing with the past in history and imagination, the present in recollection and fiction, and the future in speculation. I hope this arrangement works. In addition to our contributors, I would like to acknowledge Benoit Chartier and Bill Horne for their editorial assistance, and Magdalene Carson for the cover design.

Robert Barclay, Editor
On behalf of the Board of Directors of OIW
June 2017

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Section One

Then, in Fact...

*Let's read about things as they have been passed
down to us*

Rebirthing
Maggie Taylor



The evening before I would give birth to our first child, my husband and I were cuddling in bed.

“I’m so glad we aren’t having our baby back when my grandparents were homesteading.”

“What do you mean, Emily?”

“Well, back in the 1900s mortality rates were very high, both for mother and child.”

“Um... 1981 definitely feels safer,” Keith mumbled as he drifted off.

Pop! I awoke from a deep sleep and gazed around my bed-room. At first not understanding the significance of that ‘pop’. With my hands cradling my very pregnant belly I made a dash for the toilet arriving just in time as my water broke. Thank goodness we did not have to clean that off the hardwood floors.

As the flow became a trickle I called to my husband. “Keith... Keith, can you come here?” I could hear his hand patting my side of the bed.

“Where are you, Emily?”

“On the throne. My water just broke.”

“Oh, my gosh! Oh, my gosh!”

“Keith. Take a deep breath, get your watch and time my contractions.” We both waited with bated breath as the minutes ticked by then heaved sighs of relief as the five-minute mark passed. Keith made a quick exit and returned with pen and paper ready to track the length and the time between each contraction. When they were less than four minutes apart, Keith called the hospital and we were told to go in.

Keith was all efficiency now that he had something to do besides being a stopwatch keeper.

“I put your suitcase in the car and I’m getting the baby’s. Oh, my God, Emily. We’re having a baby!”

Rebirthing

A contraction cut short my laughter. I grabbed panties and a heavy duty incontinence pad my neighbour gave me, just in case. I smiled as I saw the clothes Keith had laid out for me: a beautiful rainbow maternity top with royal blue pants. If Keith attended to our baby the way he was looking after me, our child would have a super dad. We were on the highway in good time.

“Keith. Did I ever tell you about my grandma who lived up in the Caribou?”

“The one you mentioned last night, whose husband was a homesteader farmer?”

“Yes. That one. Here’s their story:

Their farm was south of Quesnel, British Columbia, near the town of Marguerite. I remember grandma telling me how the local women would take time away from their farm duties to help each other give birth. Anyways, there was a woman, Mrs Pollock, whose husband had decided to take a homestead on the far side of the Fraser River on the flood plain. They all thought he was crazy. Besides there were no towns over there for miles and miles and the river was often too treacherous to cross.

I raised my finger to Keith to indicate a ‘pregnant pause’ then resumed:

Grandma Olivia had pledged to assist Mrs Pollock when her time came, which was late one winter’s night. Olivia was sitting by the cast iron stove in their twenty-by-twenty foot log cabin. She was darning socks by the light of a kerosene lamp when they heard heavy knocking. Grandpa Jake quickly pulled the visitor inside, hoping to leave the cold blast on the other side of the door.

“It is time,” was all he said looking towards Olivia.

“We’ll be at the hospital in five minutes,” Keith informed me.

I nodded. Telling Olivia’s story was calming, even comforting as the birth of our own child drew near. I resumed:

While Jake and Mr Pollock discussed conditions of the frozen Fraser River, Olivia quickly gathered her supplies and

warm clothing. She asked Mr Pollock if water had been brought into the house and was shocked by his angry retort of “That’s women’s work.” She took along extra towels and blankets, realizing there would be no help coming from that man. Jake and Mr Pollock went to the barn to saddle her horse and had it by the cabin door when she came out with her bundles. Jake filled the two saddle bags and laid the extra blankets across the saddle for warmth.

Bright lights spilled from the emergency room doors. Keith brought me a wheelchair accompanied by a nurse. While I was trundled inside, Keith moved the car to long-term parking and was soon back filling out admittance forms and showing the data on my contractions.

“He’s really into this,” said the nurse and I smiled.

“They are ready for you in maternity.” The nurse handed a file to the orderly who took us upstairs. I was filled with excitement and squeezed Keith’s hand. “I’m so glad you’re here with me.”

“Well where else would I want to be?”

“For millennia and as recently as seventy, eighty years ago men never had anything to do with their wives’ birthing. If they were farmers their only experience would be with their cows and other livestock. Where did I leave off?”

“With Olivia’s horse.”

“Right.”

Olivia had put on a pair of her husband’s wool pants under her skirts for warmth. Jake helped her mount and turning to Mr Pollock said, ‘You will look after her won’t you? Make sure she gets back across the river safely.’

Mr Pollock grunted. Olivia was dreading being in his presence. He gave off an aura of anger, even cruelty.

‘Your horse follows where my horse steps.’ She nodded.

There was no talking as they made their way down the hill to the bench-land and finally to the frozen Fraser River. Mr Pollock needlessly raised his hand for silence as he gazed both down and up river before starting across. The wind gusted, rattling the branches of scrub along the shore. They

Rebirthing

were almost across when a sharp crack halted them in their tracks. Their horses picked up on their fear but Mr Pollock held them still until he determined the crack was a tree branch and not the river ice.

We were shown into a labour room where I donned a hospital gown. Nurse Mary took my vitals and listened to the fetal heartbeat.

“Emily, are you sure you want to go for natural childbirth? I mean without an epidural?”

“I’m sure, Keith. As long as you’re here to coach me through all my contractions.”

“I’m your man,” and he kissed me.

There was such love in his eyes that I nearly teared up. Once I was in bed Mary strapped a fetal monitor across my distended belly. What a beautiful sound that rapid little heartbeat made.

So Olivia was finally across the river. The wind was chill and penetrated the layers of clothing. They made their way along a rough track cut through scrub brush and trees. It opened to a clearing no larger than five acres.

A few years ago, I looked up both the British Columbia and the Dominion Land Grant Acts. I was never certain which one applied to grandpa. However, both required that a permanent dwelling and many, many acres be cultivated within three years for the farmer to qualify as a homesteader. Mr Pollock had a lot of work ahead of him if he was to qualify in time.

They stopped in front of the cabin. Olivia dismounted without assistance and grabbed her saddle bags.

‘Well is out back. Don’t be looking for me to fetch and carry.’ Mr Pollock rode off with the horses. Olivia closed the cabin door and looked around the fifteen-by-twenty foot space.

‘Mrs Pollock, I’m here to help you.’ She looked behind a curtain at the back of the cabin. Mrs Pollock was in the midst of a strong contraction.

‘Mrs Lloyd. Oh thank the Maker you came.’

‘Call me Olivia.’

‘I could not do that. Mr Pollock would be furious if he heard me being so familiar.’

‘We’ll be careful then. What’s your Christian name?’

Nurse Mary’s voice interrupted my narrative. “We’ll be transferring you to the delivery room.”

“Is Dr James here yet?”

“He’s been notified and I will give him an update on your contractions.”

I groaned as another one gripped. Keith held my hand and leaning close to my ear coached my panting breaths, just as we learned in Lamaze class. I continued:

So Olivia hauled water from the well and stoked the stove, thankful that there was a large supply of firewood just inside the door. She checked frequently on Mrs Pollock while boiling the water she would use to wash both baby and mother and to sterilize her needle and thread. After a particularly strong contraction she heard, ‘Florence. Call me Florence.’

‘Thank you. Florence. You just hold on. This will soon be over and you will be holding your lovely little baby.’

But the hours dragged on and the intense labour seemed endless. Olivia was worried something was wrong.

When Mary determined I was ready, my bed was pushed into a brightly lit room and I was transferred to the delivery table.

“Move your bottom down further. That’s it.”

“Where is Dr James?”

“Don’t worry Emily. He’s on his way and Dr DiSilvo is here to assist.”

A lovely dark haired woman came into view, adjusting her mask and cap.

“You’re in good hands, Emily.”

Keith hadn’t followed me into the delivery room but when he did appear, he was gowned and wearing booties and a mesh hair net.

“I love the look,” I tried to joke, but a super-powerful contraction took hold. “Can I push now?”

“Not yet, honey. You are only nine centimeters dilated.”

Olivia made Florence as comfortable as she could. She gave her a folded flannel to bite on and a cool compress for her forehead. After hours of agonizing labour, Olivia could see the baby's head beginning to show.

'It's time to push.'

'But I am so tired. I'm going to sleep a little bit first.'

'Florence. You look at me. Open your eyes. Now you push this baby out into the world. You hear me?'

Florence nodded weakly.

'And another push. Push. That's it. Your baby is nearly here. And such a beautiful head of hair.'

Florence brightened. 'What colour is it?'

'I can't tell when it's wet.'

Dr DiSilvo's voice interrupted my story. "You are fully dilated. I want you to push with the next contraction."

Over the next 20 minutes I panted and pushed then panted some more. I found myself getting angry at Keith. "This is your fault!" I growled between clenched teeth. He looked shocked but the doctor reassured him this was normal.

"It's called labour for a reason."

Now I was angry with Dr DiSilvo who told me to bear down and push this baby out. So I pushed and panted with little time between contractions to catch my breath.

"There we go. The head is here and what a beautiful baby."

I gazed in wonder as the doctor cleared our baby's nostrils.

"On your next contraction I am going to ease out a shoulder."

With two more contractions our beautiful baby girl was born. The doctor held her up for Keith and me, then passed her over to the nurse to clean her and warm her. I heard them doing the APGAR test but couldn't remember what it all meant. Apparently she passed with flying colours.

Finally. Finally our beautiful little girl was laid upon my chest. I gazed, transfixed by her beauty. I turned to Keith. "Meet our daughter, Melanie."

"Hello, Melanie, sweet love."

Dr DiSilvo spoke again. You enjoy your little bundle of joy. As soon as you deliver the afterbirth I will put in a couple of stitches."

"Stitches?"

“Um, hm. Babies heads and shoulders are large.”

“Will it hurt?”

“What a question from a brave woman who has just gone through ten hours of labour. I doubt you will notice.”

The cabin door banged open followed by a gust of frigid air.

‘That brat here yet?’

Olivia pulled aside the curtain, too shocked to say anything but, ‘Not yet.’

‘Well, make it fast. Barn’s cold.’

Olivia turned to look at Florence whose eyes were filled with panic. Fear must have fueled her efforts to push because a quarter of an hour later she gave birth.

‘It’s a beautiful baby girl.’

Florence burst into tears and wailed, ‘No. No. It must be a boy. You made a mistake.’

‘Why must it be a boy?’

Florence continued in great distress. ‘Boys do men’s work. Mr Pollock must have a boy.’

Olivia cleaned up the baby who was wailing lustily, wrapped her in a clean towel and attempted to place her in her mother’s arms. When that failed she laid the wee one facing Florence. After cleaning up the afterbirth she removed needle and thread from the smallest pot on the stove and prepared to stitch up Florence.

Keith and I were moved to a private room with our baby. We took turns holding and falling in love with her. Our precious little girl. How we had longed for her. Keith rustled in a bag. “What are you looking for?”

“This.” He pulled out a little bear covered in a patchwork of pink and blue fur. “My first gift to Melanie.”

“Actually, I believe it is the second one.” Keith looked puzzled. “The first gift is your love for her.” His eyes watered up and he gave me such a loving kiss.

Florence was reluctant to take her baby. ‘Look at this sweet girl. You can count her fingers, and her toes. See how beautifully made she is?’

Finally she wiped away her tears and let Olivia pass the baby to suckle. ‘She is a pretty little thing, is she not?’

‘What will you call her?’

‘Sorry, I could not hear you?’

Florence choked out, ‘Adam. Mr Pollock said I was to give him a boy.’

‘Hmm. And now you have a wee girl to name.’

There was a long pause. ‘Mary. After my favourite teacher. And Martha after my mother.’

‘Mary Martha Pollock. A fine name.’

‘A girl! You gave me a girl?’

The two women had not noticed the draft until suddenly Mr Pollock was standing there, glowering down at Florence. She lay there trembling, trying to find her voice.

‘See how beautiful she is?’

‘And just how is a girl supposed to help out on the farm? Can she chop down a tree or pull a plough? Come spring you are working outside with me.’

Mr Pollock backhanded his wife across the face then turned to Olivia. ‘You. Finish up with her and get me something to eat. It’s time for breakfast.’

The man banged out of the cabin leaving cold and fear in his stead. As Olivia cleaned up Florence she noticed bruises on her arms and back. She knew that Mr Pollock would have Florence up and working as soon as she left and longed to take Florence away from there. Olivia fetched water at midday, enjoying the sunshine that was so welcome after the long cold night. But the warmer air made her anxious. The Fraser River could break anytime. As she brought in the third bucket Mr Pollock growled at her.

‘You go home now.’ He cut off her protest. ‘You go.’

Dr James patted my hand. “You’re healing nicely. And Miss Melanie is feeding well so you can go home tomorrow morning.”

“You missed her birth.”

“I apologize. I thought I had time to go to the office, but your little one was impatient to get here. You were in good hands.”

“Oh, yes,” I answered, thinking about my Grandma Olivia’s story I had yet to finish telling my husband.

Olivia quickly gathered her things, deciding to leave half her towels and a blanket. It seemed Florence was making do with so little. She pulled a pan of biscuits from the stove and

made sure there were fixings handy for a few simple meals. Florence laid the baby in a blanket-lined wooden box, then on weak legs she walked to the kitchen.

“Thank you for coming, Olivia. I will not forget your kindness.”

The two women embraced, the look they shared filled with deep understanding. Outside, Mr Pollock stood by while petite Olivia, standing at half an inch under five feet, and balancing on the edge of a roughly carved watering trough, struggled to mount her horse. She waved reluctantly to the figure in the window. Retracing the path to the river’s edge she paused to listen. There was no sound of impending breakup from the mighty but frozen Fraser River. Olivia urged her horse forward, pausing frequently to listen. With great relief she safely reached her home shore. She was pensive as she retraced the path the horses had taken the previous night across the snowy bench-land.

Grandma Olivia had started up the hill to her own cabin when there was a horrendous explosion behind her. Turning, she watched as sheets of ice upended, crashing violently together. She tied up her horse and was still trembling as she entered the safety of her home. Grandpa Jake held her close as she related the frightful circumstances of Mrs Pollock’s life.

“I know you would love to take her to safety. But Mr Pollock can do as he sees fit. According to law, livestock, wives and children are chattel.” Jake continued to hold Olivia as she wept softly in his arms.

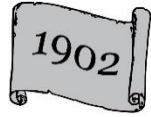
“Oh, Keith, I am so thankful we live now and not in past centuries.”

Keith lifted the baby out of her car seat and escorted us into our loving home. I sniffed the air.

“You baked?”

“Um, hm. I used your grandma’s recipe for scones.”

*Grandmother's
Saskatchewan Homestead*
Hazel Johnson



*I*t is a privilege to share the homesteading experience of my grandmother through the eyes of my mother and me. Grandmother had suffered through many difficulties in her early life, but became remarkably content in her senior years. She, along with her husband and thousands of their country folk, braved the unknown to settle in the Canadian West in the early 1900s. They were sent to inhabit a part of the country that previously only had indigenous people and fur traders living and trapping; there were no roads or towns, just wilderness and mosquitoes. They knew not what was in store for them. Many became lonely and terrified, but there was no going back; they had invested all their money getting there. They lived in lean-tos or small log and clay huts during the long cold winters for the first year or two. Many perished in their efforts to attain the freedom they did not have in their native land. Others, like my grandmother, persevered through many hardships, and established a wonderful life for their future descendants, and I heartily thank them for that.

My grandmother, Theodosia, was born in 1882, the youngest of four, in the village of Hryhoriw in the Ukraine, at that time part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Fate was unkind to her right from the beginning. When she was two years old her mother died, and at six she lost her father. She continued to live in the family home until her oldest brother got married. She was then sent to live with an uncle who already had two sons. While they attended school Theodosia was sent out to herd cows; she never did go to school. At age 15 she went to work in a tobacco factory, and was employed there until her marriage at age 23 to Yakiw Panasiewicz.

In Ukraine the land the peasants were living on had been subdivided several times for new generations, and so they could no longer subsist as farmers. Nor could they buy more land; it was all controlled by rich landlords. News reached the small villages

that land was almost free in Canada, so in 1902 the poorest peasants left Hryhoriw for the New World. Soon many more followed. The immigration authorities in Yorkton, Saskatchewan sent these immigrants to land that had not yet been surveyed, so many were squatters for a while.

Shortly after their marriage, Theodosia and Yakiw set sail on the ship *Montrose* from Hamburg, Germany leaving the last port, Antwerp, Belgium on April 27th 1906, and arriving in Montreal on May 13th. Not only did they endure a long and grueling ocean voyage lasting more than two weeks, but the rail trip from Montreal to Winnipeg, then to Yorkton was equally crowded, long and difficult. Relatives arranged an ox-cart to take them the final 50 or 60 miles to their destination. Theodosia's brother and sister-in-law had arrived in Canada a year earlier, so Theodosia and Yakiw settled on a quarter of land next to them. Yakiw filed for a homestead in the fall of 1908.

In 1882 the Dominion Lands Act had been passed, which provided a homestead of 160 acres of land to a settler 18 years or older. To attain the quarter section of land, the settler had to fulfil certain regulations as follows:

- 1) Become a naturalized citizen
- 2) Pay a filing fee of \$10
- 3) Break a certain amount of land each year for three years
- 4) Construct a home and other buildings on the land

After a few years, if the authorities were satisfied with the progress, title to the 160 acres was granted to the settler.

With the money left over from their trip, Theodosia and Yakiw were able to buy a cow. The land they settled on turned out to be very stony, and cultivating it was extremely difficult. They cleared land by hand and put up buildings during the spring and summer. The buildings were built of logs cut on the land and plastered with a clay and straw mixture, and had thatched roofs. Winters were very cold and onerous; they had not anticipated such hardships. Their first child Philip was born in 1907, and their second Pauline, my mother, in 1909. Their last child William was born in 1910.

During this last year great personality changes were taking place in Yakiw; apparently extreme mood swings, though Theodosia had never discussed the problems with her children when they were older, so little is known about his illness. Yakiw was committed to the Brandon Mental Hospital in Manitoba in 1911. This must have been most devastating for Theodosia. Thankfully her relatives and neighbours pitched in to help her, as life on the homestead with three young children under four must have been extremely difficult and stressful. Some years later Yakiw was transferred to Weyburn, when a mental hospital was built in Saskatchewan.

In the following 30 years Theodosia made an occasional visit to see her husband, but claimed he really didn't recognize her. In those early days mental hospitals did very little to help patients, and once committed the patients never left. She fiercely discouraged her children from visiting their father as she found conditions deplorable, and so they never did. Yakiw died in the institution in 1941.

Going back to the 1906-1910 migration period in this area, tracks were being laid for the Canadian Pacific Railway near the Assiniboine River about seven miles north of Yakiw's homestead. Mrs Preece fed these workers in her house on the homestead she shared with her husband. Soon buildings for quartering these workers sprang up, and in 1910 the first store opened. This was followed by a lumber yard, a barber shop and other businesses. In 1912 this settlement was incorporated into a town and named Preeceville, after the Preece family. Before this store opened, the settlers had to organize a few wagon and oxen teams and drive the 30 miles to Canora for supplies, usually spending the night away from home.

During the next few years Theodosia found life very difficult and demoralizing. She worked hard on the homestead trying to make enough improvements to keep from losing it. Because of her unusual circumstances, the officials were a little more lenient with her. While she got some help, she had to do most of the work herself with her young children, as the helpers had their own homesteads to look after.

My mother, Pauline, recalls their first house as follows:

I remember our first home, it was built of logs. The walls inside and outside were plastered with clay and whitewashed; and the roof was thatched. Inside, the house had two rooms, a kitchen-living room and a bedroom. The floor in the kitchen-living room was plastered clay, and it was my job to sweep it with a homemade broom made of young willows. In this room were a homemade table and benches, a stove and some small stools like milking stools. The bedroom had a wooden floor. At one end of the room was a large bedframe made of wood with benches around it. The mattresses were made of flour sacks sewn together and stuffed with dried hay and covered with linen cloth brought from the old country. We had big, warm, homemade down quilts for covers. This room also had a homemade table, as well as a wooden clothes chest that was brought from the old country.

Theodosia's children learned the meaning of hard work early in their life. At the age of six Pauline had to sweep the floors and help in preparing meals, as her mother spent most of her time in the fields along with her older son Philip. Working the land was a constant battle against the unrelenting stony fields. I greatly admire the tenacity and courage of my grandmother and her children for not giving up on their land.

Pauline relates another story about her mother and older brother, Philip:

We had only one or two cows, so mother milked them and she brought water in from the well, as we were not allowed near it for she feared we might fall in. My older brother Philip did some of the outdoor chores with mother until he went to the hospital; I was six years old. I don't remember Philip that well, but I remember him climbing trees and jumping down, and I remember him limping. He never came home from the hospital.

In 1915 Philip, now eight, was hospitalized with a severe leg infection. The closest hospital was in Canora some 30 miles away, an impossible distance for regular visits without public transport or a vehicle. It stressed Theodosia greatly that she could only visit her son a few times a year. And how traumatic it must have been

for little Philip, who did not speak English well and was so far from family. Although he spent two years in the hospital, his infection was not successfully treated. He died in the hospital at the age of 10, another hard blow for Theodosia. I cannot imagine the strain and grief she must have felt.

At the age of seven Pauline started school, walking with older neighbourhood children about one mile to Hryhoriw School. For the first couple of years school lasted only two months each year as teachers were hard to find during the years of the First World War. There was no school in the winter as most of the students did not have winter boots. In spring and fall both Pauline and Bill had to stay home in good weather to help their mother with seeding and harvesting. They had to work much harder as they got older; their mother depended on them. Both Pauline and Bill left school at age 14, as did most other children in their community; the legal leaving age in the 1920s.



Pauline c. 1926, sitting beside their thatch-roofed house

Pauline recalls the hard work involved in running the farm with her mother and brother Bill. She particularly remembers the uncooperative oxen her mother had owned.

I often had to lead them when mother would be ploughing as they would not listen to her. Sometimes when she was ploughing alone, the oxen would decide that it was too hot and head for the bush. No amount of tugging, pulling or beating would change their minds. She would have to relent to their wills and would sit down and shed a few tears.



*Pauline with her mother
Theodosia in 1930*

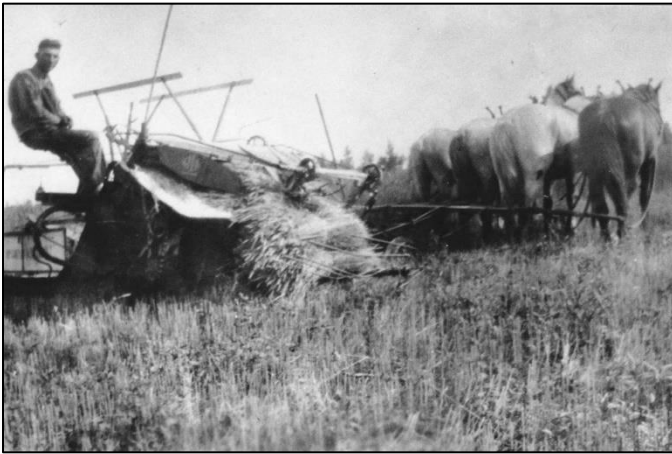
Sometimes mother and daughter would drive a wagon and oxen team to Preeceville to shop. The oxen would pull the same sort of stunt. To get to town they had to cross a bridge over the Assiniboine River. The oxen might decide they needed a drink, or wanted to cool off, and they would head for the river. Nothing would move them; Theodosia and Pauline would just have to wait patiently until the oxen were

ready to go. In 1921 when Pauline was 12, much to her delight, the obstinate oxen were replaced by horses.

Pauline recalls happy and sad times:

We also had fun with friends, playing, dancing and singing. I have happy memories, but there are unpleasant memories,

too. I will always remember when the thatched roof of our first house burnt. It was winter time, about 1927. Mother and Bill were in the barn, and I was in the house when I heard this loud roaring sound. I didn't know what it was, but I looked up and saw yellow flames where the pipes go through the ceiling and roof. I ran outside; the whole roof seemed to be burning. I shouted to mother and Bill to come quickly. Bill hurried back with a ladder, while mother and I started to carry pails of water from the well. Bill took them up the ladder to the roof; it was burning furiously. During one of the times when Bill came down the ladder to get more water, the whole roof fell in. If he had been up on the ladder when the roof collapsed he probably would have been badly burnt. The rest of the house did not burn as it was made mainly of clay, only the thatched roof burnt right down. After the ceiling cooled, the top was covered with hay to keep the house warm. In the spring, the ceiling leaked everywhere from the melting snow. A new house with a shingled roof was built in the summertime.



Stanley on a binder cutting grain in 1931

Pauline married my father Stanley in November 1929, after a two year courtship. I once asked her how she met him, and she replied, "Oh, I knew him most of my life. Before the roads were built, the

trail to town went from farmyard to farmyard, and through his parents' farm. Mother and I would often stop and visit on our way to or from town. The settlers all knew each other."

After their marriage, Stanley moved in with Pauline's family helping with the farm work for the next two years. In the fall of 1931 they rented a farm a few miles east of the homestead, moving there with 14 head of cattle, four horses and their one-year old son.



Theodosia's son Bill in 1937

Theodosia and her son Bill continued to farm the homestead, making many improvements though the stony fields continued to be a problem. In 1936 Bill married and brought his wife, also named Pauline, to the farm. Theodosia was happy to let her daughter-in-law run the house, while she tended to the outdoor chores that she enjoyed; now in a more relaxed way. She loved her garden and she loved working with the animals; they were her friends.

I remember Grandma Theodosia coming to live with us for a couple of months in the early 1940s when my dad was ill and hospitalized. She was always happy and kind, and never raised her voice to us, unlike our mother who was frequently yelling at us.

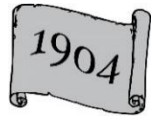
About 1950 Bill had a home built for his mother in Preeceville; she was now almost 69 years old. Many of her widowed friends had also moved to town so she had friends around her. And it is here that I got to know my wonderful grandmother as I stayed with her during my high school years. She was a kindly, jovial, good-natured, stout lady; always happy, and

loved by everyone. Of course she doted on me, making my meals and doing my laundry. And on evenings when I went out, she always left the door unlocked even though I had a key. On weekends sometimes I attended dances that lasted until 1:00 am, and when I quietly crept into the house, she always called out, "Is that you, Hazel?" I suspect she never fell asleep until after I got home. But when spring came she couldn't wait to go back to her beloved farm for the spring and summer to care for the animals she loved.

She had endured so much hardship in her early life, and I found it incredible that she could overcome all that and be so happy in her later years. She died of cancer in 1961 at age 78. Bill waited until after her death before selling their stony homestead and buying better farming land farther east. He knew how much the homestead had meant to her.

Finding Lewis

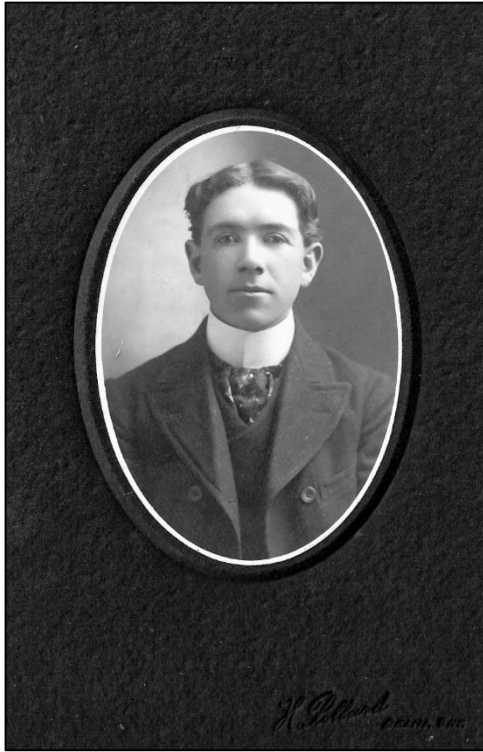
Janet Fenwick



*A*s a little girl growing up in England, I had heard of my great uncle Lewis as an almost mythical figure. I had never met him, and only heard my Nana and my mother speak of him in vague terms. As I grew older I discovered that he was my Nana's brother and that he had lived in Canada. This seemed so far away and almost unimportant to a teenager, especially now that my family had moved to the West Indies. I was far more concerned with my own life than that of a mythical great uncle who had no influence on me at that time. Then in 1969 my Nana, Mary Howells, passed away, and my mother found all the postcards and photo albums Nana had so carefully kept. One of the albums contained a series of photographs and postcards sent from Canada from 1904 to about 1911 or '12. My mother carefully cared for them, and when she moved up to Canada from the Caribbean, she started to write a little essay about her Uncle Lewis, someone she had never met. This triggered my interest in this gentleman; the pictures were so interesting, portraying a way of life over 100 years ago.

I read my mother's essay and knew I needed to know more, so I started looking for Lewis Howells through one of the many web-based family tree sites. Much to my surprise I learned that my great uncle Lewis had been born in Pennsylvania in or around 1883. Not bad for a family from Wales. My mother recalled the history of Wales at that period, and remembered that her grandparents from the Welsh coal mining valleys had traveled to Pennsylvania to work in the coal industry there. She knew little about their time in Pennsylvania, or why they had returned to their home village of Pentyrch in South Wales, where my grandmother Mary Howells was born in 1888. Family lore has it that there was some kind of scandal, likely with my great grandfather, John Howells, and probably to do with a 'woman'. But we don't know; we can only speculate.

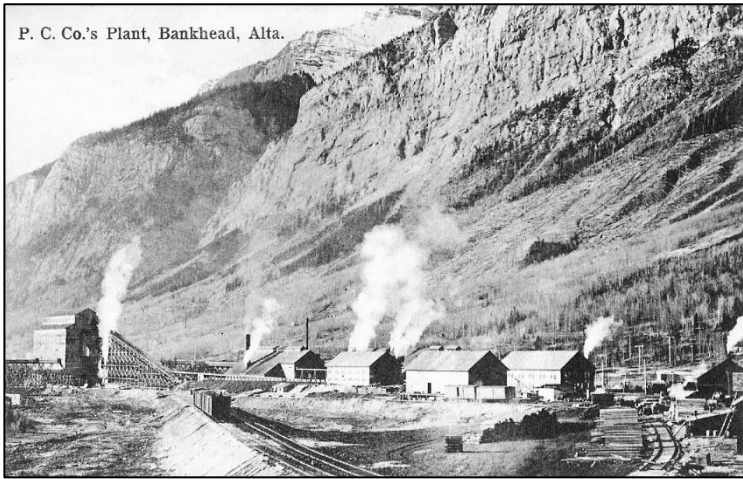
As with all families, the rumours abound as to why people travel abroad and why they choose to live where they do. So, as I kept looking for more clues I found Lewis living with an aunt or cousin in 1901, in a different village in South Wales, not his home. Was this because he didn't get on with his family? Or was it for work? Or was it something else? I'll never know. My mother, Mavis Morgan, believed it was due to family issues, so, more family secrets. Who knew there were such well kept secrets in my family?



Uncle Lewis Howells in 1903

Lewis did not stay much longer in Wales. He took a passage to New York on the Steamship *Aurania*, arriving on April 23rd, 1903. I was curious about this ship and wondered what it must have been like to travel from Liverpool, England to New York,

USA. No doubt he went third class, and I am guessing he was traveling with some of his friends. Once he arrived in New York he seems to have disappeared from the record books, until he reappeared in 1904 in the small coal mining town of Bankhead, in the Cascade Mountains of Alberta. And it is from Bankhead we learn more about his life through those postcards sent home to his sister, Mary Howells, which gave her a snapshot of his life in this very different place.

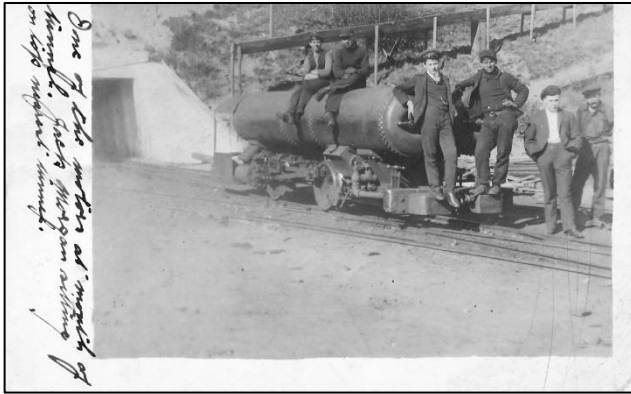


A view of Bankhead on one of Lewis's postcards

Bankhead is known as the Twenty Year Town. It was founded for one purpose and one purpose only: to provide coal for the Canadian Pacific Railroad. Apparently this mine produced a low grade of anthracite, and as time went on it was less and less economical to get it out of the ground, and so the town was abandoned. However, while there was active mining in the Cascades, miners were needed, so no wonder Lewis and a number of his buddies from Wales found themselves there some time in 1904. Once there, the boys from Wales made themselves comfortable and started to work. The postcards came regularly and were treasured by my grandmother. After she passed away in 1969 the postcards continued their journey with my mother, and

made their way to the West Indies, where they resided for the next 11 years. Finally, my mother moved up to Canada bringing the postcards with her. As I looked over these very elderly pictures of my great uncle as a young man, I really wished I could have known him.

Fast forward to 2012. I was visiting Banff and went into the museum there. I spoke to one of the curatorial staff in the vain hope she would be able to tell me something about these very precious pictures. We spent some time looking at the scans I had made and she told me the history of Bankhead. Then, wonder of wonders, she was also able to identify where some of the pictures were actually taken. This was excitement beyond belief. Now I could actually go where my uncle had actually walked.



Lewis and his buddies posed on a mine locomotive

As I strolled through the ruins of Bankhead, I was able to imagine the buildings as they would have been over 100 years ago. Those pictures of the mine workings, the mine train with Uncle Lewis and his buddies sitting on it, the mine in the snow, and all the little comments and messages written on them, made the ruins much more real for me. I thought about him living and working there and tried to imagine how different this area would have been with an active mine in the background. Gwalia House, in one of his pictures, likely would have been somewhere in this area, and I

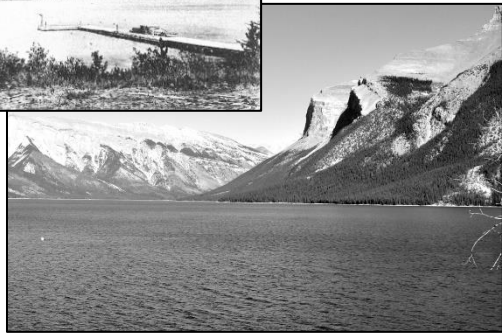
could see him in my mind's eye with his friends and colleagues from Wales living and working there.

Lake Minnewanka and the distinctive mountain face coming down to the water are visible from the remains of the town. The lake has been dammed twice since my uncle's time, and much of the town that supported the mine is now under water. Standing at the edge of the lake I found it easy to imagine my uncle and his friend Jack, sailing the boat Jack had built on the calm waters. And not forgetting the winter; no doubt they skated or slid on the icy surface of the lake.



Lake Minnewanka near Banff.

*Lake Minnewanka,
then and now*



I was able to explore the old workings of the mine, high up on the slopes of the mountain. As I walked up the well-trodden track I found lumps of coal and slag along the pathway. About halfway up I came across an abandoned lantern house. It was here that the miners picked up and dropped off their lanterns, before and after work. The lanterns were counted at the end of shift to ensure nobody was left in the mine, especially when they were getting ready to blast the coal face. As I stopped to look over the building I thought about Lewis and his life in the coalfields. I

continued up the mountainside, where coal slag was everywhere, until I came to an opening and I could see the lake through the trees. I walked along a huge pile of slag until I could look out over the lake, realizing I was seeing the lake as he might have done over a hundred years ago.

In addition to the postcards of Lewis's life here, there were two that initially appeared somewhat random. The first was identified as the Hot Water Basin, Banff Springs. There were no other comments, so perhaps when that one was sent a letter accompanied it. However, the museum staff looked closely at it and identified the gentleman standing on the edge of the pool: "That's David Drummond Galtly, the caretaker of the pool." Suddenly this picture came to life. Knowing the name of the individual meant so much more, and I like to imagine my uncle had been to the springs and perhaps spoken to the gentleman concerned. The other card was the Banff Zoo, c. 1906-7 with the mountain lion front and centre in its cage. Then, as I looked around the displays in the museum I came across a map of that very same zoo with the mountain lions' cage identified! I laughed when I saw this because the note on the postcard said the mountain lion had escaped the zoo in 1906!

As I left Banff and the Bankfield area I finally felt I knew more of my great uncle's life, and now had some knowledge of where he lived and worked for so long. How I wished that both my Nana and Mother were still with us, because I so wanted to share this discovery with them. What had been just a visit to the local museum had turned into a real voyage of discovery.

Lewis seemed fascinated by the local buffalo. He must have seen some of the herds while in Banff and also later, when traveling through to North Battleford a couple of years later, where he moved with his wife, Sadie. Judging by the number of postcards he sent home they seem to have made a big impression on him. Having seen the sheep of the Welsh valleys, I can understand why. Again, there were many postcards of the indigenous population, all sent back to his sister, so many thousands of miles away. On one postcard he wrote that these are "...the men that beat the white men in riding and running." Given his obvious yen for exploration, I would like to believe that at some point Lewis visited Calgary around Dominion Day and saw

the Northwest Mounted Police on parade, because he sent a couple of pictures home of this occasion. I would hazard a guess that these postcards were part of a package sent overseas, as there is no date or address on them. Perhaps the letter that likely accompanied them gave much more detail, but if there was one it has long since gone.

Lewis took up farming in North Battleford, and according to my mother, his niece, he was not very successful. He was used to the milder climate of Wales, and farming in Alberta must have been a bit of a shock. He continued sending regular postcards to his sister, including some showing his new home. He was in the process of building it, and the message reads: "This will give you an idea of our little home. It's not finished yet and will look better when I'm done. I'd like to send a bigger and better photo, but this is my own work and I'm not a photographer as well as other things." I can only hope he had it finished before the winter that year! Sadie also sent the odd postcard to the family. In a picture with the little house in the foreground, and what looks like the dust of some kind of farm activity in the background, Sadie writes: "Taken off a hill above it takes in miles across the river. This one is to be enlarged so will send you one of them, Sadie." I don't remember seeing the promised enlargement of this photograph in my grandmother's home, so if she received it, it must have been lost or damaged.

Lewis seems to have had a real love of engines as demonstrated by the number of images of machinery. There are the pictures of several of the engines in use in the mines, as well as more taken around his farm. We have a postcard of him sitting on the mine engine in Bankhead with his friends, and another on a steam traction engine, which is pulling a grain thresher with the comment: "Just as they were going off. Miss Katie Philpott, whose wedding is coming off tomorrow, and I got on it. I love being on engines." While researching him I found him listed as a farmer in both the 1911 and 1916 census, while living in the Battleford District. Again this fitted with the legends that have come down through the generations.

So, if I take my mother's stories as fact, it would appear Lewis moved from farming to something that seems to have been more appropriate to his love of engines. After farming with its

apparently unsuccessful outcome, he found a much more satisfying business to invest in; one that was very new, and included his beloved engines. He opened a filling (gas) station at just the right time, and his business flourished. According to family legend, his was one of the first garages in North Battleford. I like that legend, and even if it is not exactly accurate, I would still like to believe it. I found some basis for this in the census forms, in 1921 his occupation was given as engineer. I learned from the census that he and Sadie had a young daughter, Joyce, which was news to me. My mother did not appear to be aware of the birth of her little cousin, which was a shame. It is something she would have loved to know. It would be wonderful to discover if I had relatives living in Alberta, and one day I hope I am able to meet some of Joyce's descendants. By 1935 the only information I could find about Lewis was on the Canada Voters List where he is listed as Garage Owner. So it would seem that this business was successful for him.

Gradually as time went on the letters and postcards became more irregular and finally died out. I am sure the slowness of the mail and the difference between his life in Canada and my grandmother's life in Wales made the correspondence die a natural death. Airmail was not an option in those days, and by the time it was more affordable there had been no contact for some time. With no more family information I could only keep searching websites, and from this the final piece of knowledge was the discovery of Lewis's headstone in Beaver, Alberta. Apparently he died in 1950, only three years after my birth, so now I realize why he was not part of the regular conversation during my childhood.

This has been a fascinating family journey into my great uncle's life, and it would be wonderful if one day I would be able to trace my distant relatives and learn more about this adventurous individual.

*Lament for What
Might Have Been*

Nix Wadden



*A*pril Fool's Day 1949 was a day of mourning at 34 Gower Street, my family home in St. John's, Newfoundland. A black band posted on our front door echoed the pall of frustrated grief pervading the entire city of 45,000 souls crushed by the narrow defeat of Newfoundland Responsible Government advocates. My father, like hundreds of other citizens, wore a black arm band throughout the day to grieve the country's loss of its once proud independence.

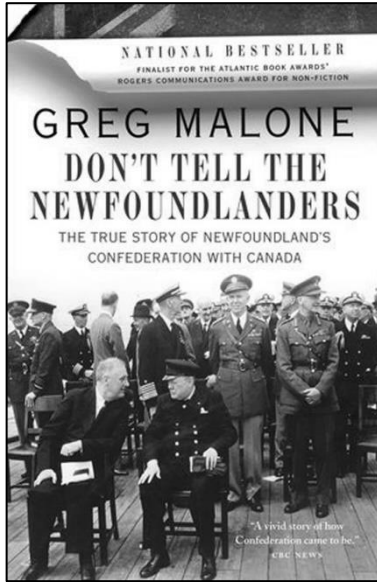
Confederation to transform Britain's oldest colony into a 10th province of Canada officially began, at Joey Smallwood's urgent behest, one second before midnight, March 31st. A healthy regard for Newfoundlanders' ironic sense of humour demanded that opponents could not impose the April's Fool label on this historic moment. But I just did.

Bitterness and utter despair racked the spirits of passionate campaigners of the anti-Confederate forces who, nine months earlier, had witnessed referendum results showing a Confederation win by 78,323 votes over 71,344, a majority of just over two percent.

I had a front seat in that emotional spectacle, first as a poll clerk in the first of two 1948 referenda held to determine Newfoundland's political future, and in the second referendum seven weeks later, as so-called election clerk assisting the Referendum Returning Officer for St. John's West. A few months short of my 18th birthday, I was too young—voting age being 21—to cast a vote, but if I had, I would have voted firmly against Confederation. It was in fact a decision that should never have been made and, for that, Britain and Canada must share the blame.

If Canadians really want to understand how Newfoundland became part of Canada, they need to look no further than a book entitled *Don't Tell the Newfoundlanders* by Greg Malone (Knopf

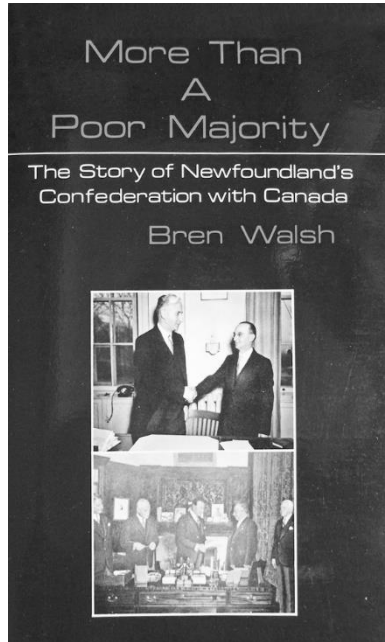
Canada, 2012.) I was astounded yet delighted how completely it confirmed the dark suspicions held by those of us long convinced, but never able to prove, that our beloved country was secretly and cynically manoeuvred into Confederation.



The cover of Greg Malone's book features Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill at the 1941 Atlantic Charter meeting near Placentia, Newfoundland, reportedly agreeing with Mackenzie King that Newfoundland would have to become part of Canada

I was especially moved in recalling the bitterness of my friend Bren Walsh when, 25 years earlier, he deplored the lack of documentation he sought for his 1985 exposé, *More than a poor majority: The story of Newfoundland's confederation with Canada*. Visiting our home while he lived in Ottawa to do his research, he voiced continual frustration as, wherever he ventured among government offices in search of pertinent archival records, he encountered what he called “glaring gaps” in what he felt should have been readily available. He suspected such obstruction might have been deliberate, but had no way of proving it. A veteran journalist,

Bren Walsh was editor in chief of the CJON Radio-TV newsroom when I started working there in the 1960s.



The cover of Bren Walsh's book features Newfoundland Terms of Union negotiators Sir Albert Walsh (to become first Lieutenant Governor) and Joey Smallwood (first Premier of Province of Newfoundland)

Fortunately, by the time Greg Malone set about writing his book, the bureaucratic (or whatever) wraps around the documentation had been finally lifted. Perhaps an unlikely author of such a work, Malone is best known as a TV actor and comedian noted for his satirical impressions of public figures. He undertook this project to fulfill a promise to his friend and mentor, James Halley, a St. John's lawyer who, as an ardent nationalist, had accumulated a large collection of research materials regarding the Confederation controversy. Before his death in 2009, Halley recorded extensive interviews elaborating on the information contained in these documents.

In his finely written and thoroughly documented narrative, Greg Malone traced the origins of Newfoundland's struggle for independence all the way back to the big island's early development as centre of one of the world's richest fishing grounds. While Britain laid claim to Newfoundland as early as 1583, its unwavering policy for more than two centuries was to prohibit permanent settlement on the island, only lifting its ban in the early 1800s. British-appointed Governors and coastal 'fishing admirals'—captains of the fishing season's first vessel to enter a harbour—rigorously upheld these policies. After settlement finally took root despite these barriers, an early form of representative government began in 1832, followed by the introduction of full responsible government in 1855. While Britain pressed for all its North American colonies to join in a confederation, Newfoundland resisted participation although attending the 1864 Quebec conference. The issue arose again in 1895 when Newfoundland sent a delegation to negotiate confederation terms, but the Canadian government of the day was not interested. Relations between Newfoundland and Canada deteriorated seriously a decade later when Ottawa persuaded Britain to cancel a free-trade agreement Newfoundland had negotiated to sell fish to the United States.

By the early 1930s financial difficulties, resulting mainly from First World War debts and the worldwide depression, forced the Newfoundland Government to seek aid to cope with mounting public debt. Canada declined to assist and appeals were made for help from Britain. The British government responded, not with financial aid, but by sending out a royal commission to assess the financial and political situation and recommend future action.

The Amulree Commission

As noted in Malone's account, the very damaging report of this commission was written, not by its nominal head, a Scot named William Warrender Mackenzie, 1st Baron Amulree, but by Dominions Office Newfoundland 'expert', Peter Alexander Clutterbuck. Other Commission members were Ontario banker Charles McGrath as Canadian representative, and William Stavert of Prince Edward Island, astoundingly chosen as Newfoundland's representative.

The Amulree report attributed blame for the current crisis to “A continuing process of greed, graft and corruption” and continued, “The public debt of the island has in 12 years 1920-32 more than doubled; its assets dissipated by improvident administration; the people misled into acceptance of false standards, and the country sunk in waste and extravagance.” It recommended that “The existing form of government would be suspended” and replaced by a Special Commission of Government. Then came what was supposed to be the clincher: “As soon as the Island’s difficulties are overcome and Newfoundland is again self-supporting, responsible government on request from the people of Newfoundland would be restored.”

Newfoundland Prime Minister Frederick Alderdice reluctantly accepted the report, ushering in a period of 15 years in which democracy lay dormant under a flaccid regime presided over by a British appointed governor and six commissioners, three from Britain and three from Newfoundland. The first Governor, Sir David Murray Anderson, was succeeded after two years by Sir Humphrey Walwyn, a craggy-visaged ex-navy commander whom I dubbed, in an adolescent moment, “Humpy Walnut.” The commission undertook some useful reforms in health care and road building but ran deficits until wartime brought prosperity in 1939. By war’s end in 1945, government coffers were in surplus, so hopes arose for Responsible Government to return.

Instead, Britain devised a so-called national convention whose carefully worded mandate was, “To consider and discuss the form of government to be recommended” to the Newfoundland people and to the British government. Announced by newly elected Prime Minister Clement Attlee, this body was given no decision-making power. Moreover, election of convention delegates was deliberately restricted by a two-year residency requirement to the districts the delegates were to represent. This proviso, which had never before applied in a Newfoundland election, was clearly intended to minimize representation from St. John’s where the majority of business and community leaders and professionals resided.

British policy throughout this period was largely focused on preserving British control in view of Newfoundland’s strategic importance and to prevent Newfoundland’s falling under United

States influence. Newfoundlanders had long enjoyed much closer relations with the United States than with Canada, especially since the 1941 influx of American military to defence bases set up around the island.

The Canadian Government, encouraged by Britain's overtures, devoted increasingly active yet clandestine efforts toward achieving what Prime Minister Mackenzie King described as "Taking over Newfoundland." One step in this direction was the appointment of a top diplomat, C.J. Burchell, to the newly created position of Canadian High Commissioner to Newfoundland, providing intelligence to Ottawa on Newfoundland attitudes toward its political future. His successor named in 1946, Scott MacDonald, aggressively promoted the cause of entry into confederation through secret communications with colonial offices in London and diplomatic officials in Ottawa, as well as some local adherents. Contents of this correspondence form a significant part of Malone's book.

Meanwhile, the Attlee Government selected as new Newfoundland Governor a dour ex-miner, Gordon MacDonald, whose primary mission would be to aid the cause of Confederation. All planning for the convention was made in secret negotiations among Britain, Canada and the Commission.

The National Convention (1946-48)

While the great majority of the National Convention's 45 delegates strongly favoured the return of Responsible Government, months of bitter debate were dominated by Confederation's leading advocate, Joey Smallwood. His early motion to send a delegation to Ottawa to discuss Confederation was defeated but later revived, initiating lengthy preliminary negotiations with the Canadian government. Smallwood's unrelenting campaign gained invaluable momentum when the Commission of Government decided to permit broadcasting of convention sessions on VONF, the publically owned radio service. Smallwood took full advantage, directing his formidable oratorical talents toward a steadily rising radio audience in support of the Confederation cause.

Convention delegates proposed sending representatives, not only to Ottawa, but also to sound out British views in London and

to explore possible United States interest. The Commission of Government adamantly refused to allow the latter initiative. The mission to Britain was very brief and met only with cold indifference. The delegation to Ottawa was welcomed with open arms. Orchestrated by Smallwood in collusion with, among others, Jack Pickersgill, then Secretary to Prime Minister Mackenzie King, sessions dragged on from June to September.

Results of the Ottawa talks were presented to the convention in a white paper covering a general agreement along with detailed financial proposals. A lengthy and acrimonious debate on these proposals ended in January 1948. National Convention delegates, in a decisive 29 to 16 vote, defeated a Smallwood motion calling for inclusion of Confederation on the referendum ballot.



Members of National Convention 1948

Confederate forces, actively supported and facilitated by Canadian government representatives and Commission of Government leaders, mounted a massive propaganda campaign demanding that Confederation be added to the ballot paper. Claiming 50,000 signatures collected within one month, the appeal achieved its aim when the British government, overriding the

National Convention recommendation, decided to add Confederation to the ballot.

I vividly remember the moment I first heard this news in the men's common room at Memorial University College. An excited Education student burst from a telephone booth, yelling, "They put CON-federation on the ballot paper!" Mixed cheers and jeers greeting the announcement reflected the depth and diversity of feeling aroused by this decision.



Colonial Building, St. John's, seat of Newfoundland House of Assembly (1850-1933, 1949-59) and locale of National Convention 1946-48. Built in 1850 of neoclassical design fronted by Irish limestone with six ionic columns and pediment sculpted with royal coat of arms

Once that action was taken, aggressive campaigning began with passionate and often bitter denunciation of each other sides' leaders and arguments. The Responsible Government campaign struggled to win voter support but suffered greatly from divided leadership. Populist politician Peter Cashin, who had championed the cause throughout the Commission of Government era, was by far the most articulate campaigner, but was at odds with other

leaders. Further fragmentation occurred when businessman Ches Crosbie launched a campaign to promote economic union with the United States. Spearheaded by future media stars Geoff Stirling and Don Jamieson, this initiative posed a serious threat to the Confederation campaign until forestalled by lack of U.S. interest.

Smallwood's highly skilled Confederation campaign, well financed especially from Canadian sources, harped constantly on family allowance and old age pension benefits. Countering the appeal of union with the United States, Confederates stressed patriotic ties to Britain and the Crown with such slogans as "Confederation-British Union." Such efforts aroused sufficient support to win second place in the initial June 1948 referendum. The final tally was: Responsible Government: 69,400; Confederation 64,006; Commission of Government: 22,311.

The second referendum seven weeks later, limiting the contest between Responsible Government and Confederation, turned a festering conflict into something close to a civil war. Journalist Richard Gwyn, in his best-selling book *Smallwood, The Unlikely Revolutionary*, summed it up this way: "Repression and jealousy flared into an ugly and consuming religious war, Catholic was pitted against Protestant, and Irish puritanism against Orange fanaticism." Outspoken Roman Catholic Church opposition to Confederation was denounced in overtures to the Orange Order, further intensifying a sectarian voting trend evident in the first referendum.

As Gwyn noted: "In a real sense, the Irish were the true Newfoundlanders. To them the rocky island was home, a land of freedom compared to the country from which they had fled, and it was they who had agitated for and won Representative Government in 1832 and full Responsible Government in 1855. Confederation meant surrendering the nation they had made to the larger Canadian whole. That Britain advocated Confederation simply added fuel to the Celtic flame."

Fully 85% of eligible voters cast their ballots, St. John's and its environs remaining strongly for Responsible Government but outport voters massively supported the other side. The final result: Confederation 78,323; Responsible Government 71,344. In Ottawa, Prime Minister Mackenzie King, despite his stated

willingness to accept Newfoundland into union, provided it did so “Clearly and beyond all possibility of misunderstanding,” announced acceptance of “A result attained without any trace of influence or pressure from Canada.”

Final terms of confederation were negotiated in Ottawa between a delegation effectively led by Smallwood and a Federal Government team headed by Cabinet Minister (later Prime Minister) Louis St. Laurent. The financial provisions of these terms, deemed highly inadequate by critics later, were rejected by one Newfoundland delegate, Ches Crosbie, who refused to sign them.

Epilogue

Perhaps it took some swallowing of pride on my part to do so, but I not only became a Canadian but went so far as to become a Government of Canada public servant. Grudgingly accepting the *fait accompli* of Confederation, I parlayed my first career as a broadcast journalist in Newfoundland into an information services/communications career in, of all places, Ottawa.

But I still wonder how different life might have been if my native land had been allowed to regain its rightful independence as a self-governing dominion some 70 years ago? If Responsible Government had been returned, would not the natural resources within and surrounding Newfoundland and Labrador have sustained many years of prosperity without hindrance from distant powers beyond its control? Becoming part of Canada would undoubtedly have persisted as an option for a Newfoundland and Labrador government to pursue. Doing so from the vantage point of an equal political entity would have ensured attainment of much more favourable terms of union than those cobbled together in the late 1940s.

There is no doubt that Confederation did bring about immediate betterment in living standards through social security benefits, and longer term opportunities for advancement in transportation and communications and other fields. Yet only time will tell if future economic growth will measure up to the lofty promises of those who, in the words of a prophet of that era, “Dragged Newfoundland kicking and screaming” into the Canadian promised land.

A Journey Back in Time Alberte Villeneuve



On October 1st, 2016 my sister and I travelled back in time to the 19th and 20th centuries during the official launch of the book *Glimpses of Cumberland Township: XIXth and XXth Centuries/ Regards sur le canton de Cumberland*. The launch was held at the Cumberland Museum where many of the township's heritage buildings can be revisited. This beautiful book gives readers an overview of the different aspects of life in the villages of Cumberland, Sarsfield, Navan, Vars, Orléans, Carlsbad Springs and other smaller hamlets.

The book stirred up all kinds of fond memories. I am very proud to say a photo of my grandfather and my dad, Adéas and Armand Faubert, is included in the book. Our farm was situated in Beckett's Creek, an area with a rich mix of clay soil. The Montreal to Ottawa railroad went through where Highway 174 is now situated and local people travelled Old Montreal Road on horseback, carriage, wagon... or sleigh in the wintertime. The Fortier family had established a cheese factory in the neighbourhood. Farmers would load up their milk cans and deliver them to the factory. When Fernand Boucher bought the factory, he added a general store. Yvon Huppé, Fern's stepson, remembers pouring the contents of the milk cans into the big vats and helping with the process of making cheese. Later, a meat shop, handled by Cyril Campbel, was added when the cheese-making was discontinued. My grandfather sold eggs to the store and every Friday he would go to town in his Ford Essex to sell eggs to clients in Wrightville, Ottawa, Eastview (Vanier) and the Rockliffe Forces Base. My father took over when my grandfather passed away.

Our farm was a dairy and poultry operation. Taking the cows to pasture and bringing them back for milking was the job of us children. Thank God, Ricki the farm dog was excellent at rounding up the cows. Jobs were shared and rotated. We fed the chickens and collected the eggs, and then we checked and wiped them before Dad candled and weighed them. There was the

milking, feeding cows and calves, cleaning pails, milk cans and the milking machine. There was field work, from sowing to harvesting to ploughing. I was good with the machinery and worked with my Dad and brother. I also enjoyed gardening, and in the summer we would sell strawberries by the roadside.



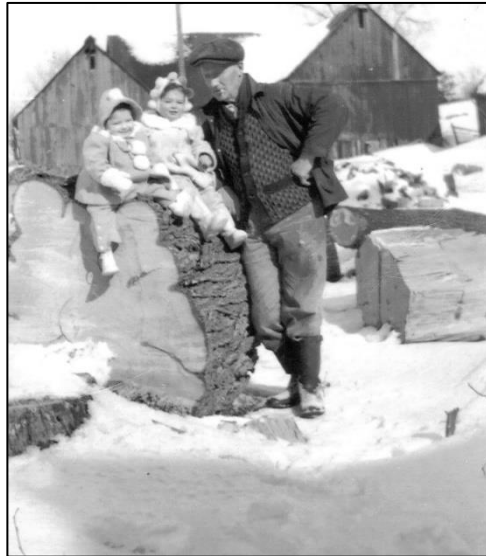
My grandfather Adéas Faubert and my dad Armand during harvest time

As the story goes, the farm was once a stop-over for travellers who needed to rest, water and feed their horses. They could also stay overnight if need be. This story came to life one day after my father decided to level the ground near the garage in order to park his tractor. Lo and behold, I saw something unusual on the ground and picked it up. It was an 1848 American coin, a treasure that led me to speculate on the traveller who had probably stayed overnight and slept in the bedroom I shared with my sister, the logical guest bedroom! I could now weave a story in my mind. Years later, my father opened the Ottawa River Shore Campground on the northern stretch of land that hugged the Ottawa River shore. Travellers could once again stay over.

Our school, St-Jean Baptiste, was a one-room country school where one teacher would have to teach all eight grades. As a 1st-grader, I was lucky to have Mrs Bertrand for a teacher; she made

me love school and reading. My sister Diane and my brother André were not as fortunate. The next teacher was a tyrant who used the strap profusely and banged your head on the blackboard if you made a mistake. In those days where corporal punishment was allowed, parents did not complain and children often kept their school misery secret, in fear of being punished once more at home.

At first the school only had a box stove to heat the room. Older boys would bring in the wood and feed the fire throughout the day. We only had stinky dry toilets and the drinking water had to be pumped from an outdoor pump. Again, older boys would fill the fountain placed at the back of the classroom. Water is all we had to drink during the day. Later on an oil furnace was installed and water was brought in, so we had tap water and two toilets, one for boys and one for girls. Most of the students ate lunch at school. Lunches were plain: a sandwich, a piece of cheese and a cookie or piece of cake, with an apple in the fall. Mothers did not follow the Canadian Food Guide in those days. They used what was available and no one complained.



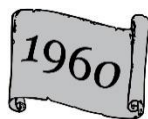
My grandfather, me next to him, and my sister Diane

We didn't have time for art classes, but we would always do something special for Christmas, Easter and Mother's Day. We didn't have gym classes either, but during recess and lunch hour we would play soccer or German ball, hide-and-seek or tag, hopscotch or skipping rope. And we got more exercise walking back and forth from home to school, rain or shine!

When I tell my grandchildren about those days, they are surprised at how little we had, but we didn't complain. Some will even say those were the good old days!

*Qingming: A Piece of
the 'Real Canada'*

Margaret Southall



Long before I officially became a citizen of Canada, I was accepted as one in a small Northern Ontario community by my presence in a cemetery for an ancient rite to honour the dead. Sitting on an ancient tombstone sipping rye—Canadian, of course—among the graves of the town’s pioneers, the wind stirring the surrounding fir trees, I recalled how I came to be there: my need for a job, a wish to see ‘the real Canada’ and a fondness for British chips.

By then, the culture shock of living in Northern Ontario was the norm for me. How could it be otherwise for a twenty-nine year old woman from a town an hour and half from the Swinging London of the sixties, living in a one-industry paper-making town in the bush four hundred miles from Toronto? But bewildering though it was at times, it was also fascinating and often a lot of fun.

It began with my flight north to take up the job of editor–reporter on a weekly paper, a job that promised to be a lot steadier than the intermittent temporary ones I’d had since immigrating to Canada during Expo year. Newspaper jobs in Southern Ontario, I discovered to my cost, weren’t easy to come by. I would have to go where the jobs were, and for me that turned out to be Indian Falls.

From a window of a Vickers Viscount turboprop, I saw a landscape so different from the neat gentle patchwork of greens, yellows and browns of the British countryside I was used to. There was nothing but trees; more trees than I had ever seen in one place in my life. North, south, east and west they grew, an unending wilderness interspersed with a few lakes and rivers. And running around down there among all that foliage were wild animals, the kind I much prefer to see in the comparative safety of zoos; bears for instance.

“What the hell have I got myself into?” I wondered as I surveyed this unfamiliar terrain. It was a question I was to ask myself often in the days and weeks that followed.

My next surprise was when I stepped off the plane at the airport some distance from my ultimate destination: I saw my first real Indian. That’s what I called him then, although now I know better. I actually experienced an inner jolt akin to a mild electric shock. True, he wore his hair in a long braid with a headband, but no fringed buckskins, no beaded moccasins. Instead, he had on a belted raincoat and shoes, and carried a briefcase! My reaction to him really surprised me. I could tell fact from fiction: I knew the ‘Hollywood Indian’ of the Western movies of my childhood was ‘just Hollywood.’ But much to my inner embarrassment those images of Indians attacking wagon trains, with John Wayne leading the cavalry to the rescue obviously had had an effect.

Already I felt how Alice must have felt in Wonderland, but then that place with all its strangeness was just a dream. Not so a one-industry northern Ontario mill town and its ways: they were real life.

There was the town’s name, for instance. Indian Falls was on the banks of a river, one of the Arctic Watershed systems of rivers flowing into the Arctic Ocean. The falls had been there from time immemorial, their name derived from an Indian legend in which they feature, but they disappeared when the paper company built the dam for mill. When the town amalgamated, it took the name of the original company townsite: Indian Falls. There being no falls by then, the name was a misnomer. Many a sightseeing tourist lured into town in hopes of seeing a mini Niagara left disappointed.

The town received one television channel, possessed no movie theatre, and the Toronto daily papers were always a day late. I became accustomed to hunters calling at the office to have their picture taken for publication with the bloodied head of the first moose of the season they bagged. There was the trapper who tried to sell me at an exorbitant price a cross-fox pelt worth only a few bucks. There were train rides through the bush that stopped every few miles to pick up waiting hunters beside the track like they would at a bus stop; skies as blue as that of the Mediterranean although the thermometer registered 40 below. Bears would come

into town to scavenge the town's garbage pails if there weren't enough berries to fatten them up prior to hibernation. Fortunately, this didn't happen during my first year there, or I would have left in a hurry: there are exceptions to my love of animals. That year the local blueberries were profuse in their purple plumpness throughout the area, a state of affairs I took to be a good omen for my stay in the north.

The town owes its existence to the establishment of the mill—the first of several in Canada—by an American businessman. Men poured in to work in the mill, or as lumberjacks cutting down trees in the bush. Many came from Quebec, their descendants comprising over half the population by the time I arrived. The others were mainly immigrants to Canada, their descendants' family names indicating their original European countries of origin and causing me some spelling headaches when I wrote about them.

The mainstay of the town's economy, the mill was the hub of a symbiotic financial web embracing not only its workers, but indirectly the livelihoods of those employed at the town's other institutions: schools, churches, hospitals, town hall, post offices, police and even the newspaper. Every two weeks, the mill's payroll provided a heavy infusion of cash into the economy, the local paper experiencing a boost in advertising lineage when the merchants took advantage of this economic surge to boost their sales.

A railroad ran through the town from the mill yard to carry long trains of seemingly endless boxcars belonging to Canadian U.S railroad companies. Loaded with giant rolls of paper—think toilet rolls on steroids—the trains delivered paper to newspapers across North America. When one of these leviathans chugged in or out of the mill, the patience of Job was required of motorists and pedestrians stuck at the railway crossing while it passed through.

On the 'right side of the tracks' stood what was the former company town. Rows of well-maintained houses, site offices, the company hotel and the mill manager's house. The company store had burned down, leaving only the local Hudson's Bay store in this area. The 'wrong side of the tracks' was where, in the mill's early days, those workers and merchants who couldn't get a

foothold in the company town built tar paper shacks and businesses.

Despite the divisive presence of the rail line, the two distinct areas had just amalgamated into one municipality when I arrived. The attitudes of residents on both sides of the track toward each other had still to catch up with this change; 60 years of ingrained prejudices on both sides were still evident. There was, however, one thing that united as it does most Canadians: ice hockey. The arena and curling rink, built by the townspeople themselves, and standing as it did halfway between the former company town and the township, was an unintentional symbol of unity.

If I was going through culture shock, then the residents for their part seemed to have trouble knowing what to make of me. In Britain, I was a reporter in a town of 75,000: I just filed my news copy then disappeared into the woodwork. In Indian Falls I was the only editor in a town of 6,000 people: I stood out like the proverbial sore thumb.

Initially, I was the subject of the town's very efficient, and rarely accurate, grapevine. My marital state being the main topic. "Almost thirty, and she doesn't have a husband? How come? Divorced? Maybe she ran off and left him." I had done none of those things, but protestations to the contrary were no use: they didn't stop the talk.

Like all societies, the town had its own social order. At the top was the company's mill manager; most considered more important than the mayor, but, as he told me he was only 'low man' on the company totem pole. Throughout the mill's 60 years, the mill manager had been 'god,' and only slowly was this idea disappearing. Occasionally, someone who disapproved of something I had written would threaten me with whom to him—it was usually a man—was the ultimate authority figure: the mill manager. The teachers were one group; some permanent residents, the others rookies who arrived in the fall for their first teaching job and left the following May. The professionals formed another group: doctors, lawyers, engineers and dentists. There were the white collar and blue-collar workers at the mill, and there were the merchants.

So where did a woman journalist fit in? Well, although it didn't really matter to me, I soon found out.

One day, a few months after I had been in town, I was sitting at a table in my favourite of the town's two Chinese restaurants. The owner's wife Pearl marched over, sat down opposite me, and rested her elbows on the table and her chin in her hands. The eatery had earned my patronage because Tom, the owner and Pearl's husband, made the best chips I have ever tasted either before or since. Real chunky British chips they were, soft on the inside and crisp and golden on the outside, not like those skinny North American French fries.

Where had the owner of Chinese restaurant in the Canadian bush learned to make these morsels?

"Hong Kong," said Tom, when I asked him, adding with some pride. "British Crown Colony of Hong Kong!"

Since Britain handed back Hong Kong to China, I have often wondered about the quality of chips there now. I hope the lowering of the Union Jack on the island didn't portend a lowering of standards, or even worse total banishment, for this staple of British take-out food.

Chinese, whatever the dialect, is an inflected language, and when Pearl spoke English her cadence was still Chinese, making her sound abrupt. High and low repeatedly went her voice when she announced, "We go picnic. My grandfather. In cemetery," she said, naming a date a few days ahead. "You come?"

Implicit in this question was expectation of an immediate reply in the affirmative. Having a mouthful of chips, I could only smile and nod acceptance.

A 'picnic'?

In the cemetery?

Hmmm. That was a new one on me.

Pearl's language skills being what they were, I thought she must have used either a Chinese word, or mispronounced an English one. But before I could finish my mouthful of chips and ask her to repeat what she said, she had left my table.

Reaction to the announcement of my invitation at the office surprised me. It was met with a collective widening of eyes and opening of mouths. Yes, I was told, each year Pearl and her family did 'picnic her grandfather in the cemetery'. The guest list for this occasion, they assured me, was both selective and exclusive.

“They don’t ask just anybody,” an astonished advertising manager told me. “You. Are. In!”

The grapevine at once went into high gear. In no time at all everyone knew of my date in the cemetery. Obviously impressed, complete strangers on the street and at supermarket checkouts remarked to me about it with knowing nods.

“Hear you’re gonna picnic Pearl’s grandfather.”

“Mm-m-m. Invited to Pearl’s ‘picnic’ are you?”

The guest roster at the event comprised the local A-list, among them the mayor, the president of the chamber of commerce, town councillors, local lawyers, the newspaper’s publisher and me. Sipping our drinks and nibbling snacks we watched as Pearl, Tom and their children swept and weeded around the tomb’s stonework. They then gathered before it to say prayers and leave offerings of food cooked by Tom for the old man’s spirit to enjoy. Paper ‘spirit money’, specially made for this purpose, was burnt as an offering, and a few firecrackers set off, the latter presumably to ward off bad spirits. Afterwards everyone trooped back to the restaurant, which was closed for the day, to enjoy at leisure a feast of Tom’s home cooked Chinese food, and drink.

None of the guests, and for that matter nobody else in town, could tell me the reason for this annual event. Even Pearl wasn’t too clear about it. All she could tell me was that each year a relative in Vancouver consulted an astrologer in that city’s Chinatown on the matter and forwarded his prognostications to Pearl. So not until many years later, while trolling the web, did I discover the reason for the ‘picnic’. It was derived from the ancient ancestor worship of China, a rite called Qingming, at which the relatives of the deceased did what Pearl and her family did: sweep the tomb, leave offerings of food and money and set off firecrackers to honour the spirit of the departed. Reading the explanation, I think I understood why Pearl was so selective in her choice of guests. We were, because of local standing, as much a tribute to him as those other offerings.

Officially becoming a Canadian citizen was for me just a matter of swearing an oath to Queen Elizabeth—a queen whose subject I had been for most of my life—in a government office. But I like to think that much earlier I was accepted as one by a

Canadian community in a ceremony accompanied by a great feast and even a few fireworks.

Note: The names of people and places have been changed in this memoir.

Cooking with Nagymama

Louise Szabo



“I barely know how to cook,” I told Charlie.

Thank goodness, back in 1963, this did not deter him from marrying me. He thought my lack of culinary skills a bonus as he planned to teach me how to cook. How difficult could it be? He was no expert but he’d been on his own in Canada for a few years and knew the recipe for chicken paprikash.

Believe me, I tried, but my cooking attempts fell way short of replicating the taste of his mother’s Hungarian dishes. I was more inclined to cook the Canadian way. We often barbecued steaks and hamburgers or I’d call my mother for her roast beef recipe and instructions on how to bake a chicken or a ham. When I felt brave I chose a recipe out of the cooking bible of the day, *The New and Complete Encyclopedia of Cooking* by Madame Benoit.

We’d been married five years—so it would be 1968—when Charlie, desperate for his mother’s Hungarian cooking, convinced her to come to Canada for a three-month visit. I had never met my mother-in-law and I was apprehensive, understandably so. Married to her only child, would she find me good enough for her son? Would she like me? Would we get along? Being a stay-at-home mother to our 3-year-old daughter Sandy when Charlie went off to work, how would I manage? She spoke no English and I spoke no Hungarian. How on earth would we communicate?

She arrived at the beginning of June on a Friday afternoon. A big breasted, wide hipped woman, with dyed dark brown hair and a touch of lipstick, Nagymama (grandma), looked matronly and a bit intimidating. I chastised myself for not learning some Hungarian before her arrival.

As gifts she’d brought a Hungarian doll for Sandy, a Kalocsa-style embroidered tablecloth for me and, for Charlie, a Csabai salami and a kilogram of homemade paprika. I looked at this huge bag of orange powder and thought it a strange gift. How many deviled eggs would I have to make to use up all that paprika?

Charlie had not seen his mother in over 10 years and, since they had a lot of catching up to do, I gave them their space by staying in the kitchen to prepare meals that I hoped she'd like. When not gabbing she'd head to the kitchen offering to help, but I'd wave her away. Wanting to score brownie points I didn't even let her help with the dishes.

Since she'd just arrived from a country still under the communist regime, Canada, with its way of life, enthralled her beyond belief. She couldn't get over the size of everything, especially our huge department stores, giant-sized fast moving cars, unfenced front lawns and our refrigerator.

Nothing thrilled her more than grocery shopping. This took hours as we walked up each aisle and she stopped and inspected every display of food. Her face glowed at the abundance of fresh fruits and vegetables that surrounded her. I watched her tap cantaloupes, squeeze lemons and smell tomatoes while chattering constantly with Charlie. I assumed that by the way she filled the cart he'd told her to buy whatever she wanted.

Eager to show her a Canadian way of cooking, we introduced her to the wonders of barbecuing. Since Hungarian beef was only palatable if it stewed for hours, she was leery of this quick and easy way of cooking steaks. Charlie convinced her to at least taste her steak and after a few bites she pushed her plate away and ate her salad. Barbecues were definitely not to her liking. To appease her, we reluctantly moved the barbecue into the garage. I seethed in silence.

When Charlie returned to work I was anxious, not knowing what to do with her. To keep myself busy I spent the morning cleaning the already clean house while Nagymama seemed content to play with her one and only grandchild, Sandy. Even though they had no clue as to what they were saying to each other, communication between them seemed fairly easy and I was envious. I could hardly wait for the end of the workday.

That evening, after I'd done the dishes, I entered the living room to find Nagymama and Charlie deep in conversation. I suspected something was up by the way Charlie kept glancing my way and licking his lips. Heck, he was almost drooling.

“She’s taking over the kitchen,” Charlie said with a grin. “She wants to teach you how to cook. She brought her cookbook. You’ll need a notebook.”

She looked at me with a sparkle in her eyes and said, “Igen? (yes).” How could I object? I knew very well that she was dying to play with all my fascinating kitchen gadgets. Besides, she was my guest, my mother-in-law, and I had to live with her for three whole months.

From then on, each day, as soon as the morning chores were done, we headed for the kitchen. I’d stand by her side, pad and pencil in hand, watch her every move and write down the recipe in progress.

Since the ingredients were there for the taking it was nothing to make cakes using a dozen eggs and a pound of butter. At least those ingredients were easy to write down in my notebook. My problem was how to estimate how much of the other ingredients she used. She would scoop flour by the handful. She’d add a pinch of salt or shake it out of the box directly into the pot. If I was lucky, she’d use a spoon for the sugar. Spices were sprinkled out of their containers. Paprika was used liberally in practically all meat dishes. Often, in went another handful of flour, or another chunk of butter, more spices. I took out the measuring cup and pointed at it in a plea for her to use it. Knowing instinctively the amount she needed she said, “Nem,” and kept on cooking. How could I explain to her my dilemma and ask her to measure ingredients?

Communication was a challenge to say the least. We interpreted our words with many hand gestures and weird body language. Then we’d realize how silly we looked and burst out laughing.

One evening while shopping with her, she fell in love with a pair of slippers that were too small for her. No matter how I tried to explain, what arm gestures I made, saying, “Nem, nem,” over and over again, I could not explain to her that she could buy the same slippers at another shopping mall. She bought them and when we got home Charlie explained that other sizes were readily available. I returned them for the proper fit the following day.

On a lazy summer day, when the only thing I wanted to do was to sit on the patio with a cold drink, she decided the conditions were perfect for making bread. Using yeast with milk and

sugar, a ton of flour and even more elbow grease it took us all of a very warm humid morning to knead the dough.

When it was my turn, my hands tortured the dough relentlessly as I imagined myself camping in our tent-trailer and watching Sandy play in the water. War almost broke out when we offered Nagymama a Canadian camping experience. How dare we suggest that she live like a gypsy? She disliked them with a passion. Insulted, she marched to her bedroom and slammed the door shut. She sulked in there until Charlie went to apologize. I sulked in silence. Did I have a choice? Still fuming about it, I took it out on the dough.

Finally, with the dough raised to her satisfaction, she put it in the oven, and the house soon filled with even more heat. I headed outside to cool down. The wonderful aroma of baking bread drifted out of the window and made my mouth water. I must admit that those warm slices with gobs of butter melted in were certainly worth the frustration and the effort.

As days went by we devised our own way of communicating. We each spoke in our own respective language yet we knew exactly what the other was saying. Almost. She didn't understand any of my swear words nor did I understand hers. I learned the Hungarian words for the ingredients she most often used; salt, lard, flour, eggs. Life in the kitchen became easier.

Since most mornings were spent cooking, lunch was usually a simple affair of a sandwich or hot dogs. One day, wanting something a bit different, I took out a box of Kraft macaroni and cheese. Big mistake. She thought I wanted her to make macaroni and cheese. I kept saying, "Nem, nem." She kept saying, "Igen, igen." As usual, she won.

Out came the flour. Out came the eggs. Out came the two-foot long rolling pin that she'd insisted Charlie get for her. In a large bowl she mixed it all with water, adding more flour, more eggs, salt, pepper. She dumped the dough in the middle of the kitchen table and rolled it out so thin, that like a tablecloth, it hung over the edge. Knife in hand she cut it into strips and left it to dry. She fried some bacon, boiled the noodles a couple of minutes, drained, added the bacon bits, a bit of bacon dripping, cottage cheese and voila. It was the best melt in your mouth Hungarian macaroni and cheese I ever ate.

Over the summer I fell in love with the smell of yeast. She fell in love with my hand mixer, the taste of cold milk, the thickness of our sour cream and having the use of a refrigerator. She occasionally drank a small glass of wine or warm beer and, instead of water, drank club soda. I much preferred a large glass of wine or cold beer. Often, two maybe even three would have suited my mood.

I learned the consistency of the batter to make palacsinta (crepes) and spaetzle. She taught me how to make the famous Hungarian Dobos Torta and a Gypsy John cake and walnut filled kiflis. I discovered that all paprika dishes are basically spiced the same way yet they all taste different, and goulash is really a thick spicy soup of beef cubes, onions, potatoes, and pea-size dumplings. To my surprise that big bag of paprika shrank before my eyes. I worried that once she left the bag would be empty.

My mom would call and ask, "What's on the menu today?" Saturday my parents came over for a Hungarian meal and a blessedly English conversation. As they walked in the door they'd take a deep sniff, inhaling the wonderful aroma escaping from the kitchen. Even they converted to the taste of the spicy Hungarian dishes and Dad couldn't get enough of the sweet, fancy, mouth-watering desserts.

It is no wonder that by the end of the summer I'd gained a few pounds. I'd also filled my notebook with interesting recipes, learned how to cook Hungarian dishes and, best of all, I'd gained a new friend. I only hoped that once she returned to Hungary, I'd be brave enough to recreate her recipes. Was her handful the same size as mine?

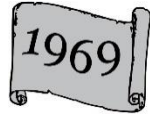
In late August we bade her a sad goodbye. We watched the plane take off and then rushed home. We opened a good bottle of red wine, dusted off the barbecue and put on a couple of big juicy T-bone steaks.

After 53 years of marriage, according to Charlie, I had surpassed his mother's cooking skills a long time ago. Still, every now and then, I take out that very stained and dog-eared notebook, press it to my heart and give thanks to Nagymama for teaching me the true love and fun of cooking.



Sandy and Nagymama enjoy each other's company

Island
Barbara Florio Graham



Sixteen is vain, volatile, vulnerable. As a former high school teacher, I thought I knew what to expect when a 16-year-old girl from a remote native reserve arrived to spend a month in my home. The letter that began all this was read at a meeting of the United Church Women. The new minister at Moose Lake contacted every name he could find in the files of the abandoned office. He described in stark language the living conditions: no running water, no sewage disposal, no Hydro, 60-gallon oil tanks for heating and a cooking, fueled by wood which had to be gathered daily from as far away as three miles into the hardwood underbrush that skirted the rocky shore.

The school had few books, the church no hymnals and the pews were rotting. When students finished Grade 8, they were sent south to live with strangers in the few communities that had agreed to accept them. Most dropped out by Christmas, overwhelmed by the abrupt adjustment to urban life and homesick for their families. The women around the table in the basement of the United Church clucked appropriately; one suggested they might pack up the old hymnals and faded choir robes taking up cupboard space in the basement and send them north. Then they moved on to discussing the annual bazaar and what colour to choose for the new carpet in the sanctuary.

I asked to borrow the letter, took it home, and despite my husband's skepticism, wrote back. I explained that I'd be happy to have a young girl ready to enter grade nine to visit, as a guest, so I could help her adjust to an urban environment and provide her with some back-to-school clothes and supplies. After several letters and a phone call, the minister was able to obtain funding for air and train fare. We agreed to fund all the rest, and a date was set for Ruth's arrival. Her plane was delayed by weather, and she spent the night at a motel in Red Lake. Watching television for the very first time, she watched the men walking on the moon. It was July 21st, 1969.

Ruth was like no 16-year-old girl I'd ever encountered. Quiet, but with a sly sense of humor, she was quick to learn, eager to help, although I wanted her to feel she was a guest, and had a strength, both physical and emotional, beyond her years. Thirty years later that shy teenager was a grandmother posing in cap and gown to accept her B.A. degree from Lakehead University.

And I had developed a close relationship with her entire extended family, but especially with her brother Mike. When I visited Moose Lake in 1975, Mike was 16. He should have been going out to high school that fall, but his father, Eli, had just had open-heart surgery and Mike had become the man of the family. For two years he handled all his father's chores, cutting wood, hauling water, repairing the house, accompanying his uncles to hunt or fish, navigating the Moose River in a canoe to bring supplies home from the store two miles away. Finally, Eli was well enough to manage without Mike's help, and Mike and his brother James, who was two years younger, came to live with me while they attended high school. By then students were allowed to choose where they wanted to go.

Several of them have returned to visit. One June, James phoned to say he would be here overnight to attend his wife's graduation from the special native teaching course at the University of Ottawa. I picked him up at the airport and we had a joyful reunion, sitting up past midnight before he went to bed in my guestroom.

Then Ruth and her sister Elaine visited. I'd seen Ruth several times in the intervening years. One summer, when I was in Winnipeg at a convention, she flew out to spend two days with me, and another time she tagged along with a group from the reserve, coming to Ottawa to attend a craft exhibition.

But I'd only met Elaine once. She was outgoing and lively, and it had been her idea to visit me. They were in Thunder Bay with their husbands, and when the guys were ready to leave for their hockey tournament, the girls decided they could afford bus fare to Ottawa. They stayed four days. They both brought photos of their children. Ruth had two grandchildren by then, and Elaine's son had just gotten married. They also brought news of the rest of the family, and pictures of how the reserve had changed since I'd visited in 1975.

There was also tragic news: Mike, who had lived with me for the longest period, had lost his oldest son Rupert. Elaine told the story. There were some couples, people not related to them and from the other side of the community, who took their boats out at night, up the river to where a floatplane would land and deliver illegal booze. They'd stay overnight, drinking, and return the next day. For some reason, Rupert had gone with them this time. After several hours of heavy drinking, everyone fell asleep, and when they awoke, Rupert was gone. The boats returned, they told the Band Constable Rupert was missing, and a search party formed.

Rupert had just turned 16.

Mike, Eli, James, the uncles, brothers-in-law and cousins left immediately, and others followed, including some volunteers from neighbouring reserves. They searched day and night for five days, but found nothing. Finally, one of the men who'd been at the drinking party remembered that he'd awakened during the night and thought he saw Rupert roll off the bank and into the river. He hadn't mentioned it earlier because he thought it may have been a dream. Everyone was devastated, but Mike, of course, took it hardest. Ruth said he couldn't talk on the phone without crying, so I wrote to him. Eventually, he called me, and I was able to tell him how sorry I was. He denied that Rupert had been drinking, claiming he went along on the trip not knowing they were going to get booze. Mike characterized Rupert's drowning as an accident. "He just fell asleep and rolled into the river."

At one point during the girls' visit to my house, Elaine spotted a pencil drawing in my front hall.

"Did Mike do this?"

"Yes. You can see his name and the date. He drew it when he was living here."

"Do you know where this is?" The alarm in her voice brought Ruth to her side to look.

"Oh my God! That's the island where Rupert drowned! It's the only island in the river."

We all shuddered. Perhaps, I thought, it was a popular place to go camping and fishing, and held no other significance.

After Mike joined the Band Council, he came to Ottawa a couple of times, but he was always too busy attending meetings and only had time for a quick lunch or dinner. I was so proud of

his accomplishments, his growing family and how he had overcome the shyness that made his adjustment to high school so difficult. The next time he was here, he had time to spend with me. I arranged to pick him up at his hotel, and over dinner at a local restaurant, he told me about his father. Eli had died after being bedridden for almost a year.

“It was a blessing, really,” Mike said. “My mother was tired, caring for him, and she couldn’t go anywhere unless one of us stayed at the house to look after him.”

“Actually,” I said, “your father lived an unusually long life for someone of his generation, especially since he had so many health problems. I remember when I was there in 1975, he had just had open-heart surgery.”

“This time they took him to Sioux Lookout. He knew he was dying. He called each of us into the room, one at a time, and told us to take care of Mum and each other. He gave me his medicine bag.”

Mike lifted the tiny moosehide pouch out of his shirt. I’d seen the leather thong around his neck, but hadn’t realized it was attached to anything so significant.

“Well, you’re the oldest son,” I replied.

“It doesn’t work that way. They give it to whoever they think has the gift.”

He changed the subject then, putting the bag back inside his shirt and pulling out some photos from his pocket.

“We have a mini-sawmill now. My brothers and I cut two-by-sixes and we built decks on our houses where like to barbecue, just like on TV.” The familiar grin again.

One of the photos showed Mike, James, and two younger brothers getting out of a metal skiff. “We have big outboard motors now, and we built that dock on the river just below my house.”

When the waiter brought the cheque, Mike picked it up and offered his VISA. “Remember how you taught me this?” he asked. “The first time I went to a restaurant in Thunder Bay, I remembered how you showed me.”

As I drove him back to my house, he reminded me of other things. How he had phoned me when his daughter was born.

“I watched!” he had said, triumphant, and I realized that this was something he could never share with his mother.

He got out of the car in my driveway and shook his head.

“The house looks so different, yet the same.”

He wanted to see everything, every room inside. I’d added a front porch and many new pieces of furniture. The room where he’d stayed was now a feminine guest room, and the dresser in which he’d kept his few clothes had been replaced by bookcases. He bounced on the bed, laughing. “Still nice and soft!”

I’d recalled that when I visited the reserve in 1975, the boys slept on blankets on the floor. I took photos of him inside the house and in the front. In the backyard, he stood a long time beside the rock garden. He’d remembered that, recalled that it had been built out of a mound of earth excavated for the first addition to the house, designed to cover the stump of a poplar tree we’d cut down. I had since encircled it with a wide gravel path. Inside, he took another tour through the house, looking at things more carefully.

“I remember dusting some of these little things,” he said, fingering objects on the shelf in the dining room window. “I told my kids about that; that it’s important to keep things neat and clean, to take pride in your home.”

Then he stopped in front of his drawing. He looked at it for a long time. I froze in place.

“I forgot that I did this,” he said, finally.

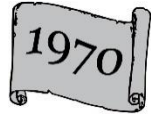
“Did you draw it from memory?”

“Partly.” His voice was very low. “And partly from vision.” He fingered the leather thong around his neck.

I picked up my photos from the store that had developed the film, as this was before digital cameras were common. Mike, in the front yard beside the porch, smiling. Mike, on the bed with the frilly bedspread, grinning widely. Mike beside the rock garden, an island in a river of gravel. Looking older, looking a lot like his father.

Note: The names of people and places have been changed in this memoir.

The Canada Parcel
Robert Barclay



Towards the end of November we would await the postman. My two brothers and I—one older, one younger—would come home from primary school when the wind was turning cold and Christmas was in the air, hoping beyond hope that this would be the day the Canada Parcel arrived. There wasn't a lot of luxury in the London pantry of the '50s. Rationing had only just been phased out in those post-War years, and many families still made ends meet by growing their own vegetables on the communal allotments that had been London parkland before the War. Rabbit was the staple meat in those days because there were lots of them. Our Canadian relatives—descendants of our Nan's brother—had started sending us a box of goodies at year's end during the worst of the War years, and the practice continued well into the '50s.

As far back as I can remember the Canada Parcel was a feature of Christmas; once it arrived, the festive season could be said to have begun. There it was, when we came home from school one day, sitting proud on the kitchen table... unopened. A huge cardboard box, bigger in my memory than it ever could really have been, battered around the edges from its long sea voyage, bound around in sticky tape and covered with labels and addresses, and dozens of stamps.

Our parents wouldn't dream of even breaking the tape that bound the box until all of us were present. Then, the great moment! Tins of Spam and corned beef, peanut butter and jelly swirled together in a glass jar, dates and figs, canned pineapple, fruit cake, creamed corn, maple syrup, tomato ketchup and once, magnificently, a whole cooked chicken in a tin. And pumpkin, a strange orange pulp for which no recipe existed. Weird, exotic and wondrous things for little boys and parents alike.

Throughout the 1960s, cousins and aunts and uncles from faraway and mystic Toronto on Lake Ontario would come to visit, and we boys would show them London. And, you know, I don't

think us denizens, having the greatest city in the world on our doorstep, would have seen much of it if we hadn't been the tour guides. I think we learned as much then as our Canadian relatives did... but we didn't let on. Once there were two female cousins, older than us, who rented a car to travel the countryside, having never driven on the left, and having never seen a stick-shift or a roundabout. They came back with harrowing tales. But as a driver, Uncle Don was the craziest of all. He badly wanted a British motorbike to take back to Toronto, so he bought a copy of *Exchange and Mart*—the automotive buy-and-sell magazine of the time—and set off by train to a village down the Thames estuary in Essex, coming back at the end of the day riding a 350cc AJS motorcycle with attached sidecar. He had never ridden on 'the wrong side of the road' in his life and possessed no vestige of a driver's licence. The next day, to compound his naughtiness (so gleefully enjoyed by us), he shinned over our back fence to the building site behind us, stole three sheets of plywood, and in what seemed like a jiffy, the bike was crated and ready to ship. This was probably the moment when no-nonsense Canadian know-how first impressed itself on me.

One year an aunt or an uncle gave us a View-Master. You put a cardboard disk with tiny square transparencies around its edge into a slot at the top, and looked through the binocular eyepieces to see Niagara Falls in 3D, all sheathed in ice. Click the lever at the side and there was Banff National Park framed with snowy peaks; click again to see Indians and wigwams, all stereoscopic. It was a little coloured window into a world that was unimaginably far away, adventure-filled and waiting to be experienced. Small wonder, with the Canada Parcel, the relatives and the colour pictures, that my older brother decided to go and see it all first-hand; to make the big jump that nowadays we take for granted. That jump into an unknown was about as real as a View-Master colour slide, and it was a bold and courageous thing to do in the 1960s. It wasn't long before his impressions came back to us. Airmail letters arrived regularly; their thin blue paper and red and blue striped edges signaling to the postman, and to friends and neighbours, their foreign and prestigious origin.

What a place this Canada must be! It always snowed at Christmas; there was skiing and skating, and fishing in Georgian Bay after the ice broke up. There were vast freight trains 100 cars long that crossed the enormous prairies and crested the Rocky Mountains. There were bears and moose in Algonquin Park. Expo 67 was a fabulous exhibition that attracted the whole world. Then there was this dynamic young Prime Minister, one Pierre Elliot Trudeau, who was turning the electorate on its head, and... the Toronto Maple Leafs had just won the Stanley Cup!

Britain was a disturbed place in the 1960s. Industry was in ruins, wracked by labour strife, mines and factories closing; politicians were contemptible figures of fun and crude satire; and young people were kicking against authority. Sex and drugs and rock and roll, and damn the future because there wasn't one, and even if there was, it was shit. And, of course, it always rained.

After an appalling school career I had done surprisingly well in technical college, and now I aspired to university. My brother had written to me of higher education possibilities in Canada, far more approachable, far more possible than anything I had seen in England. Born in south London, schooled by an elder generation that 'knew its place', there was precious little hope that a dream of university could be fulfilled. The 1,000-year-old class system was well entrenched; people from my borough just didn't do that. I recall one incident above all others that seems to me, now, to have been a turning point: as a research lab technician I was assisting one of the institute's PhD students with some task in front of a high, west-facing window. It was evening, and there was a glorious multicoloured sunset.

"That's something Turner would have painted," I remarked.

"Oh," the student replied, "I didn't think your sort knew about Turner."

I had to leave.

*Canada in One Hundred
and Fifty Words*

Maria Saba



A month after I landed in Winnipeg, a volunteer from the International Centre took me for a drive in rural Manitoba, where roads lined with yellow and green went on until they joined the sky. The unbounded horizon held my gaze, and I connected with Canada the way an infant first bonds with her mother. After waiting two years in Turkey as a stateless person—without documents, money or often a place to live—I found myself safe and secure in a country that I loved, and which would undoubtedly love me back. I made a pledge to work hard to make Canada as proud of me as I was of her. Thirty years later, I feel the same way about this gentle, generous and surprisingly modest country as I did on that day, and I do everything I can to ensure others who come to Canada experience the same.

Time Stood Still
Philip Schubert



*I*t was sheer stark terror. A scene unfolded in front of my eyes that I did not want to see. A succession of sounds seemed to reverberate through my mind although I heard nothing.

I had been canoeing down the Red Wine River in Labrador in 2001, solo. I liked the freedom of canoeing solo, miles from anyone. Everything would be okay, as long as I didn't make a mistake. I had gradually acquired exactly the gear I needed to travel solo in wild places like Labrador. I had the perfect tent and cooking gear. I had my satellite phone. I registered my trip plans with the local police. I checked in with my wife every second day via my satellite phone. I carefully thought out each move as I proceeded.

In lining my canoe up the swiftly rushing Red Wine River, I had walked along the riverbank and towed it with ropes tied front and back. I adjusted the angle of the canoe so the current pulled it away from the riverbank and the rocks. I made sure to stay on the insides of bends in the river. When approaching the outside of a bend, I launched my canoe and paddled to the opposite bank. I would angle the canoe in the current so I was swept as little downstream as possible.

I had it all figured out.

Coming back down the Red Wine River, it was possible to canoe portions of it and run the rapids. Anyone canoeing solo, miles from help, is very careful in running rapids. And I was very careful.

Then a confusing set of channels put me on the outside of a bend. The problem with outside bends is that the force of the water as it turns in the bend, erodes the riverbank. There is no place to walk along the edge. I was cornered. The wise thing to do would have been to line my canoe back up the river and try to figure out which channel would put me on the inside of a bend. It looked to me, however, that I could launch my canoe from where I was, turn fast enough to make it through the bend, and

then avoid the boulders I could see in the distance. There was a maelstrom of white water to my right, but a slow moving eddy ahead of me in the bend and a clear path past one side of the boulders.

I moved my canoe away from the edge, keeping the stern from being pulled around by the current hitting it from the rear, and hopped in. The bow, instead of going straight ahead as I planned, turned left into the bank and stuck there. Then the stern started swinging around and I began tipping over to my right. Time seemed to stand still. It was sheer stark terror.

The canoe rolled completely over and I was thrown into the maelstrom.

My head emerged from the water. In front of me things were happening fast. I was just behind the upside-down canoe and grabbed the end. Just ahead of the canoe was a boulder with water pouring around both sides. I attempted to steer the craft to one side, but it hit the boulder head on and turned end for end.

This threw me to one side, back into foaming white-water. I now found myself no longer in contact with the canoe but paddling along madly some feet behind it. I could not seem to catch up. Swimming desperately, I was aware that everything I needed for survival was in the canoe, in particular my satellite phone in its waterproof case.

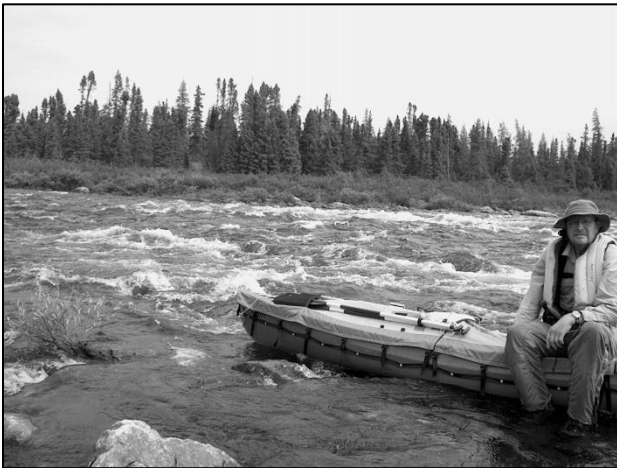
Then I noticed the rope floating beside me, tied to the back of the canoe. I grabbed it and in a few seconds had pulled myself forward to the back of the canoe. We had now entered a stretch of slower water and I started swimming for the nearest riverbank with the rope held in one hand. Before I could reach it, we entered another rapid. Immediately in front of the canoe was another boulder with water cascading around and over it. This time I was able to rotate the canoe enough so that the front end went to one side and we swept past the boulder.

Suddenly, my feeling of panic was gone. I was again master of my fate. I even chuckled to myself, thinking I was making pretty good progress and at this rate would soon be down the river. In fact, I was able to finally reach the riverbank in the next slow section and pull the craft onto the shore. I pulled my pack out of the sodden canoe and was relieved to see that my change of

clothes had stayed dry. The dry bag holding my camera had not leaked, nor had the waterproof container with my satellite phone.

Back in dry clothes, all seemed well again with the world. My only loss was my wristwatch, which had somehow come off and was now lying at the bottom of the Red Wine River. Nevertheless, for a while after that I had an unreasoning fear of rapids when canoeing. However, there is something to the adage of getting back on the horse that threw you.

As I got better at not dumping in rapids, I continued to go off on more and more extreme wilderness trips by canoe, solo. And as much as I tried not to, I inevitably dumped from time to time, sometimes in rapids that were much worse. I'm ashamed to admit that it took me two tries to get down the legendary George River, which runs north for some 600 kilometres from the height of land between Labrador and Quebec to Ungava Bay on the Arctic Ocean.



The author on the George River

It became legendary due to the race that took place down it in 1905 between Mina Hubbard and Dillon Wallace. Mina Hubbard won the race handily thanks to her superb canoeing team headed up by the equally legendary voyageur, George Elson. George declared the George River to be the most challenging one

he had ever been down. Dillon Wallace was not in the same league in terms of canoeing skills, but made it to Ungava Bay anyway, to George's surprise and Mina's disappointment.

Dillon has written one of the finest books ever published on the North, recounting the disastrous trip in 1903, which was supposed to go by the route taken later in 1905, but which had gone up the wrong river and had proved to be lethal after they were caught by the onset of winter. Mina Hubbard's husband, Leonidas, had died during the course of it and Dillon and George barely survived. Dillon's book *The Lure of the Labrador Wild* has been an all-time best seller. Mina never forgave Dillon for the portrayal of her husband as simply a mere mortal like the rest of them, thus precipitating the race to Ungava Bay in 1905.

Dillon in fact had no idea he would find himself in a race after the success of his book, but his publisher convinced him to attempt the trip once again in memory of his deceased best friend, Leonidas. He had attempted unsuccessfully to secure the participation of George Elson, never guessing that Mina had already convinced George to put a team together and take her. Learning about Dillon's plans, she was determined to deny him the satisfaction of being the first to complete the trip. It was tremendously daring for a woman in those times, even if she would maintain appearances by travelling in a long dress and, like the Hudson's Bay Company senior staff of that period on canoe trips, assume none of the paddling and camping duties. Rumours that George had fallen in love with the daring woman, and this was why he agreed to her request, remained just rumours. By all evidence, George and his team of outdoorsmen from the North conducted themselves at all times like true gentlemen. Dillon only learned that he was in a race against Mina, and the superb team of outdoorsmen that he had wanted, when he and his second-best team of university students and a Nova Scotia lumberjack reached the starting point at the Hudson's Bay Company Post at North West River in Labrador.

Dillon's crime was great enough in Mina's mind that he deserved to die along the route.

He nearly obliged.

I could not resist the challenge of the George River either, regardless of what George Elson thought about it. It turned out

that George was right. In my first attempt down the river in 2006, one of my more monumental dumps in a rapid had me pinned for a second between the front of my canoe and a boulder. This is not a position I recommend. But it was only a glancing blow and I was not injured.

As the George River builds up in flow as it heads north, the rapids become monstrous in size and length. There is no way some of them can be portaged. I misread one of them and dumped halfway through it. As I bumped over boulders behind my overturned craft, I concluded that I was not sufficiently well equipped. This is what satellite phones are for and so I arranged for a floatplane to fly me out.

I could not, however, stop myself from wondering what I had missed in the second half of the George River. Two years later I was back. Again I was solo, had the same canoe but had replaced my pack with a watertight barrel. Much better when a canoe dumps. This time, I ran the rapid that had nearly resulted in the death by hypothermia of Dillon Wallace and his university student canoeing partner in 1905.



The Rapid that sank Dillon Wallace

Dillon had already sent half his team home at that point after he realized it was going to be a near thing if they finished the trip before winter set in, fearing a repeat of the 1903 disaster.

I discovered the hidden eddy that I concluded had overturned them. I made it through okay thanks to the modern day spray deck on my craft, which canoeists did not have in 1905. The eddy suddenly grabbed my canoe and turned it into the riverbank. The craft then was catapulted backwards into a maelstrom of water behind me; water burying the stern of my canoe and rushing past and over me. The water had filled Wallace's canoe, sinking it. In my case, it flowed off the spray deck that covered the top, and a few seconds later I was flushed down river, shaken but still afloat.

Near the end of the trip a boulder tipped me over as I neared a rapid. The rapid turned out to be a foaming cauldron, which I later learned had nearly done in George Elson. Somehow, Dillon and his partner had made it through okay. As for me, I floated along holding onto the back of my canoe with my legs held high in front of me as I was swept into and through the most violent rapid I've ever experienced. I bumped over boulder after boulder in front of me, each boulder hidden under a maelstrom of water, known to white-water enthusiasts as haystacks. I felt strangely calm and time had long since stopped standing still for me when faced with this type of event. Finally, I could see calm water ahead.

Home again after my 37-day trip, I did admire the bruises on my buttocks and the backs of my legs when standing with my back to a mirror.

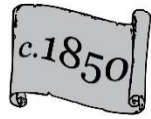
My wife thinks I'm insane.

Section Two

Then, in Fiction...

Let's read about things as they might have been

Death and Green Apples
Gladys Galay



Green apples
Red apples
Yellow
One each for each one
Eat them all and you be done
Worms and rot
Fill the pot
Push and pull
Your belly full
Green apples
Red apples
Yellow
Sinners sinning sin!
Comes out faster than goes in!
Green apples
Red apples
Yellow
Ain't you the fine fellow?

She'd only had one apple in the whole of her short life and it had worms just like the rhyme the children were chanting. Hurrying but not escaping the sound... green apples... red apples... yellow... past the children pouncing on the "fine fellow" as he took his turn for the beating in a game that none of them understood.

Running, slipping, sliding over the wet cobble stones. Through the back alleys. She wasn't going to make it on time. Hair flying, escaping from the pins beneath her cap and getting in her eyes. Skirts flapping heavy against her ankles, soaking wet at the bottom. Feet squelching in the dirty water let in by the worn boots. Breathing faster through the nose even though the sewage

smelled so bad. She couldn't let that smell into her mouth. It would be like tasting it.

"Your hair is always in your eyes, flying around. That's why you can never be a proper maid," Rose said. "You have to be presentable," Rose said.

Rose was proper in every sense. She preened in front of the back-shed window. It wasn't a proper mirror but Rose stood there often to admire her reflection.

Lily careened around the corner of the back fence that opened into the yard of the big house. Rose was not preening today. She was standing on the back steps looking worried and only slightly relieved when she saw her sister. Opening the back door, she shoved Lily through none too gently.

"Come on, come on! Martha's fit to be tied. You've not emptied the slops yet or scoured the pots from yesterday. I did the fires and pretended it was you but I don't think she believed me. Be quick or she'll find you were out again last night. I've put the pots in to soak so get up those stairs and get the slops before she comes. And, don't make a clatter. The Mister took a turn and Father Donovan and Sister Angela are up there now."

Lily ran. She didn't have time to put on her apron but prayed it wouldn't be noticed. Taking the back stairs two at a time, she stopped short of the dressing room door to calm herself. No use in tip toeing around if she sounded like a racehorse.

She didn't have a chance to tell Rose that Mam was doing much better. Her body didn't shake when she coughed and her breathing was steady now. She wished Rose could see Mam but it wouldn't do for her to stay out all night. She would for sure be noticed. Lily came and went with no acknowledgement from anyone in the household; anyone except Martha who took every opportunity to correct her for her own good.

"That's not the way you scrub the pots, girl. Put some effort into it."

I'll scrub you; you old witch.

"Don't use so much polish, girl. You're not paying for it."

And neither are you; you old bat. You're stingy with other people's money.

"Stop your dreaming and get to work."

I was dreaming you'd lost your tongue.

How long before the words in her head slipped out of her mouth, she did not know. As tempting as it felt, it was a good job and she couldn't lose it. There was little enough money, even with the two of them earning. And Mam was not able to do her cleaning job for weeks now being so sick. Lily wished she could be more like Rose, but her mouth was as flyaway as her hair.

Green apples red apples yellow

Lily wasn't afraid of Martha anymore, not like when they first arrived at the big house. For all her frowning, scolding and yelling, she never actually hit. And she had to admit that Martha was a great cook. But she startled Lily. How a woman that size could get around so quietly? And then she was yelling in your ear!

Lily slipped through the back door of the dressing room, trying to ensure no one on the other side of the curtain noticed. Through the fabric, she heard muffled voices and the soft shuffle of feet moving back and forth. The priest and nun looking after the dying.

They're wonderful, working so hard. Lily didn't think she could. She didn't mind looking after Mam, that was different, her own flesh and blood.

Sounds from the room got louder, drawers opened and closed. *They're changing him. He goes through night clothes so quickly. Sweating and throwing up till there's nothing left.*

Lily covered the chamber pot hiding the mess before turning to make her way downstairs.

It was too bad for the Mister and Missus, their children moving to Kingston when it became the capital and not coming home to Toronto. Didn't do them any good when the capital moved to Montreal later. And now, the 'Queen's choice' turned out to be Ottawa of all places. They'd bet on the wrong horse and now they wrote home begging.

It wasn't right; the Mister was kind when he was well. He didn't mistreat anyone, even though he let Thomas go because there wasn't enough money anymore.

That's why Martha was so angry. She blamed Rose for being so pretty and so well spoken. Given no choice, they'd kept the girl because she was cheaper. And Martha was angry at Lily just because they were sisters.

Martha's joy was her son Thomas. Lily had to admit, though, that Martha didn't talk to him any better than she talked to Lily. She was always telling him what to do, what to say, and what to think. But, since he lost his position in the house, he had more freedom than when he was under the same roof as his mother. And, she was madder still that she couldn't keep track of him every minute of the day.

Maybe Martha was right saying that Thomas could make his fortune out west with just a little money. Not to Kingston or Montreal; trying to follow the capital was just plain foolish. Might as well stay in Toronto; it would likely be the capital soon as they gave up on that Ottawa nonsense. Thomas should go west where the future was. Martha was sure he would succeed because he knew how to work not like them born with gold spoons in their mouths.

Thomas was okay, mostly. Except for trying to get too close on the back stairs whenever he could. His Mam yelled at him to leave those girls alone. "Not worth your time nor bother."

But Lily knew Thomas wanted any woman he could get. And there wouldn't be one now with no job. He was getting more desperate as time went on.

Lily went out to deal with the slops as quickly as she could. She just made it back into the kitchen and started on the pots and pans when Martha came in.

"You'd best leave those, girl, and get upstairs. There'll be laundry to do and you can't be lax about it. Get the sheets, pillowcases, and his night clothes in to soak right away. You can't leave that mess on the floor."

And how was I to know that the father and sister had gone already.

Lily stomped up the stairs until she got close to the bedroom. She calmed herself so she wouldn't disturb the Mister. Lily slowly pushed the curtain aside to peek into the room. In the middle of the large bed, lay the shrunken form. Not having seen the Mister since he took to his bed, Lily was shocked at how small he had become. Tears stinging her eyes, she backed up, picked up the washing and made her way down the stairs.

What can I do what can I do what can I do? Mam survived it. She was getting better, stronger every day. Neighbours tried to help, but they had their own families to worry about. And no one

wanted to get sick. Only the bravest tried to help those who were sick.

Well, it was no use fretting about it. She was never going to nurse the Mister back to health. She would never get past the Missus or Martha or even Rose. She better get on with her work and leave the nursing to them that thought they could.

Lily was halfway through the laundry when she heard the screams from an upstairs window.

“No... No... No...”

“What on earth...”

“Nooooo...”

The hair on her arms stood up as she froze pinning a sheet to the clothes line.

One each for each one

The Mister’s funeral was small and quiet. Most were as there were so many and not enough mourners to go around.

The retired army major died the week before and down near the high street, the doctor’s wife died. Both deaths were surprising. They seemed to be on the mend and then suddenly, they were gone.

Whispers started about sin catching up with people. Although what sin, no one knew. And what of the Mister? What had he done to deserve such a fate?

The constant message from pulpit; don’t talk back, go to church, confess your sins. Sickness is waiting for you.

Rumours of sin were not the only ones. There were rumours about missing things in the houses of the dead and dying. Words whispered; looks furtive. Fear in the drawn features and nervous gestures of the servants.

Maybe sin did cause the fever if you didn’t go to church and pray for forgiveness. But, being accused of stealing got you sent to gaol or worse to the gallows.

Eat them all and you be done

No time for such thinking now. It was a beautiful spring day and the sisters left the church for Mam’s house.

“Rose, not so fast, you don’t have to run.”

Rose looked back laughing. "Yes I do. I haven't seen Mam for a month. She was so sick then I hated to leave her."

"I know. And you helped her get better. Doing half my chores, it's why I could see her most nights. And hiding away all that food. Why if it hadn't been for those broths and stews, I'm not sure if Mam would have gotten better."

Rose hooked her arm in Lily's. "Yes, I know. But it's not the same as being there. You're the one who held her when she heaved. You're the one who bathed her, kept her warm or cooled her. I know how afraid you were, how tired you were every morning getting back to your chores."

"Well, enough of that now, let's go." And they both ran until the sight of a tall black frock coat stopped them in their tracks. Sober again, they walked sedately behind the priest, careful not to look at each other for fear of being caught laughing on a Sunday.

Worms and rot fill the pot

And see Mam they did. Thinner yes and weak still but able to laugh again. The three, happy for the first time in a long time.

The sisters felt lighter when they started their walk back to the big house. They spoke excitedly about the changes in Mam. But there were changes too at the big house and it wasn't long before their conversation drifted to the family.

"I don't like them. None of them."

"You don't know them. They were gone long before we came."

"It don't matter how long they've been gone. And it's not the extra work. I don't mind that. It's the way they look down on everyone. And the way they act towards the Missus."

"You're right there. They do treat the Missus as though she was their servant. And the daughters are no better than the sons. I hoped their coming would give her a little joy, but I think she's worse off than before."

"And do they have to go through the Mister's things now? He's not been in the ground more than two minutes, and they're looking to see what they can get. I heard them in the bedroom."

"Lily, you didn't. What if they heard you? What if they thought you were listening?"

“I could hear them plain as day from the back stairway. They didn’t bother to hide that they were searching the room and I don’t mean nothing to them.”

“You be careful. That Mister Daniel might be the new master. He’s the oldest and he’ll inherit.”

“I don’t think he wants to inherit the house. He told the Missus that it was big and drafty and too expensive to keep. They’d like her to sell it so they can take the money and move to Ottawa. And good riddance, I say.”

“You may be right. They were asking the Missus where the money was, the jewelry, the Mister’s watch and cufflinks and that tie clip of his with the ruby in the middle.”

“If the Missus doesn’t watch out, the house is going to be stripped bare. The daughters were asking about the linen. Which tablecloths are in good condition, and which ones are old and faded. They pretend they’re helping but they’re really measuring what will fit in their trunks when they go.”

“Well, one good thing is that Martha has been much, much nicer since they arrived.”

“That’s true. She gave me an extra biscuit this morning and said I could have some jam. She never let me have jam before.”

“She’s worried about Thomas, too. She’s been feeding him and she’s worried that someone will find out. And Miss Elizabeth almost did. She came into the kitchen yesterday just as Martha was giving Thomas a basket. Martha couldn’t speak so I said it was some of the Mister’s old bed shirts for the poor. Miss Elizabeth didn’t want to touch those. Scared of getting sick herself before she leaves, it’s a wonder any of them go in the bedroom where he died. They must really want the money.”

Nearer to the house now, Lily knew she’d better say what was on her mind.

“You know there’s things missing, don’t you?”

“What... what’s missing? I would’ve heard the Missus say if anything was missing.”

“Not from our house, not yet anyway. But I hear the talk. Lots of the houses have things missing. And by missing, I mean stolen.”

“You can’t mean that.”

“Yes I can. Things have been stolen. It’s bad enough people are dropping like flies from the sickness then somebody’s got to go and steal their stuff. It ain’t right. And what’s worse, some folks say those who died shouldn’t have died at all.”

“Lily, you’re scaring me now. Who shouldn’t have died?”

“Them that have their stuff stolen, Rose. They die and get robbed at the same time.”

“But how do you know Lily?”

“I’ve been out far more than you have this month. There’s plenty of talk. People are scared. Not scared of getting sick. The fevers are going now but you don’t have to be very sick to die. And the missing things, first thought was that they were just misplaced, taken accidentally and forgotten about. Now some in the family start to blame others in the family but soon they might turn to the servants.”

Push and pull your belly full

A week later, Rose dragged Lily onto the back porch and whispered urgently. “You can’t keep doing this.”

“What are you talking about? I’m not doing anything wrong.”

“You’re going to get caught. It’s not like seeing Mam. That they would understand. She was sick and had no one else. It’s the other thing. Seeing the other servants on the street and the market.”

“What’s wrong with talking? There’s no law against talking.”

“You know what I mean. You’re not just talking. You’re asking questions and people are going to get scared. What happens if they think that you’re the one who’s been stealing things?”

“Don’t talk crazy. Nobody would believe that.”

“Of course they would. They’d want it to be a servant girl. They don’t want it to be one of their own family or rich friends. They’ll want to pin it on you if you get caught. And you won’t have any excuse. Coming and going every night, someone is sure to notice.”

“Well, I’m not stopping. Not yet. I want to know if there’s someone going in and out of the houses who shouldn’t be.”

Rose sighed rubbing her temples. “Well, at least be more careful. Maybe some of them could meet you here.”

“They’ll never come, afraid to go out after dark. And, what would they say if Martha or the Missus saw them? They’re in the same boat as we are, and none of them wants to be accused of stealing or worse!”

Green apples red apples yellow

“You want to know all the people who have been here in the past month? Are you stupid, girl? How can I remember who’s been in and out of the Major’s house?” Beatrice reminded Lily of Martha, same size and booming voice but Lily willed herself not to be afraid.

“Not everybody. I just need to know if there were strange people going in and out. People who should not be here.”

“So, like the doctor, he wasn’t here before the major got sick. And the undertaker, he wasn’t here before. And that solicitor, he keeps coming around now and he was never before. If you want to know who’s strange, it’s that solicitor.”

“All right, all right, I’m sorry I asked.”

But Beatrice was not finished. “Well then, what about that big Martha of yours? And, that big son of hers?”

“Who, my Martha? Thomas?”

“Yes. Martha and Thomas. Both were here, week ago now. He were looking for a job. Said he was let go because there wasn’t any money to keep him anymore at your house. And they’ve been round to the other houses. Didn’t you know?”

“No, I didn’t.”

“Don’t know much, do you.” But Lily, deep in thought, had already turned away.

Sinners sinning sin!

“Jessie, I have to talk to you. Funny things are happening, don’t you think?”

“What do you mean funny? People are dying, that’s what’s happening. And it ain’t funny.”

“I know, sorry. That’s not what I meant. Not funny, really, more like odd. Around the time the doctor’s wife died. Were there people that you didn’t know or that never came around before? Has anything gone missing?”

“Well, there are the dresses. Some’re missing and her hair brush and mirror and things that were on her dresser. The doctor spends all the time in the bedroom going over her things, touching them and worrying that they’re not where they should be and it bothers him so.”

“What does he think happened to them? Does he think someone’s stolen them?”

“He doesn’t think about anything at all, except his dead wife.”

“Well, do you think they were stolen, then?”

“I don’t know. I didn’t think about it at all till you asked. I guess I figured that they would just turn up some time.”

“So what do you think now?”

“Now? Now, I think I have to get to the market. I don’t have time for anything else. I still have to prepare the supper, even though he’s not going to eat it.”

Comes out faster than goes in!

Standing in the shop, looking in the pickle barrel, Lily wondered if she had enough money for one. So tempting floating in the brine. She reached forward to take the smallest one, when she was struck from behind. Hands pushed hard on her back, big hands pushed down. Her feet left the floor and she was dunked head first. No chance to breathe, the vinegar and salt stung her eyes; filled her nostrils and mouth. Choking, choking, her hands grabbed the sides of the barrel. She kicked desperately backwards. Her feet found the large mass behind her and she pummeled over and over. The hands let go abruptly. She swam up sputtering and coughing. It took her precious moments to breath. She couldn’t open her eyes. The burning was terrible.

“Help, help, please help me.”

“Oh, my dear, are you okay? What on earth happened?”

“Can I have some water, please? My eyes are burning.”

“Of course, let me...”

Lily heard the woman running and the splash of water.

“Now lean back. Tilt your head, that’s right. This will wash everything away.”

Lily never felt anything so beautiful, so cool and refreshing on her face. But it was several minutes before she could open her eyes.

There in front of Lily, worried looks on their faces were Mister and Missus Connor, the shop owner, and his wife. There was no one else around, no large man with big strong hands. No one who would have pushed her into the pickle barrel and held her there.

Mister Connor glanced at the window then ran to the door.

“Here, Thomas. Here, Father. Come quickly.”

The two men hurried after him and seeing Lily, ran to her side. Then, seeing the bit of lace floating in the pickle barrel, Father Donovan plunged his hands into the brine and grasped her cap, splashing as he held it out to her like an offering.

“Oh Father, it doesn’t matter.” Lily took the drenched piece of lace and stared at it as though it could tell her what just happened. She raised tearful eyes, “I’m sorry about the mess.”

Missus Connor looked like she was going to cry as well. “Oh, my dear, it’s not your fault. Nasty boys, it must have been, you could have been hurt.”

Waving Thomas away, the priest helped Lily to her feet. Mister Connor, not knowing what else to do, extended a large pickle to her as though it could make up for her fright.

On the way home, Lily found herself talking a bit too freely with the priest although she doubted that he heard much. After an initial rebuke, he fussed about Thomas every step of the way. He seemed to have forgotten about the pickle barrel and Lily’s wet state.

But, then there was Rose. “What on earth happened to you?”

Lily just shook her head and handed the pickle to Rose.

“Lily, what happened? Why are you giving me this? You love pickles.”

With another shake of her head, Lily turned and walked back outside to the washhouse.

An hour later, Lily sat, squeaky clean, at the worn kitchen table sipping tea under the watchful worried eyes of both Rose and Martha.

“Well, I better make more tea. The Father is still here talking to the Missus.”

Lily said, “I know he is worried about me and he is worried about Thomas too.”

“Yes, yes that he is.” Martha stared long and hard at Lily who blinked red-rimmed eyes back at her.

With Martha occupied, Rose dragged Lily out to the porch.

“Now you tell me what really happened.”

“I got pushed into the pickle barrel. It were just kids having fun.”

“Are you sure Lily? I am so worried.”

“I know. And now Father Donovan said I should stop. If I’d known he was going to scold, I would never have told him in the first place. But I got caught up confessing. I told him about taking the food for Mam and asked forgiveness. The next thing I knew, I was telling him about my investigating. But he was far more upset about Thomas. He forgot to tell me how many Hail Mary’s I should say.”

“Don’t change the subject, Lily. Someone tried to drown you in that barrel.”

“Well, they didn’t and now I have to get to work.” But Lily knew Rose was not satisfied.

Green apples red apples yellow

Next Sunday and the sisters were on the way to Mam’s house again. Up ahead the priest was starting his rounds. Rose was impressed.

“He is so busy with his flock, he doesn’t spend much time at the church.”

Lily pulled Rose back so that the priest could not see them.

“What’s wrong? Don’t you want to see Father Donovan?”

“I don’t feel like another scolding.”

Closer to Mam’s house and the priest was still ahead of them. Lily sped up. She wanted to get to Mam before the priest. She was sure he was going to see Mam but there was no way to get around him.

Seeing two constables standing on a street corner she pulled a startled Rose up to them.

“Our Mam needs help. She’s in danger. No, I don’t know.” She could not say why but her urgency carried them along.

In minutes, they were at Mam’s tiny house where the priest was stooping to enter.

“Why are you here?” Lily demanded.

The priest turned to her. "I know your mother has been ill and it is my responsibility to see her." He looked down at the others standing around nervously. "Why are you questioning me and why are the constables here?"

"I know what you've been doing. You're the one who's been stealing and... and maybe worse." Lily said amid the shocked looks on the faces around her.

"Don't be ridiculous. You're demented, accusing a priest. The truth is that you're the one who's been stealing."

"That's right." All heads turned to see Martha coming up behind, red-faced and panting.

"There you are. Listen to her. She knows Lily has been stealing."

Martha managed to look down on the men even though they were all taller than her.

"No, that's not what I mean. Lily's not been stealing. She's been taking the food that I made for her mother. I always knew she was doing it. What I meant was that Lily is right, the priest is a thief, if he is a priest at all."

Now even Lily was shocked. "What do you mean if he is a priest?"

"I don't know any priest who talks about a confession." Martha stared hard at the man pretending outrage. "Lily, I know you thought he came to the house to say he was worried about Thomas but that wasn't it. He told me and the missus that you confessed to stealing. I knew then how low he was. No one's supposed to know what's said in confession, that's between you and God. The priest is there to give penance and this one's not much of a priest at all."

Lily looked up at the furious face before her. "Now I know why you stuck your arms in the pickle barrel for my cap. Your sleeves were already wet from pushing me in and you didn't want anyone to notice.

Mam, Rose and now Martha gathered around Lily.

But the priest was not finished yet. "Arrest her. Arrest her. It's her, don't you see?"

The constables were torn between their religious upbringing and the dawning realization that the women may just be right. It was unthinkable.

Finally, it was Rose who broke the silence.

“Do you want him visiting your bedside? Because he will, you know, if you get sick. You are part of his parish. Do you want that?”

The constables looked at the mother and daughters clinging to each other, their faces so sure so defiant and the formidable Martha. What if they were right?

“Well, it wouldn’t hurt to check a bit. We should go to the rectory. You don’t mind, do you Father? I’m sure you’ve nothing to hide.”

“No, no, this is not right. I won’t allow it. To treat a man of God this way. You will all burn in Hell!”

But it was too late for protests. The small party made its way back towards the church picking up another constable and several curiosity seekers along the way.

Ain't you the fine fellow?

The search of the rectory revealed all the stolen items and something unexpected; a naked Sister Angela struggling to get into the doctor’s wife’s dress, amid other stolen dresses and finery that she smuggled out of the houses. Caught in the act she defended herself.

“It’s not killing if they were already dying. We just helped some of them along. The doctor’s wife woke up when I was putting the dress under my habit. I didn’t want to do it but he made me.”

“Shut up, shut up you stupid cow.”

“Don’t tell me to shut up. This is all your fault. I told you we had enough but no, you had to have more. We could be long gone.” Her eyes went to the top of the book shelf and there were the steamer tickets for France in the names of Mister and Missus Preast.

Walking behind the gaol cart with the other women and half the neighbourhood, Lily wanted to make sure the ‘priest’ and the ‘nun’ didn’t get away. She wouldn’t be happy until they were locked up.

Priests and nuns dealing in death. It was enough to turn a person off religion.

The children ran around the cart singing for the prisoners and pelting them with stones on the last line until the constables ran them off. Lily wondered if they knew what they were singing about...

Green apples
Red apples
Yellow
One each for each one
Eat them all and you be done
Worms and rot
Fill the pot
Push and pull
Your belly full
Green apples
Red apples
Yellow
Sinners sinning sin!
Comes out faster then goes in!
Green apples
Red apples
Yellow
Ain't you the fine fellow?

*Diary of a Desert
Lumberman*
Darren Jerome



In 1884 the British Government decided to send a military expedition up the River Nile to relieve Major General Charles Gordon, who was besieged in Khartoum by Mahdist tribesmen. Appointed to command the relieving force, Viscount Wolseley, who had led the expedition to the Red River in 1870, requested the recruitment of Canadian voyageurs. Almost 400 volunteered, including many superb river men, and the largest group came from the Ottawa valley area.

Archeological and Historic Sites Board of Ontario plaque located at the Kitchissippi Lookout, Ottawa

My job is mostly just watching for ripples or rocks and steering clear. But I keep an eye on the other boats too, and when they speed up, or change course, so do I.

For weeks we've been making our way up the world's longest river. There are hundreds of boats, each carrying a half-dozen khaki troops, all bobbing along the mud-brown Nile. Trailing off into the distance as far as the eye can see. But a man can tire of near anything, and fourteen hours a day spent staring out at these brown bits of Empire is no different.

It's been a race from the moment we stepped off our ship, the *Ocean King* in Alexandria. Travelling by steamboat, train, and then steamer again, until finally ending up in the town of Wadi Halfa, or Bloody Halfway as the Brits call it. Then it was straight onto the boats.

We hardly even had a chance to look at anything the whole way up, save for an hour at one of the Pyramids. A fella in the group said it seemed like everything here came straight from the Bible and I think he's right. Every blocky bleached-white building blends into the land and seems as old as the dirt. But we kept on, rushing through places where time, it seemed, didn't much matter.

We needed to save Gordon. We heard this about a thousand times on the way over and probably even more since we got here. Seems the poor General got himself into a tight spot and was trapped in the fortress at Khartoum, cut off from the rest of the world and hanging on by his fingernails. We was his only hope, 5,000 of Her Majesty's finest... and us, the skilled raftsmen of Canada needed to pilot the boats for this heroic rescue. That's what the ad said, and that's what me and the other lumbermen from the Ottawa and Saguenay along with some Indians, and a handful of poseurs, signed up to do.

Whaling boats is not what they call 'em, but sure as shit that's what they are. They're 10-yard-long rowboats, plain and simple. Only difference is they drilled holes for sails because some fool figured on using wind to move us along. Just kick back and sail right up to and over the rapids he must've thought. Problem is, sails need wind and skill and we got neither. So we move on the power of a half dozen sweat-soaked Brits, and we store the sails as extra canvas in case the toy soldiers need more tents.

The soldiers are all business, even after we've set up camp for the night. Tight little circles of men around neat little fires and smart little tents lined up all in a row. Hardly a word is said between us, save for the odd hello maybe, but they might try and pick on us from time to time. Once one asks me while I'm sitting having my dinner if my mother had done it with bears.

"How else would a man look the way I do," he says, and he and his mates have a good laugh. But I'm easily a head taller and a good piece heavier than any one of 'em, and so I come at him with my hands out like claws, growling, like I'm the real thing. Then when I'm only a foot or so away I stop and give him a hard look. He's doing his best proper Brit face and I just keep on staring. Right there in front of him, and I bring my head down so that I can have a good look at his chin, and I notice he missed a spot on his last shave. Then I comb my beard real slow with my hand and I tell him, in my most respectful voice, he'd better soap up and get in a good shave tomorrow morning or they might think he's one of my kind. Even his mates got a kick outta that one.

I was taught to see the good in things, and a six-month contract at 40 dollars a month makes for a decent wage. There's food in your belly, even if it's corned beef and hardtack, but still

enough to fill you up. And the weather's bone dry, and not near so hot as some had warned. Midges and blackflies are not anything to speak of. You hardly notice them except for when you go through the odd swamp.

But these rapids, or cataracts as they call 'em, are a different story. In all my blessed life I ain't never seen nothing like them before. If you take the Chaudière Falls, near to where I'm from, when they're running at their meanest in spring, with all the jagged outcrops and shallows, and make 'em 50 times bigger you got some idea of what we're up against.

It's damned hard heading up them long stretches of white water that funnel through the islands. Sometimes the waves are so high the boat and driver disappear, and the current is so damn strong the only way to get through is to hitch up two long ropes, each held by a dozen men onshore and drag 'em up. It's better than a portage maybe but not by much. Lines break and boats get flipped or pulled downstream or worse. What's more, we don't know these waters, and there's many a trap and dead end that has forced us to backtrack. We lose men too, swept away by the high waves that come outta nowhere. After Ambigol, someone finally had the good sense to send teams ahead, to suss out the cataracts up river and get to know them so that they would push through that much faster.

This is where I now find myself. Sitting and waiting after days spent sussing out every inch of this great beast. But it feels good to stay put in one place.

I'm here with my friend Mick, and a Frenchman who goes by the name Grey Fox. Mick is well-seasoned, much like myself, and has spent half his life on the rafts. I'd seen him around from time to time as he lives just down the line from where I call home. I got to know old Frenchy (I don't call him Grey Fox) on the liner on the way over. Frenchy is different, and not just 'cos his beard is more grey than black. He's the real thing. There's a lot of poseurs on this trip, even foremen that are in over their head. Not Frenchie.

We've sat for hours every evening since we got here, working out our plans, drawing the islands in the desert sand, tracing and retracing paths that the boats should be run through. The best line, the second best, and the spots to steer clear of.

There was no way of knowing for sure how it may go, but we had some good talks and agree on what has the best chance of working.

It's dark now and the fire's lit. But the sky is bright with stars so we hardly even need it for light. Frenchie asks me what's the most fun I've had since I got here so I tell him my bear story and we all have a good laugh.

"How about you, Mick?"

"I had a little, er... fun on my boat a few weeks back."

"I heard. You get fined for that one then Mick?" Frenchie asks him.

"What fer?"

"What ya mean what fer, *essdee*?" Frenchie holds the 'fer' to mock Mick's way of talking before adding,

"Ya gone and struck a soldier!"

"What?" I say. "Jaysus, I never heard about that! Mick you coulda got yerself shot."

He gives me a grin that I can just make out through the black fur on his face.

"Listen, like I told the boss man, like I told that Major what's-his-face, and his adjutant, and anybody else who cares to listen... I runs my raft..."

"Boat, *fa*," Frenchie says.

"Boat, ship, whatever. Me, I runs it, get me? And I ain't gonna risk my neck on some dumbass who ain't doin' his job. I don't give a good goddamn who it is. When I'm manning the bow and spots a rock, and shouts out to pull right, I ain't talking to myself and that's just what I said. That's just what I told him."

"So?"

"So what?"

"So how much they charge you?"

"You're some crazy bastard," I tell him.

"Maybe I am, but I'm a living and breathing crazy bastard. And I'm gonna stay that way, even if I gotta kick a hundred of 'em in the back of the head!"

"Jaysus, what? You, kicked him in the head?"

"Damned straight."

The days have been long and we soon turn in for the night. We are awake at the usual time and I go for a swim. I come back and see Frenchy is waving.

“Hello!”

“And there they are,” I say.

The boats are arriving, the officer at the front of the lead boat has taken off his helmet and is waving to us.

“Ain’t he just all precious and polite?” I say.

“Maybe he wants you to set him up with that bear-loving mother of yours,” Frenchie says. I give him a playful shove.

We show them our map in the sand. Some of the officers ask questions, then go look for themselves before telling us they like the plan we’ve laid out. At the same time, boats have been coming in and are now moored and waiting for word to move through the first narrows, or gate as they call it.

I hear my name along with Mick’s. We’ll pilot the first one through. Mick takes the front because he’s bigger than me, and it will help keep us from tipping, so he says. Makes sense. The first couple of narrows are not so bad, and with the help of the lines we are through in less than two hours. But we know the worst is yet to come. We approach the next and I’m already feeling the rocking and I look ahead and see the rushing torrent of water coming in from two sides. Mick throws the lines out from the bow to the teams perched on rocks on either side and we go in.

The water is like a bedsheet in a windstorm. The lines scream loud enough to be heard above the waves. I do my best to keep ’er straight. Craning my eyes and ears to catch half of what Mick is screaming or motioning as great waves splash up over the side and onto us both. I grip tight and use all my skills to keep balance.

Step quick now. Watch yourself. Another crashing wave. Too far starboard... back now! And then another... and another. And then... he’s gone!

“Jaysus... oh, Jaysus... Mick’s gone!” I shout, still straining on the oar to hold on. “Mick’s gone! Do you see him?! Does anyone see him? Mick! *Mick!*”

“Hold on to yourself!”

It’s Frenchie.

“One man’s enough to lose. You stay with it! You stay with it you hear me, *cabliss?*”

So I do. I fight with all I have, for as long as I can and then some. I don't know how, but we make it through. I am told to take hold of one of the lines. I step off the boat and climb up onto the rocky bluff where a dozen khakis are standing. I'm surprised when two of them offer me a hand up.

Working the lines and barking orders helps take my mind off Mick, and I spend the rest of the day shouting as I watch the play of the water against each craft.

"Gordon awaits. C'mon boys, bring her in! Pull hard."

We hear a command that seems strange given we still have a lot of daylight to work with.

"All stop. All stop. Boats ashore!"

"Officers report to the General's tent immediately."

There's no need for secrets. We all know there is only one reason for stopping. Water is passed out to wet our thirsty throats. Quiet whispers and the sound of cups being filled and passed around is the only sound.

Word spreads like a tide over a floodplain. The fortress has fallen. Gordon's head is being paraded around as a prize. It's over. I hop onto the nearest boat, wishing I could just turn it around and ride it straight back. I think about poor Mick. I hold out hope that maybe he is all right, that he got carried to shore somewhere downstream. That by some miracle he will turn up.

Frenchie comes over to stand with me but we say nothing. Then a khaki sergeant joins us, looking proper as ever.

"Well that's that," he says. "We knew it was never going to be easy what with time and river all working against us. Still, a noble cause, wouldn't you say?"

"Yeah," I answer.

"Quite a kick in the head though, eh?" Frenchie adds.

Murder at 11 Wellington

David Huffman



Disaster struck Ottawa late on 3rd February 1916 when fire broke out in the Reading Room of the Parliament Buildings. The bitter cold played havoc with rescue attempts and the frozen firefighting hoses. Reports indicated that the fire had raced quickly, but by early morning it was mostly under control, although there was another outbreak later.

Confusion reigned on Parliament Hill as the city was full of war refugees and soldiers—French, American, British, German—many of them standing in the cold to watch the inferno.

“Who’s in charge?” He asks of the first person he finds in a uniform.

“Renault... Inspector Louis Renault, Head of the Dominion Police. He’s over there,” pointing. He walked over.

“Renault? I’m Ferguson. George Ferguson, special investigator from the Attorney General’s office.”

“Yeah, as you can see I’m a little bit busy.”

“I’m not here to be a bother. I need to know if everybody has been accounted for. Who’s missing?”

“It’s a bit early to tell.”

“Is there a team searching for bodies yet?”

“They started a couple of hours ago, even though the rubble is quite hot. We’ve set up a temporary morgue across Wellington in the basement of the Dominion Police offices. Check with the coroner, a guy named Fiennes. He should be there.” Looking at his watch. “I have to get back there anyway, so I can introduce you.”

Thanks to the cold weather, the buildings had already cooled enough for the Fire Marshal to start investigating the possibility of arson, and perhaps find more bodies. Extra constables were brought in to help with the search, and they were receiving assistance from the local police and the army.

In the morgue, introductions seemed almost automatic as they do in times of crisis. Staff Sergeant Lacelle of the Dominion Police was already with Fiennes. Nine bodies were lying on individual stainless steel tables. The Coroner was looking forlorn.

“Preliminary autopsy results have identified the seven bodies that appeared on your list of missing staff,” said Fiennes, “but they just brought in another two bodies.”

“Another two?” said Ferguson.

“Yes,” said Lacelle. “Two security guards, well... enough said for now.”

Fiennes continued, “There is obviously something underhanded going on here.” He led them to the last two tables. “These two have their hands and feet tied. And they’re gagged. And their heads are hooded. What’s going on here?”

Renault said, “At present, that’s classified; as will be your autopsy results. Eyes only to my attention. Understood?”

Fiennes stared at Renault. He understood.

Renault led Ferguson and Lacelle back to his office. Ferguson couldn’t take the suspense anymore. “Are you going to let me in on what’s going on, or do I have to pull rank?”

“Okay, okay, okay.” Renault shut the door. “What I am going to tell you two is top secret. Not even the Prime Minister knows. Absolutely top secret, and classified... During the evening last night, there was a meeting on the Hill about the war; a highly sensitive, very secret meeting. I can’t emphasise that enough. The meeting was to discuss the Canadian war commitment. Topics ranged from staff changes, troop deployments, code books, new armaments design, production figures and manufacturing locations. Intelligence and counter-intelligence operations were also on the agenda.

“Even more sensitive are the names of those who attended that meeting; Sir Albert Edward Kemp, Minister of Defence; Sir George Halsey Perley, Minister of the Overseas Military Forces; and John Douglas Hazen, Minister of the Naval Service. There was also a Dominion Police constable Jacques Vanaire present, acting as a body guard and providing security.

“Our staff has already interviewed their families. Kemp and Vanairé are still unaccounted for. Perley and Hazen had left the meeting early.”

Ferguson was about to speak but Renault held up his hand and said, “Let me finish. The House was in session last night. My staff is continuing to meet with families of those who were known to have been in the House. The list the coroner had been only preliminary. Those seven in the morgue are accounted for, but the other two...”

Suddenly there was a loud knocking at the door and a flustered man in uniform burst in; Fire Marshall Jake Cameron.

“Search efforts were initially concentrated in the area of the DOD Ministry office,” puffed Cameron. “When we look for aspects of arson, we look for the obvious. In this case it is reversed. Nothing’s there!”

“Jake, stop,” said Renault. “Just what are you talking about?”

Cameron sat down and took a moment to pull himself together. “Due to the nature of the files and documents that the Defence Department handles, they are kept in steel ring-binders, in old steel filing cabinets with combination locks or steel bookcases. But they’re all empty. Well at least most of them... Most of the files appear to be gone. Disappeared. Flew away. Poof... It also appears that a cigar bomb was the ignition source that started the fire in the Reading Room, but I have a feeling that it was just a diversion.”

“So, while the fire was started in the Reading Room,” mused Renault, “a person or persons unknown broke into the office, tied up and killed the two security guards, and made off with all this stuff?”

“How much stuff are we looking at?” asked Lacelle.

“Five or six cubic feet, maybe more,” replied Cameron.

“That missing information,” observed Ferguson, “would certainly be of interest to German intelligence, and that ties in well with what we were starting to suspect.”

Renault repeated his warning, “Jake, before we continue I have to say that everything related to this discussion has to be classified. It’s top secret. Now to your ears only, we have two bodies in the morgue—security guards—who had their hands and

feet tied. It looks very much like we are dealing with sabotage. The Germans are here.”

Ferguson said, “Your group has been keeping a watchful eye on German activity in Canada and monitoring ‘enemy aliens’, especially those who have been identified as secret agents?”

“Well, that is true, probably more so than most people are aware,” replied Renault.

“May I suggest, due to the situation, we issue an alert to immediately increase surveillance? I agree that this fire is probably a diversion. We don’t yet know what else, if anything, they may have done but we can’t wait to find out. We have to act now. They may be long gone.”

“That’s a good idea,” replied Renault.

“And we also need to monitor potential escape routes like the train stations, and the waterways for any German activity,” continued Ferguson. “And let’s get updates on all these activities as soon as possible.”

“Get on that, Lacelle,” ordered Renault.

“If these unknown suspects somehow got through the Hill security,” said Ferguson, “and into that meeting, and then absconded with all those documents... Those documents didn’t just fly away, but I don’t think they would have chanced getting it all out during the mass exit during the fire. The risk of getting caught would just be too high. So how did they get the stuff out? Have you done a complete search of the grounds?”

“Not yet, there has just been too much to take care of,” replied Renault.

“Let’s get a couple of dozen constables and search for footprints leading away from the Hill, all the way down to the Ottawa River bank. We know there are going to be countless tracks from firefighters all over the place, but maybe we can find tracks leading away. Those files had to be heavy and would affect their walking in all that snow. We’ll start on the far western edge and sweep north to the river, then east to the Rideau Canal, and back around.”

Sometime later, the three officers with their frustrated search party, walked south along the Canal up to the lockmaster’s office and storage area. To the west of that building there was a small

concrete block building that looked as though it had been built right into the cliff face; maybe it was a storage shed. The area between the office and small shed was covered with footprints and a set of tire tracks. At the entrance door to the shed, they found blood in the snow.

“The door’s locked,” said Lacelle.

Ferguson yelled, “Break it down.”

The inside was dark and as they entered the first of them tripped over something. The light from a lamp showed it was a body; an Ottawa police officer. Shot dead. They all paused and stared at the far wall examining an old iron gate through which they could see a tunnel heading west toward the Parliament Buildings.

“Okay. Where now?” asked Lacelle.

Both Ferguson and Renault shouted their revelation at the same moment, “The train station!”

“Sergeant Brierre,” said Renault to the leader of the searchers, “take four men and get into that tunnel and find out where it goes. I need to know where it comes out. Look for anything that will help us determine how many men there were. We also need to know how long it takes to make the trip. Time yourselves. The rest of you to the train station.”

As they walked to the station, Ferguson and Renault threw ideas back and forth.

“The simplest getaway would’ve been to drive a car or truck from here up to the station.”

“Yes, the ice would have stopped them using the river.”

“So, the train is the only option.”

“On top of all that, the whole place is crawling with police, firemen and the army. They would have had a plan already in place to get out fast, before things got bogged down. It’s been eighteen hours since the fire first started. That would put them down at the lockmaster’s house between ten or eleven last night. About fourteen hours ago.”

“We’ll have to find what trains have left. My guess is that they would target Montreal, then Halifax. I’d be looking for a ship or freighter to Europe and Halifax is the closest port this time of year with water access. Unlikely they would try for New York.”

Renault said, "The train station has been under surveillance throughout the war. But we got the army to station troops at strategic points around the city, especially at the train station. The officer in charge of the army unit is Lieutenant Glen Bainbridge." Once they had crossed the Canal at its upper lock and entered the station, they sought out Bainbridge.

"Lieutenant," said Renault, "we are looking for those responsible for the Parliament fire. We don't know how many there were. We believe they have with them large containers of some sort. Like trunks or duffle bags. The number is unknown. They are probably Germans. Search everywhere; question everybody, especially any on duty after midnight last night."

Bainbridge saluted and went off to command his men.

"Contact us through my office," called Renault.

After leaving the station, Ferguson met Renault at the Hill Café next door to the Dominion Police offices. They sat in a booth at the back out of earshot of curious onlookers and reviewed the train departure schedule as they ate.

Renault asked, "Do you think they would just hole up in a farmhouse or something?"

"Probably not. If they think they have got away with it, their handlers will want what they took as soon as possible. It could affect the outcome of the war."

"We could use it to our advantage. Let them think that they *have* got away with it, but change all the codes anyway."

"But the problem is with all the other stuff they got," said Ferguson. "We can't change that; troop numbers, production figures and manufacturing locations."

"Okay. So they are probably going on a train to Montreal, through to Halifax. On that we can agree."

"Get the army and local police to monitor all points en route to Halifax. We'll issue arrest-warrants of those we suspect. Include that they are considered armed and dangerous," said Ferguson.

"Sergeant McGrath is in the Dominion Police offices as we speak. He's questioning suspects that have already been brought in, and trying to find others. He'll bring us a list of those who appear to have vanished. He has had informers scouring the streets and hangouts since early this morning."

“Renault, there are a number of questions that need answering,” said Ferguson, “and I don’t want you to think I am casting a veil of suspicion over your organization. It’s just that we can’t assume anything and the hell with anybody’s pride. Understand? I really don’t know who to trust. Somebody is feeding somebody information. See for yourself, here’s a list of questions that have popped up.” He showed Renault a page in his notebook.

While Renault was perusing the questions, McGrath mysteriously appeared through the cigar smoke.

“We have narrowed the list to four people. They were all seen yesterday, but for some reason they are not around today. Nobody seems to know why. Heinrich Strasser, Howard Koch, Conrad Veidt and Torben Meyer. This may also help. It’s a telegram from Signals Branch who have been monitoring all radio transmissions. Seems that the army’s code-breaking section read a German agent’s cipher that they thought might be of interest.”

Renault read out the telegram. “‘Operation proceeding. Shipment en route. Arrange transport.’ Time-stamped 7:00 a.m. today. Sent from the Château Laurier.”

“Inspector Ferguson?” He looked up as another uniform appeared through the smoke.

“And you are?”

“Captain Isaac Singleton, aide to Major General Sam Hughes. On behalf of General Hughes we would like to extend our complete cooperation and assistance. Can you give me your latest status report?”

“Thank you Captain. We believe the suspects have escaped Ottawa by train and headed east, possibly to the coast. The train stopped somewhere outside of Halifax about an hour ago, near a crossing at a place called Milford Station. Someone had pulled the emergency cord. According to onlookers, a number of passengers got off the train and loaded some large trunks onto the truck that was already there, obviously waiting for them. Then they took off. Details are somewhat sketchy but the local police are questioning the remaining passengers and have sent a car to attempt to follow the trail from where the train stopped. Milford Station is not far from the coast.”

“This war isn’t confined just to Europe,” expressed Singleton. “We have information that may coincide with your case.”

Sitting down, he continued: “Here’s the story: Dartmouth police are investigating concerns received from neighbours about three men who had quietly moved into a vacant house without the owner’s permission. Folks noticed that the men avoided even the most casual contact with the community, and slunk back and forth from the house through the woods rather than travelling the main roads. Their behaviour aroused suspicions that the three were German spies or fugitives from other crimes. Fear of German spies has been common since the early days of war.

“The investigating constable, who went to the house with two local men as backup, came face to face with one of the occupants, who fired two shots at the constable. He’s dead. The three strangers slipped away during the confusion. Witnesses described them as between thirty and forty years old, well-dressed, with plenty of money to spend on provisions.”

Ferguson looking at Renault said, “There may be more going on here than we realize.” Then looking at Singleton, he said, “We need to get some more manpower on the ground searching for these guys.”

“That’s why I’m here,” said Singleton. “There’s the Nova Scotia Rifles 106th Battalion stationed in Halifax; and the Number 2 Construction Battalion, the Black Battalion, is in Truro. Both groups are waiting for deployment overseas. They’ve been sitting around and could use some action.”

“As you can see here on the map, this road, county road 224, runs almost straight from Milford Station to Sheet Harbour. If we make the assumption they are headed for the coast, that would be our best guess. Can you deploy those troops along the coast between Halifax and Port Dufferin just north of Sheet Harbour? Maybe we can still intercept that truck. What are the odds they’re planning to rendezvous with a submarine merchant vessel?”

“Yes, we’ve heard of them. We need to get the navy to patrol along the coastline north and south of Sheet Harbour.” Pausing Ferguson said, “You wouldn’t be able to get a plane in the air, say from Halifax, and monitor the roads for that truck? We also need some troops at the Halifax harbour, just in case. And at Sheet Harbour.”

Singleton smiled. “Done. Done. Done,” then left in a hurry.

Ferguson asked “When can you have them in place?” but he was already gone.

Back in the office, the waiting for Ferguson and Renault was torturous. Even though it seemed like hours, it was only minutes before an update from the constable at Milford Station arrived. According to the passengers interviewed, four men had left the train while it was stopped. There was a car and a truck waiting, each with their own drivers. They took three large trunks from the train. Once the vehicles were loaded, they went north.

Looking at the map, Ferguson commented that county road 224 went north from Milford Station but then turned south toward the coast.

Singleton telephoned from his office with the first report, “No word yet but we’re airborne. We got a Curtiss C-1 twin-engine aircraft, a military version used for sea patrol, out of Halifax. We put a radio operator and observer on board. Presently they’re following county road 224 toward Sheet Harbour. Reports are now being passed to the troops on the ground about vehicle movements. Troops have been dispersed and are working their way along the coast.”

“Make sure they know they’re looking for a car and a large truck,” said Ferguson.

Singleton had just hung up when the phone rang again, this time directly from army intelligence. “The navy had two frigates in Halifax harbour. Together with a number of smaller craft they are now patrolling along the coast around Sheet Harbour.”

The troops and police from Dartmouth had already arrived in Sheet Harbour. While monitoring the harbour, they had recognized the three men who had shot the constable and escaped capture. They were located in a boat in the harbour and police and the army were holding back and keeping out of sight.

“Thank goodness it’s daytime,” observed Ferguson. “It would be a nightmare to attempt to locate those vehicles if we had to do it in the dark.” Francine, Renault’s secretary, was making another pot of coffee when the next report came in from Singleton. “Located a car with a large truck on 224. Wait... Are we lucky! They just turned off into a farm just north of Sheet Harbour. Troop transports have been notified and are ten minutes behind.”

The troop transports had stopped on 224, blocking the lane from the farm that joined the road. After the troops had encircled the farm buildings, they found the truck and the car hidden in the barn but the suspects and the loot were gone, just disappeared... again. The personnel in the plane that had been circling couldn't see anything more because it was getting dark and visibility was far from good.

Ferguson ordered the soldiers to hold their positions at the farm and at the harbour, but to stay out of sight.

The clock was ticking. Everyone heard this imaginary tick-tock, tick-tocking in their ears. It was now dark in Nova Scotia and dusk in Ottawa.

The observers at the harbour watched patiently. There was only one man left on the boat, they reported. Two had left a while ago and they were being shadowed. As anybody left the area one man was assigned as shadow and, in a bit of inspiration, another would walk ahead. The plan was for the two watchers to alternate positions. When the shadow charged ahead, the point man would fall back and take his place; and they'd go on switching back and forth throughout their shift.

By this approach, they followed the suspects to a bay just south of Sheet Harbour where they stopped and waited. Soon the others from the farm arrived carrying the trunks and were led back to the boat in the harbour.

Once they had loaded their gear, the army pounced. After the arrests were completed the perpetrators and the evidence was sent on the train back to Ottawa, under heavy military guard.

Back in Ottawa the office staff had all left for home. It was a clear night. Ferguson stood at the window staring at the burnt-out hulk across Wellington Street. He and Louis Renault were both smoking cigars and enjoying a well-earned libation of single malt, Old Tennis Shoes. They were alone in the office.

"Those two guys, Perley and Hazen," said Ferguson, "who left that meeting early before the fire started. We should put them under surveillance. And their aides."

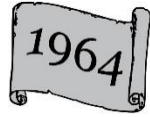
"For God's sake! They're Ministers of the Crown!" exploded Renault.

“Even so,” he replied mildly, “they’re not above suspicion. Nobody is. They may have known what was going to happen and got out. I’ll leave that with you, Louis.”

“Those unanswered questions you showed me all point to someone inside the Dominion Police passing on information or providing information to a third party. Could be a mole working for the Germans?”

Ferguson sighed, “Well, Louis, we’ll just have to wait and see. That’s a whole other story.”

The Grand Old Flag
Susan Taylor Meehan



*M*y Gramps was the greatest man I have ever known. He was a crusty old curmudgeon with ferocious eyebrows and a voice of doom you could hear all over the house. A tall man for his generation of poor Scottish immigrants, he had huge bony hands, broad square shoulders, a jutting chin and piercing blue eyes. But beneath that forbidding exterior was a deep sentimentality and an unyielding loyalty to all he held dear.

He was a man of strong opinions and a love of vigorous debate. Every Sunday evening after the big family dinner, he would hold forth on the issues of the day. Gran's only demand was no politics during the meal—bad for the digestion—but if we helped clear the table, then we had her permission to let the games begin.

I loved those discussions. Two peas in a pod, Gran would call Gramps and me. At the end of the evening we would be the last ones standing, still arguing, still making our cases. And of course those cases were diametrically opposed: Gramps was what we used to call a dyed-in-the-wool conservative; he idolized Sir John A. Macdonald, the Empire and all things Scottish. I was one of those baby boomer boys raised on economic prosperity and liberalism. I idolized Gandhi, Martin Luther King and Bob Dylan.

But no matter how passionate the debate became, at the end of the night, we always shook hands and parted friends. Until the Great Flag Debate of 1964.

By that time, I was a well-seasoned debater. I could talk circles around my friends and schoolmates and was zeroing in on besting Gramps. I was getting a bit full of myself by that point, claiming to speak for my generation, taking stronger and more radical stands, writing impassioned letters to the editor and dreaming about a brilliant political career.

It all came to a head after Christmas dinner, one week after the Parliamentary vote to approve the now-familiar red maple leaf design as Canada's official flag.

"Ye're daft," said Gramps. "It looks like the back end of a monkey!"

"No it doesn't," I replied. "It's beautiful."

Gramps snorted.

"It's Canadian," I continued. "We don't need to stay under England's thumb forever, Gramps. In a couple of years, Canada will be a hundred years old. We need our own flag."

"We have a flag. It's tradition."

We'd had this argument since May. Neither of us had shifted ground, and neither of us had given up hope of winning the other over. But this night was different. Gramps wasn't on his best game. He was less rational, more emotional. His timing was off and he missed several chances to zing me, too absorbed in his own arguments. I noticed the difference, but just pressed on, sensing my advantage and getting more and more aggressive. Gran was hovering over us as we talked, fussing with the tea things and watching Gramps out of the corner of her eye.

"What kind of tradition excludes so many people?" I demanded forcefully. "The British ensign doesn't mean a damn to anybody in Quebec. That's one third of our population."

"Hah! Tell the Vandoos that."

"What about the younger generation? Don't we get a say in it?"

"You'll get a say when you've fought and died under it. Not before."

"Gramps, this is a democracy! Most people haven't fought in a war. We all have a right to be heard."

"You've got a democracy because of the men who went to war. You have a comfortable life and a good future ahead of you. And you know what? You didn't earn any of that. You didn't sacrifice anything. You didn't lose anything. You have no right. No right at all."

He got up, kicked the chair away and stomped off to the front hall. In the blink of an eye, he had his galoshes, hat and coat on, and he was out of the door and into the night.

Silence hung in the air like the aftermath of a thunderclap. I sat there, stunned. What the hell just happened?

I looked at Gran. She made a move to start clearing the table, avoiding my eyes.

“Gran, please, why was Gramps so mad? Was it something I said?”

She stopped, smiled and touched my arm. “No, no, dear, you did nothing wrong.”

“Then why...”

She put the teacups down, looked at me for what seemed like an eternity, then said, “We were talking about the old days earlier. It brought back memories.”

“What kind of memories?”

“Come with me. I have something to show you.”

I followed her up to the attic. We went to a dim corner in the back and she removed a pile of old carpets from the top of an ancient steamer trunk. Dust motes swirled in the cone of light from the ceiling. She struggled a bit with the hasp. Clearly, it hadn’t been opened in a long time. I took over, wiggling it till it gave, and lifted the creaking lid.

The trunk was full of old clothes and various odds and sods. She rummaged past most of it, pulled out a box and drew out an ancient leather pouch. Her eyes softened and she picked it up, ran her fingers along the stitching, and breathed in the scent of long ago. She sat down on a nearby stool, silent and lost in time.

After a minute or two, she handed the pouch to me. I opened it slowly, carefully, reverently. There was a small box inside. I took it out and opened it. On a worn black velvet cushion sat four military medals from the Great War.

I looked up at her. “Are these Great-Uncle Alfred’s?” I asked.

She nodded. I knew very little about the only man our family had lost during the First World War. He was Gramps’s big brother, I knew that, and I knew that he had died during the Battle of the Somme. I’d seen his official military portrait, but that was about it. It seemed that this was something the family just didn’t talk about.

Six faded photos sat underneath the little box.

“Who are these people?” I asked, handing her each print.

She smiled and pointed to a tall, thin, dark-haired man in the middle of a group of four young soldiers. “That’s Alfred,” she said softly. “He was nineteen years old. It was taken sometime in early 1916.”

With the exception of his official portrait, all the photos were taken at the Front: Alfred sitting in his dugout, writing a letter; Alfred in a trench, lighting someone’s cigarette; Alfred visiting someone at a field hospital; Alfred clowning around with a group of men from his unit. I was fascinated by this relative I had heard so little about.

“What was he like, Gran? Did you know him?”

“He was a fine young man. Your Gramps idolized him. Alfred was his hero. He looked out for your Gramps after they lost their dear father. When Alfred signed up in nineteen-fourteen, your Gramps was so excited. He treasured every letter Alfred sent home, read them over and over and bragged to his friends about his brave big brother.”

Beneath the photos was a packet of letters wrapped in tissue and tied with a red ribbon. Gran opened it and I saw the one on top, addressed in careful copperplate script: Mrs. Edward McCrae, 34 Elm Street, London, Ontario, Canada. My great-grandmother. Gran leafed through the envelopes and pulled a telegram out from the bottom of the pile. She handed it to me.

Sir/Madame, It is my painful duty to inform you that a report has this day been received notifying the death of No. 16798, Rank Sergeant, Name Alfred McCrae, Regiment 5th Battalion, which occurred on the 6th of June 1916, and I wish to express to you my sympathy and the regret of the Militia Council at your loss. The cause of death was Killed in Action. Any application you may wish to make regarding the late soldier’s effects should be addressed to...

I felt an unexpected lump in my throat. It was as if the telegram had just been delivered.

“I will never forget that day,” said Gran softly. “It felt like the whole world just ended.”

We were silent for a while.

I folded up the telegram from the War Department and handed it back to Gran. As she replaced it in the pack of letters, one slipped out sideways and I caught a glimpse of the address:

Miss Emily Stuart, 110 Main Street, London, Ontario.

“Who is Emily?” I asked.

Gran hesitated a fraction of a second, then said, “That was me.”

“You? Why was he writing letters to you?”

She slowly slipped the stray envelope back in the pile, then looked up at me. “Because I was his fiancée,” she said softly.

The penny dropped.

We sat for a while as I absorbed this. “So how is it you ended up marrying Gramps?” I asked.

“Oh, it didn’t happen right away,” she replied. “On that terrible day, your Gramps was beside himself. He ran all the way down to the recruiting office and tried to get them to let him go in his brother’s place. He was eighteen by then, but they wouldn’t take him because he was the sole source of support for the family. Rules were rules, and that was the end of it.

“So he came back home defeated. I can still see him walking slowly up the lane, his head down and his shoulders drooping. He didn’t come into the house. He just sat on the veranda for the longest time. So I went out to console him. The difference between us was that I was prepared for this news and he was not.

“He just said over and over, ‘I can’t make it right, I can’t make it right’, and I knew his heart was broken. There was nothing I could say. So we just sat there with our arms around each other and cried. It was the saddest moment of my life.”

I felt like crying myself. I came over and put my arm around her.

“I’m so sorry, Gran,” I said. “I never knew.”

She smiled. “You are so like your Gramps,” she said, patting my hand. “But you were asking how we ended up together. Well, that story is much happier. About a year later, he invited me out for a walk, and we talked a lot about Alfred. And then he said that he might have found a way to make it right. He said he had been in love with me long before Alfred even knew I existed, but he was too shy to say anything. He wouldn’t have stood in Alfred’s way, of course, but after we lost Alfred, everything changed.

Anyhow, he proposed, I accepted, and we've been happy ever since."

We heard the front door opening and Gramps stomping the snow off his galoshes.

"This must stay between us two," Gran cautioned as we replaced the trunk's contents. "Gramps would be all right with you knowing, but we need to respect his privacy with the others."

I understood instinctively and nodded. "Of course, Gran," I replied.

We went downstairs and Gran met Gramps. The rest of the family had left.

"Cup of tea, dear?" Gran asked.

"Grand, grand," he said, giving her a quick kiss. She left for the kitchen, leaving the two of us alone. He walked towards me and put out his hand. "Sorry I flew off the handle, lad," he apologized. We shook. "It takes a real man to admit when he was wrong, and I was wrong to lose my temper."

Then a twinkle appeared in those piercing blue eyes: "But you're still wrong about the flag!"

We both laughed, restored.

"Your Gran and I were talking about the Great War earlier," he said as we sat down together in the living room. "I got bogged down in the sacrifice and the loss and forgot what it was all for." His craggy face softened and he cupped my chin with his giant hand. "I think it's time you heard about the man who earned your freedom for you."

We talked late into the night. I learned a lot about Alfred, but even more about Gramps. He told me how hard it was to see the families crowding around the casualty lists every day, and how hard it was to see the flag everywhere he looked and know he would never fight under it.

"I got over the shame of not fighting," said Gramps. "I did my duty at home, went to work at the gas company and earned a living. But I wanted to make it right for the families who paid the ultimate price. I helped them out whenever I could, did repairs, ran errands, took some of the boys under my wing. I even put coins in the gas meters so no one would be cold in the winter. It wasn't much, but it made me feel better."

The cost of the war had never been personal for me before. I had always understood the tragedy of lost lives, lost potential, senseless destruction; these were the lessons of the history books. But I knew these families Gramps was talking about. I felt for them. And I began to see things in a different way.

“Thanks for telling me all that,” I said as the conversation wound down in the early hours of the morning. “It means a lot to me to know about Uncle Alfred. And I think I understand better what the flag meant to so many people, then and now. I think I’d feel the same way.”

“I taught you well,” he said. “You know how to fight to win, and sometimes you need that. But debating isn’t always about winning and losing. Sometimes a debate’s just a meeting place where you find common ground and resolve your differences. Remember that. Always make sure you understand your opponent in your heart.”

We both stood up and embraced, something we rarely did. “It still looks like the back end of a monkey,” he said as he saw me to the door. “But I can live with it.”

“I love you, Gramps,” I said.

“I love you too,” he replied.

I’ve been a counselor and a mentor in peaceful conflict resolution my entire career. I’ve had my successes, but some days I doubt that we humans will ever get past the fight-night mentality. When I feel that way, I let my eyes stray to a flag stand I keep in the corner of my office. In it is an old Red Ensign crossed with the Maple Leaf. Balanced on the point where the two flag poles cross is a monkey. I think Gramps would approve.

Section Three

Now, in Fact...

Let's read about things as they are now

Medicine Mentors in Canada

Ian Prattis

White Eagle Woman

It was during a gathering of elders in 1978 that I first met White Eagle Woman where she announced that she did not like me at all! Her rebuke was perhaps well deserved, given how dense and unaware I must have seemed. My disjointed education and experience with the Native American domain of mysticism did, however, slowly develop into a seamless pattern rather than remain as random knots stretching across an abyss.

The blunt introduction to White Eagle Woman was a prelude to a 30-year period of training and healing under her guidance. She was a heavyset woman with a round face and long black hair, but it was the air of quiet authority that pervaded her presence that immediately struck me. She rarely smiled, but when she did it illuminated the entire room when her dark eyes lit up with mirth. I was very fortunate to be in her hands. She was the first of three incredible medicine people in Canada who provided me with shamanic training and teachings over the next three decades. White Eagle Woman directed the shamanic process of my healing from childhood sexual abuse, and this allowed the mosaic of the past to start revealing itself.

Shamans and medicine people from far and wide came to consult with White Eagle Woman. Elders from the Amazon would come to see her. She was a holder of the Midewiwin lineage, a secret tradition of medicine people which stretched far and wide across the Americas. At that first encounter at the elder's gathering she told me about a Vision Quest on her reserve in Sault Ste. Marie in south western Ontario. I was to be there, as she had received instructions from her ancestors to train me. That humbled me and was enough for my attendance.

The eight-day Vision Quest began and finished with a sweat lodge. In between were six days of fasting, prayer and ceremony in the wilderness. White Eagle Woman located me in a small grove of birch and oak trees and I had to stay within a strictly designated

area. The other seven participants in the Vision Quest were located in a different part of the forest, distant and unseen. I found some level ground for my tarp and strung it over a frame built from what I could find within the grove. I placed my coloured ribbons at each of the four directions, also for the realms of above and below. One of the oak trees became the symbolic stem of my pipe. The bowl of the pipe was a clamshell with tobacco in it. As the sun moved the tree's shadow, I had to be alert and move the clamshell in the same direction around the base of the tree.

I was very still and silent, observing my territory's nuances; the leaves, smells, insects and the rain, all while in a constant state of prayer and thanksgiving. White Eagle Woman located herself in a trailer close by for anyone who needed guidance. She indicated that a medicine bear would visit one of us and to report that to her. Time passed in a seamless flow, scarcely existing, before we gathered for the final sweat lodge once the Vision Quest was over. On coming off the land, a surprise awaited. I had to consume a half cup of blueberries and then drink vast quantities of a foul tasting concoction created by White Eagle Woman. This was a cleansing medicine to make me throw up the blueberries. It was quite disgusting. Especially for me, as it took a long time before I vomited them up. White Eagle Woman's comment to me was terse. She pursed her lips and looked at me quizzically:

"Hmmm. You're holding on tight to resist the truth you need to know!"

I had no idea what she was referring to. White Eagle Woman asked about the medicine bear. Nobody reported experiencing it. In exasperation she turned to me and announced that she had seen the medicine bear visit me twice. What did I remember? I recalled dreaming about a tall, gangly and somewhat goofy creature that was not a bear to my mind. I had also noticed the creature on another day, out of the corner of my eye, sitting next to the sacred oak tree. White Eagle Woman immediately threw tobacco on the fire to absolve my ignorant gaffe and instructed me that a medicine bear can take on many forms. The goofy creature was the most receptive one for an idiot like me.

Though the medicine bear had been easy on me, White Eagle Woman was certainly not. She chastised my lack of insight while we were all in the sweat lodge. Later on, in private, she quietly revealed

the door that had been opened wide due to the medicine bear experience. The visit was to assess whether I was capable of receiving medicine gifts from the past. White Eagle Woman identified the female entity that was trying to come through, as a medicine woman from the American southwest, before white settlement. She even named her, Trailing Sky, and indicated that this entity was trying to come through to me in this 21st century. Further, that she would bring powerful medicine gifts and I had to find the wisdom to receive them.

The significance of what my mentor was saying did not penetrate very deeply, as I still placed intimations about the feminine in an intellectual, scholarly frame. The only insight I had was a scholarly one that I was somehow engaging with the *anima*, a vital reflection of Jungian psychology. The real significance of the *anima* experience remained buried. White Eagle Woman sensed correctly that I was not open at this time to receive Trailing Sky's presence, so she advised me to constantly dialogue with the internal feminine, directing me first of all to White Calf Buffalo Woman, a prominent source of Lakota Sioux spirituality. I could grasp that direction along with Carl Jung's concept of *anima*, yet did not see that White Eagle Woman was carefully preparing me for a major leap in consciousness.

On a daily basis I followed White Eagle Woman's instructions. I would come to a stop, look deeply and dialogue with the feminine seeds of knowledge in my consciousness. I listened deeply in the silence to the communications from feminine wisdom within me to address issues and questions. This became my fieldwork of life, observation and understanding the field of consciousness through the eyes of the internal feminine. Silence and skilful deep looking were certainly important, yet I knew that dialogue with the internal feminine was the key. I made diary entries with my questions and dilemmas, doubts and misgivings then waited quietly for a reply from within. I wrote with respect, love and gratitude and anticipated counsel to arise from inside. It was frequently not what I expected, hence my faith in its integrity.

White Eagle Woman also ensured that I trained with other shamans in journeying, so I could eventually create a form that would be acceptable for non-indigenous people. White Eagle Woman had taught me how to create a mental medicine wheel

earlier. I was always to start by bringing into my mind the ancient shaman from the East, then the South, West and North in succession. Finally, I was to bring in the ancient shaman from the Centre. She instructed me to see this as a map in my mind, the foundation for a personal mandala. Next, I was instructed by White Eagle Woman to call forth the animal guides I had personally experienced, again starting from the East. I had experienced many animal guides and told her so. White Eagle Woman retorted with some exasperation:

“Choose the most powerful ones, dammit.”

With that cryptic encouragement, I chose mountain lion in the East, moose in the South, deer in the West and medicine bear in the North, with dolphin and whale below and the great eagles above. The space at the centre of the medicine wheel was a stillpoint, a safety zone and conduit for different time/space conjunctions and the meeting place for my later dialogues with Trailing Sky.

Susan Tatoosh

In 1990, I took a sabbatical leave from my job at Carleton University in Ottawa. In addition to teaching a course at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, I was conducting energy and healing workshops in the city. This led to my offering a retreat in the high plateau area of southern Colorado, near Crestone. Quite a few people had signed up for this but all fell away except one: Susan Tatoosh, elder of the Shuswap First Nation. She was very quiet spoken with a gentle smile that lit up her features. She carried her slim frame with great elegance. The power within her was largely concealed, as I later found out when I became the butt of her exasperation. She knew that her ancestors were instructing her to guide me to realizations I had long ago buried. The retreat turned into a major learning experience for me, as Susan led me to deeper revelations, not the other way around as I had expected. We spent time in meditation and ceremony. The arid desert scrub of the high plateau, cut through by small streams, was our backyard. Wherever we walked there was always a gathering of eagles. I did not notice this until Susan pointed out our recurring company. One morning after breakfast she called to me:

“Jan, there is someone here to speak with you.”

I went to the door. There was no one there, or on the pathway.
“Who? Where?”

She pointed to a large golden eagle on the scrubland close to the house. “He is there waiting for you.”

I slowly walked over, approached the eagle and squatted down.
“Do you hear anything?” The elder was right behind me.

“No.”

“Stop thinking. Empty your mind. Do you still not hear?”

“No.”

“He called you by a name you should remember. Did you hear?”

“No.”

There was a long pause from the elder. She continued: “You’re so useless Ian. From the way you are squatting down your name should be Shits with Eagles.”

In exasperation she slapped me on the back of the head and stormed back to the house and watched me from the doorway. I slowly rose to my feet and waited for the eagle to fly. He stayed there right in front of me. Then I felt or heard him communicate, that I should go to the elder. I did. She was still steamed with me.

“Don’t you realize yet Ian? You were here before and could speak with eagles and other creatures? That’s what the eagle told me and you got nothing. I will name you rightly as Shits with Eagles. You are so stuck in your own shit in your mind.”

I offered to Susan that I had heard the eagle speak as I stood up to return to the elder. She put her hands on her hips, still fuming:

“Progress at last. Maybe he will come to you in dreamtime and you had better tell me. For now, get out there and listen without any thought in that shit laden mind of yours. Breathe slowly as I have taught you. Stand apart from all notions. Wait. Listen.”

Still I heard nothing, sensed nothing; I just looked at this magnificent creature.

“Speaks with Eagles, we have been waiting for you.”

Where did that voice come from? Was this some kind of trick? I turned round to see Susan smiling. Was she a ventriloquist playing with me? She gestured that I turn my gaze and attention to the eagle. He was preening his feathers, still there within 10 feet of me. I took a small step forward and kneeled down so our eyes were on the same level. Not that eagles smile, but it felt as though this one was

amused by my discomfort as I knelt on stones and a small cactus. I found it strange that I had sensed the name Speaks with Eagles. That was a name bestowed upon me by an Algonquin elder 10 years ago in 1980 during a sweat lodge ceremony to reconnect humanity to the Earth Mother. Susan Tatoosh knew about this ceremony and the naming. It was the source of her scornful sarcasm.

The eagle and I stayed like that immobile for an endless moment.

“We protect and guide your direction.”

The voice in my head was deep and resonant. I felt myself going into a sort of trance and wondered if I was hallucinating. What had Susan put in my food at breakfast? Really stupid things I thought of. The great eagle was patient and waited for my thoughts to fade away.

“We will come to you in ways you cannot know. We are at the pinnacle of the medicine wheel that becomes sanctuary for you.”

What medicine wheel? A-a-ah, the one that White Eagle Woman instructed me to create in my mind of course, I get it. Then quickly I came back to stillness, ignoring the ache in my leg muscles and the cactus needle in my left knee. For long moments I gave myself up to this beautiful eagle, not understanding too much at all. Then he gathered himself and launched into flight. I watched him as he flew with huge wing beats over the scrubland towards the southern hills of the Rockies surrounding Crestone. Even when he was out of sight, I just stayed there. Then there were Susan’s hands gently on my shoulders.

“You can stand up now.”

My left knee was bleeding. She led me to the house and applied ice to the knee, which had become quite swollen. She had heard everything and knew I was now open to being tutored by her wisdom. Susan Tatoosh, elder of the Shuswap nation, educated me about Eagle Medicine, as her ancestors had instructed.

Grandfather William Commanda

Grandfather William Commanda, spiritual elder of the Algonquin Nation, taught me about the legends of the Seven Fires Prophecy. He was revered throughout Quebec and Ontario, and created the Circle of All Nations organization some 40 years ago. It was inclusive, as the name implies, and a very unpopular step with many

aboriginal groups who had suffered greatly from oppression by the wider society. His vision, however, was clear: to create a global centre for all peoples at the sacred Chaudière Falls in the city of Ottawa, based on models of healing and reconciliation long established in aboriginal culture. The plans and architecture were carefully drawn together and simply await implementation.

Grandfather had a welcoming spirit and a twinkle of humour in his kind eyes. He was open to everyone who wished to spend time with him and share his wisdom. He taught me what he and other Native American spiritual leaders believe: that present day humanity has entered the Seventh Fire. A time for hard choices, to either remain on the same destructive course or to incubate a major change in consciousness so the Eighth Fire can be ignited. This is an internal Fire for basic human goodness to prevail. The Seven Fires Prophecy is meant for all peoples, to encourage a new generation to fearlessly come together and create a society based on earth wisdom and harmony. I was told by Grandfather that it invokes an end to bloodshed and suffering, the beginning of forgiving and reconciliation. He was the holder of the Seven Fires Prophecy Wampum Belt until he died in 2011. The belt was created in 1400 CE and encodes the potential evolution from the Seventh Fire to the Eighth Fire. I discovered from him that the prophecy was both a warning and an opportunity for reconciliation and change.

Grandfather was a formidable figure and influenced me greatly in the writing of *Failsafe: Saving the Earth from Ourselves*. He provided a generous testimonial. I drew upon the wisdom of the elders to show that human beings are programmed literally with a Failsafe, which will ultimately kick in, unleashed by our very will to survive. The Failsafe I was describing referred to the necessary incorporation of the Eighth Fire into everyday life. Grandfather was also a trickster with a wicked sense of humour. He warned me, with a hint of mischief, that I would receive a visit from the Thunder Beings that would scare the hell out of me and totally confuse everyone else.

Pine Gate Mindfulness Community in Ottawa, where I am the resident Zen teacher, had for some years participated in an annual sweat lodge ceremony. Just before 2004's winter set in, we entered into an extraordinary *inipi* experience. On a rain-swept

day, nine members of the Pine Gate community travelled to a remote location in the Gatineau Hills to meet the lodge keeper, Roy Barnes. Grandfather had first introduced me to him at the sweat lodge that I was invited to participate in to reconnect humanity with the Earth Mother. Roy was the fire-keeper for that ceremony on Victoria Island next to the sacred Chaudière Falls, the location for Grandfather's vision to establish a centre for the Circle of All Nations.

Roy was trained in the Lakota Sioux tradition and was also a Sun Dance leader. We were joined by four Dene Chiefs from the Northwest Territories as well as by five members of Roy's First Nations community. I felt these two sets of nine as one body of 18. Despite the relentless rain, the fire heated the rocks beautifully. The ceremony began with blessings and purification. In the first round I was asked to speak about my work for peace and reconciliation and to extend a welcome to the Dene chiefs from the far north of Canada. One of the chiefs replied and honoured me for setting in motion the reconciliation between traditions and cultures. There was an auspicious energy present from the get-go that soon turned into a startling reality. In the third round, as the men offered prayers for the Earth, thunderclaps exploded overhead and a lightning bolt struck the sweat lodge, travelling underground into the fire pit. No one was hurt or injured, but we all felt the ground shake underneath us, like a mini earthquake.

After the completion of the fourth round, we emerged from the sweat lodge quite shaken yet knowing something awesome had taken place. The fire-keeper tending to the rocks and wood for the fire recounted how the entire sky turned a bright yellow when the lightning bolt struck the sweat lodge. In the weeks and months that followed, Roy and the Dene chiefs consulted with elders and medicine people about the events of this *inipi* ceremony. They were told that this was a Thunder Beings lodge, a mark of respect for whoever had been honoured inside the *inipi*. Most elders had only heard of this in legend and offered honour to whoever received this blessing from the Thunder Beings. When this was told to me, I placed the honour on the Dene Chiefs and the lodge keeper. They stated firmly that this was for me also. We had all been marked by this auspicious visit from the Thunder Beings. Roy later related to me that the medicine people and Sun

Dancers across the country honoured the work I do by keeping me in their prayers so that I would be protected. I was humbled by this unexpected source of support.



Tipi and Medicine Wheel

On the Hill
Molly O'Connor

Canadians have a reputation for being reserved, of being a society of people who do not wave their banner high. Not me, eh! I stand at attention for the national anthem and sing loud enough to deafen the people around me. I display the easily recognized red and white maple leaf flag whenever I travel to foreign destinations and I consider Canada Day on Parliament Hill an annual pilgrimage. Ah, but I do not stop there! I impose my patriotism on everyone I can.

Whenever I learn that friends or acquaintances have never been to the Hill on Canada Day, I go out of my way to get them there. Since moving to Ottawa in 1972, I have shuttled my family and numerous guests to my favourite parking spot at the National Library. Armed with folding chairs they are then marched along Wellington Street to the Hill where I promptly settle them on the lawns in front of the Centre Block to enjoy celebrating being Canadian. Over the years and through changes of government I've heard different Prime Ministers recounting our short history and praising the future of this young country. I've helped welcome dignitaries with my loud yahoos and wildly waving flags. Governor Generals have come and gone, each delivering well thought-out words to Canadians across our land, those on the grounds and those sitting at home watching the celebrations on television. The year Queen Elizabeth II visited found me and a friend crushed and sweating pressed against a barrier for a glimpse of her. Uncomfortable as we were, we wouldn't have missed the experience for anything. Canada Day on Parliament Hill is, for me, a time to publicly celebrate being Canadian.

All this festivity takes place on July 1st and was originally called Dominion Day. I remember those days and the small town celebrations when I marched in parades proudly wearing my crisply pressed brownie uniform. Those celebrations still take place in nearly every town across Canada but on The Hill is where you will find me. Fond memories of my children, my mother and

my friends who have done the trek with me flood back on that special day. However, my most memorable foray to The Hill was in 2005.

During a winter visit I learned that Carol, a native of Winnipeg and my friend of some 50 years, who was a consummate world traveller, had never celebrated Canada Day in Ottawa. I was aghast then adamant and would consider no alternative; she had to come that summer. Carol was an expat, choosing to live in the kinder climate in Palm Springs, California, and then in Mexico. She has, however, always remained a proud Canadian. Convincing another friend from Picton to join us, the trip was planned. Carol and Mary arrived on the VIA Rail train on June 30th.

Carol, Mary and I fall into the category labelled 'Seniors', but we are still kids at heart. That being said, we allowed lots of time to navigate the streets and the crowds to view the morning festivities. Since I know the drill (the program is similar year after year) I positioned us close to the centre of the cordoned-off area of the centre lawn in front of the West Block. From there we would have a perfect view of the RCMP Musical Ride.

Sixty-four Royal Canadian Mounted Police, dressed in their famed red uniforms and mounted on sleek black steeds, performed their precision choreographed maneuvers back and forth in groups of four and eight right in front of us. We cheered and clapped as they formed wagon wheels, filed past in crossovers and galloped by with lances lifted high. The performance lasts over a half hour and the grand finale is always a dynamic crowd pleaser. Charging the full length of the parade square the horses come to an abrupt halt and the Mounties jab the lances in a forward thrust. I tore my eyes away from the thundering four-times-sixty-four hooves to watch Carol. She was transfixed until a lance point stopped only meters from her face. She flinched, sat paralyzed for a moment then broke into 'bravos' louder than everyone's.

We watched the Changing of the Guard, cheered the Kilty bands then quietly listened to the Prime Minister speak. It was a special year as the original maple leaf flag was returned to Canada after it had mysteriously disappeared 40 years before. As I listened to the story of its journey and how it came to be returned to Canada, I felt a gripping in my chest. I watched the flag being

handed over. I swallowed and held my hand over my heart. Tears fell shamelessly down Carol's cheeks, 'proud to be Canadian' was written all over her face.

Following the formal speeches, performances by exciting Canadian talent delighted the crowd. Knowing what was ahead on the program and how emotional my lifelong friend was, I watched Carol closely and was not disappointed. Surprise, then elation, spread across her face as the cannons loudly reported followed by our famed Snowbirds soaring over the back of the Peace Tower, jet streams of red and white behind them. All eyes were riveted to the sky to see them fan out over the wildly cheering crowd then disappear over the city. Thirty thousand people stood silent, holding close the moment. Then babble returned and chairs were folded.

As the masses emptied into the streets we watched a sea of revelers in red, waving flags and wearing crazy patriotic hats. Children and adults were singing *O Canada* and we joined in. Full of warmth and fuzzies, with arms draped around each other we headed for the car.

Carol and Mary insisted on thanking me over and over again but I countered that we were not finished celebrating yet. The morning on Parliament Hill only began the day. Leaving downtown, we drove to my friend Polly's and had a much needed quiet time, a rest before the heading out again. I did mention that we were senior ladies. With Polly (another senior) added to our group, we headed over the Alexandria Bridge to the Quebec side to board the *Senator*, one of the Ottawa River cruise boats. The plan was to take a tour downriver, have dinner on board, and return beneath Nepean Point by dark. However, we were minutes onto the river when the captain announced there were weather warnings and we would be returning to the dock. The blackening sky and rocking boat confirmed he was right. Disappointed we had missed the river cruise, we were somewhat appeased when dinner was served on board at dockside. It did not disappoint, and the grand finale was yet to come. The short downpour and black clouds gave way to a fading sky that darkened and cleared simultaneously; passengers flocked to the ship's railing. No celebration could be complete without fireworks and in Ottawa there is no better place to watch them than from the river.

Brilliant flashes rose high over the Parliament Buildings erupting into a blaze of sparkling bursts filling the sky. Cascading like waterfalls they fell toward us, faded and disappeared. Oohs and Aahs, clapping and joyous cheers mingled with the noise of the fireworks. Then all was quiet, penetrated only by a lone voice: "Happy Canada Day!" I think it was me. Then from somewhere toward the front of the boat a tenor voice soared into our national anthem, soon joined by everyone on board. Sauntering to the car I observed my guests. Proud to be Canadian was written all over their faces.

Yep, we north of the 49th parallel are said to be a reserved society of people who do not wave our banner high.

Not so on Canada Day, eh!

Could You Pull the Duvet Up, Please?

Bill Horne

*T*hese seven innocuous words, clearly spoken by my wife Dannie at about 3:00 a.m. on May 29th, 2015, launched me onto a journey I had never contemplated and was totally unprepared to take.

She had just returned to bed after a normal visit to the washroom. I instinctively responded that since it was not cool in the room, did she really want the duvet? No response. I asked her again, more loudly. Again, no response. A bit of a shake. She could not have fallen back to sleep so quickly, not even Dannie. On came the lights. Lying there, eyes open but not seeing. A few seconds of utter disbelief, and it sank into me that this was way past wanting the duvet.

911. Four minutes and 30 seconds later the first team arrived, laden with gear. Four minutes later, a second team arrived. Enough technology spread on the bed to equip a small hospital.

Grim faced teams: “We are taking her to the Civic Hospital, the regional stroke centre, and please don’t speed getting there.”

After grabbing a few things that I thought she or I might need for the short time she would be there before being released, fully recovered, so we could finalize our plans for celebrating our 50th wedding anniversary in July, I headed for the hospital.

Several nurses and doctors hovering around, all kinds of tubes and other sensors connected everywhere, while she lay, seemingly asleep.

“Dannie, squeeze my fingers”, one nurse said. A slight squeeze. This should work out okay, I thought. She is responsive.

Neurosurgery Resident: “Mr Horne, let’s go where we can talk about what we know and don’t know. Your wife has suffered a massive stroke. We are still doing tests. There are several blockages. In some cases we are able to go into the arteries where the blockages are and remove them, but in her case we cannot do that as the danger is that they will break apart trying to remove them, and make it worse.”

Time to advise the kids. Two grown daughters, married; one couple in Ottawa, one in London, Ontario. Down to Starbucks in the hospital lobby, large coffee, about five-ish in the morning. E-mails sent.

Back to the resuscitation unit. Dannie is no longer responding to the squeeze fingers command. Occasionally tries to remove the oxygen mask; at first successfully. I put it back on. Then just random swipes at it.

Daughters respond. Stephenie will be here soon. Husband Andrew is making plans to return from abroad. Jen and Gerry have packed the car in London and are on the way.

More updates: Dannie has been moved to the acute care section in Neurosciences, with two patients per nurse. There are blockages in three organs: brain, heart and lungs. Average size of a blockage is 1 cm. Some of Dannie's are 10 cms.

I send the first email to as many of her friends as I can. Shocked responses pour in. Most especially from her family doctor, who had seen her 36 hours prior, and thought she might have the onset of pneumonia, and had given her some antibiotics. I assure her I do not hold her responsible.

Update from the doctor in charge: "If she survives, she will have no ability to speak, she will hear noise but will not be able to process the sounds into speech, she will be blind, and she will have no ability to use anything on her right side. And she will need twenty-four/seven medical care for the rest of her life."

Instinctively, I blurt out, "But couldn't I provide that care?"

The doctor says, looking at me very strangely, "And what would you do after hour thirty-six, Mr. Horne?"

We are mutual Power of Attorney and Personal Care designates. Dannie had worked in a long-term care facility for 30 years as the Creative Arts Service Manager. She often said I was to throw her under a bus before putting her there. I tell the medical team there will be no heroics.

For the first time in my life I am absolutely terrified. I think there is some chance that she might actually 'survive', if that is the term for what the doctor described.

Jen and Gerry arrive. We maintain someone at the bedside while the others take short breaks. We understand she is resting comfortably. We finally go home about 11:00 p.m. on the day of

the stroke. A few minutes after getting home, Jen's cell phone rings.

"They think we should come back as soon as possible; she has deteriorated."

We all go back. She now appears very peaceful, asleep. Steady breathing. No response to any stimulus. All the sensors and oxygen have been removed. I have now concluded the end is relatively near. We eat and take breaks in shifts. Later in the afternoon we detect a slowing in breathing. Nurse comes in. No heroics.

At about 5:00 p.m. I conclude she has died. The doctor on call is busy tending to another similar case. It is the first time I have ever been with anyone who died in my presence. I am surprised at how fast the skin loses all colour; 15 minutes at most. The doctor comes and certifies. I send a second email.

She was the only girl I ever dated. It is over.

We had agreed to donate whatever organs would be of any use. I undergo an extensive telephone interview on Dannie's life. "Has she ever had sex with anyone from East Africa?" is one of dozens of questions. In the end, they are able to use her eyes before cremation, nothing else.

We regroup. Dannie and I had not made any final plans, on the assumption we would both live forever. By coincidence, there was room at a family plot near Glencoe for three more interments. Dannie's mother, Barrie, a widow since Dannie was four, had died of Alzheimer's at 96, in 1998. She had lived joyously with our kids and us for some 23 years, until we could no longer keep her safely at home. Dannie had not been able to bring herself to inter her ashes, until this very year when we had finally agreed it would be done.

Our wills said we wanted a celebration of life, whatever that was, not a funeral. The Board of Directors of the Ottawa Independent Writers, of which I am a former President, meets at a Kelly Funeral Home's conference room for free. A quick phone call to them and we find the perfect place for a celebration of life, surrounded by gardens. They were Dannie's passion, after her family and her charitable pursuits. Plans come together; we will have a wine and cheese party, another favourite of Dannie's.

We engage the musicians from the Perley Rideau Veterans Health Centre, where Dannie had hired them all over the years, and they are totally on board. A special song is written; performances are arranged. The 1980s theme song of the Horne backyard parties, *Gloria*, by Laura Branigan, will be played for dancing. This ain't gonna be no funeral, folks.

We get to the site early to make sure everything is in order. A lovely room indeed, large enough for the 125 or so guests, and it is full of plastic flowers. We had specified no flowers, in favour of donations to the two charities Dannie was most dedicated to for many years. So the funeral home thought they would fill the room with plastic ones.

With a fervor that surprised even me, I immediately declared that all the plastic flowers had to go. Dannie would roll over in her urn if there were plastic flowers at *her* party. They were quickly removed.

We had warned the guests that this was not a traditional funeral. They could come in whatever attire they wanted. Some of my running buddies showed up in shorts and T-shirts. Some older folks really did not know what to make of it. There was no rent-a-minister who would start his spiel with, "Well, I really did not know Dannie but I understand she was a great lady..."

Yes, there were some speeches, but we warned all speakers their remarks had to celebrate Dannie's life and her passions. All complied.

And then we played *Gloria*. Loud, *really* loud. And I, as the MC, saw a few folks standing there not dancing, arms folded, totally confused. I singled them out and got them dancing. And when it was over I yelled to the music player, "Play it again!" And this time everyone danced. Joyously.

Afterwards, we got several emails from folks who said they were changing their wills to have the same kind of celebration.

I am writing this story on October 12th, 2015 in London, and tomorrow, in the presence of a few family members, we will finally inter Dannie's and her mother's ashes.

The duvet will be pulled up.

The Gardener Who Loved His Country

Bernadette Cox

I dig the soil, the Canada 150 tulip bulbs inside my favourite kitchen bowl beside me, the one normally used for mixing cakes or whipping cream. The soil is surprisingly soft, not nearly as packed as I thought it would be. I ponder the peculiarity of this soft soil but then reason that its loose texture makes sense after all. It was not so long ago that it, like my wounded heart, was heaved and torn, oblivious to the coming new reality of lingering pain. I take the shovel and make a rectangular shape, a little over a foot long and six inches wide, enough for three or four of the bulbs from the pack I have brought with me. More tulips would overpower, and I conclude that a simple remembrance is best as I am already overpowered by the cancer that took him.

I walk the 20 or so feet to the car and get the large plastic container of moist topsoil and peat moss that I had mixed at home after having planted bulbs in his garden, which adorns the front yard of our house. He won an award for that garden a few years back, it so impressed the community beautification committee. Only after he received the award did I take the time to really look at his creation. "It's true," I thought. "It is beautiful." I had to agree that the poppies, a reminder of his time in service and the struggles endured by him, his brothers and so many women and men, were a lovely contrast to the small cedars, one on each side of the bay window. I am sorry now that I had not been more enthusiastic about his floral creations.

Returning to his grave, I kneel down and spread the soil mix, turn it over lovingly with my hands and create the resting places for just four bulbs. If the squirrels stay away, all four might come up in the spring when Canadians will turn their attention to celebrating the country's 150th birthday. I don't have the green thumb he did; so, if I'm lucky, three will bloom. "Three. That is a good number," I think. It has a spiritual balance to it, even if it is an odd number, even though there were just the two of us, even though, now, there is just one of us.

“For you, Boo,” I say out loud as I try to celebrate his life. I sigh. It is hard to celebrate, and I wonder how I will feel about all of the country’s festivities the following year. As much as I know anything, I don’t think I am looking forward to them. My heart just isn’t into anticipating a national hoopla, but I plant these tulips because the simple act honours two of my husband’s greatest loves: love of country and love of gardening. I may not be ready to party, but Ray most certainly would have been. Together, we would have planted bulbs in his front garden as his dog, tethered to the maple tree, watched, tail wagging. The Canadian flag Ray insisted on hoisting on a pole encased by cement into the front lawn of our new house, the house we were going to grow old in together, would have been waving gently in today’s calm breeze. With our work in the front garden finished, we would’ve then moved to the back to plant some more bulbs because Ray never did anything in a small way. If a little was good, then a lot was even better. He probably would’ve barbecued some steak and potatoes for us later in the day with the dog hovering around the barbecue in the hopes that some bits of human food would fall, which often did. I smile as I think about what would have been a glorious day with its visits to the nursery, sunshine, exercise and dirt under our fingernails. Then I choke back tears.

The barbecue is gone now and so is that damn flag. Excuse my language, Canada. To me, the towering pole and flag took away the curb appeal of the house. When the wind picked up, there would be this much-too-precarious sway in the pole for my liking, and I had visions of it crashing down on the house, the neighbours’ cars, or worse, the neighbours themselves. But I had learned early in our marriage there were some arguments I just couldn’t win, and when it came to flags, Ray had free rein.

With similar dedication, Ray attended Remembrance Day ceremonies, no matter how brutal the weather. When he was silly, which was often, he would stand at attention in front of the television during the singing of the national anthem before hockey games. He bought Olympic coins, uncirculated ones depicting our country’s history and older circulated coins that had been touched by innumerable hands a century or more ago. He displayed memorabilia from his army days. You just didn’t mess with the way Raymond P. C. Irvine showed respect for home and native

land because despite the hardships he had suffered, and there had been many, he believed he was among the world's fortunate to live in Canada.

Born in 1949 in the Town of Smiths Falls, Ontario, Ray learned from an early age that if there were any silver platters in life, they were never given. He had to make them or take them. His was a large family, and the babies came often. Like his brothers, sisters, mom and dad, he was often cold and hungry. He stole food: food from local farms and live chickens from the neighbouring apartment.

When he and his brothers got together, it was inevitable they would recount their childhood shenanigans at the beehive, as they called it, an apartment building that found the Irvine clan in its midst. The boys had discovered a small hole in the wall between their apartment and that of a neighbour. Lo and behold, there were live chickens running around next door. It was like striking gold! A small child's hand would feel its way into the hole, a curious chicken would peck at the tiny fingers and quickly the hand would grab onto a leg, wing, neck—anything—and there would be dinner coming through the wall. I don't know for sure, but I believe there were many kind eyes that became temporarily blind when the Irvine children did what was needed, legal or not, to fill their stomachs.

Ray also learned how to cook at an early age, and it was nothing for him to prepare family dinners. I imagine these were meagre meals but as cook, he got to taste, and he knew he would always be on time for supper. Suffer the little children who were a few minutes late for a meal. The faster you ate, the more you got.

It wasn't surprising, then, that as an adult Ray didn't tolerate a depleted pantry, freezer or fridge. We always had too much fresh produce—cheese, meat, fish and breads—for our physical needs, but just the right amount for Ray's emotional ones. We wasted a lot of food.

As a child, Ray had street smarts, but he did not have school smarts. Today, we would understand that his inability to do well at school had everything to do with his stomach, not his brain. He quit school early and used the experience of his older twin brothers to set his path. He joined the army.

The army wasn't good for Ray, though it was good to him. It gave him three meals a day if he chose to eat, a bed at night if he chose to use it, and wonderful memories of two huskies at the Alert signal station who often lay in the snow beside passed-out soldiers and prevented them from freezing to death. Ray probably owed his life to those dogs on more than one occasion. The army eventually forced Ray into hospital and honourably discharged him. That saved his life, too, and while some of his demons followed him, the alcohol did not.

When I entered the picture, about a year after his discharge, it certainly wasn't love at first sight for him, not by a long shot. But it was for me. Perhaps my demons were smaller than his, and he needed a couple of extra years to wrestle his to the ground. He went to college, found his school smarts and became a correctional officer. Shortly after, we moved into our very first house, unmarried. Both of our cancer-widowed mothers did a good job hiding their disapproval of our apparently sinful ways. Whatever his mother may have thought of me for having snagged her son, she changed her tune when she saw the small vegetable garden I had planted.

"Hang onto her, Raymond. You will never go hungry," she pronounced after confirming that I was the one who dug up the soil and planted the lettuce, onions, beans and radishes.

"I would be hard-pressed to feed us for a week, let alone a year, on that garden," I laughed. Of course, I had missed her point.

"A woman who can grow vegetables knows the importance of food and hard work," she explained. It was a big compliment made bigger coming from a woman who had to work to support small children still at home after her husband had died.

Ray and I eventually formalized our relationship in a beautiful church ceremony, after he promised my mother that I would never go hungry and never go cold. Over the 23 years of our marriage, we bought bigger houses with good-sized lots. While I tended to the vegetables, Ray purchased houseplants and created flower gardens, much to the delight of my mother, who had much-admired ornamental gardens of her own. My mother and my husband had something in common about which they could talk, other than me.

In time, Ray's houseplants and flower gardens annoyed me. The plants cluttered the house, in my opinion, and we could just never get clear on whose turn it was to water and when. Weeding was normally not on his to-do list, so it would end up on mine. The ornamental gardens and most of the houseplants were among the other non-negotiables, though, and whether I liked it or not, they remained a prominent feature in our life together.

On the morning of December 19, 2015 I saw things I could not have imagined and desperately hoped that I would forget someday. Shortly after 11:00, the doctor confirmed that Ray had taken his last breath. I prayed an Our Father, a Hail Mary and a Glory Be to the Father, even though I didn't want to glorify God at all. I told Ray his sister Opal was waiting for him, and he needed to go to her.

Around New Year's Day I took the flag and almost all of its pole into the garage where they were destined for the garbage. Stuck in the cement foundation was the bottom portion of the pole, an 18" tumour standing ready to impale anyone who wasn't paying attention. It was the ugliest thing I had ever seen in my life.

That winter was kind for its mild temperatures and its gentle snowfalls, except for one record-setting day. Once the snow was gone, I hired someone to dig the flag's foundation out of the lawn and fill in the gaping hole left behind.

I determined I would keep his gardens for the first summer. I really didn't know what else to do with the flower beds in the front and back, anyway. I could at least try to grow some plants and flowers in them, I figured. I surprised myself by how hard I worked preparing the beds and how carefully I planned what to plant and where. With the flowers blooming and the plants growing wide and tall, I could feel small doses of a possible future returning to my life. No, the gardens weren't as nice as Ray's handiwork; they wouldn't win any awards, but they were pleasant enough to look at all the same.

Canada Day approached, and I ventured into the basement to see if I could find the little Canadian flags with which Ray edged his garden. There they were. I measured the garden and placed the flags as evenly as possible. I did that to memorialize Ray, and in doing so I realized he had left me a precious gift, the gift of knowing how great our country is and that it deserves our love.

The days grew shorter and the temperatures started to fall once again. I wondered if it would be possible to save some of the coleus plants, or propagate some from cuttings, so I could enjoy them during the winter. I scratched my head at the prospect that I, of all people, wanted to create and care for houseplants. But these were plants that had grown in soil that Ray had tended and it felt as if part of Ray was in them.

“Maybe I could even bring one of the plants here next year,” I wonder, my mind starting to return to the immediate task at hand. A coleus would look nice against the tulips and then continue to grow as the tulips fade. Yes, I decide. I do like the idea. I gently put soil over the bulbs I have just planted. Maybe when I visit Ray’s grave next Spring I will see three or four red and white tulips emerging. Perhaps, by then, my heart will be partially healed or healed enough that I can feel some of the joy of a country celebrating. I hope so, but it’s hard to know the future when I am so uncertain about the present.

All I know is, in this singular moment it makes perfect sense to put these special bulbs in this special, sacred place. I pat the soil. “Rest well,” I say. I do not know if I am speaking to Ray, to the tulips or to me.

I stand up. I like the dampness on my knees, the way the soil feels on my hands and the way it smells. I gather the plastic container, shovel, my favourite mixing bowl and remaining bulbs. As I walk back to the car, I wonder what Ray would say to me if he could. I think I know.

“Thank you, my love. Thank you.”

Red-Painted Toes

Judith Cowan

I think I knew even then that the events of that warm, languid, summer afternoon, events deceptive in their simplicity, would resound with me for years after my mother's death. It was a beautiful July day, perfect for a long drive. On a whim, I decided to make the three hour trip along Highway 401 to Marysville to visit my aged mother. Shortly after noon I saw the beautiful old stone house, bordered by apple trees on one side and a farmer's field on the other, my childhood home for 10 years.

I drove down the long laneway, sheltered by pines we had planted some 10 years ago. I soon got a glimpse of Mom, waiting in her rocking chair, eagerly positioned near the window.

"Judy, come sit down and let me have a good look at you." After our two hour gabfest, Mom asked if I would like to stay overnight.

"Yes," I replied and immediately started to work out the problem of what to do with the next seven hours. My mom goes to bed at about 5:00 pm, give or take 10 minutes or so. It was now about 3:30, still hours of beautiful sunlight left, some of it even then streaming onto our faces as we sat on the back stoop, a stoop as weathered and worn as my mother's 82-year-old face.

"You know, I think I'll just take a little drive out to Picton," I announced, a trip I've been contemplating for months each time I passed the signpost at the T-junction, alternate arrows announcing Picton and Marysville.

"Well, that sounds like a nice idea. I'll come too."

"Really?" With the exception of doctor's visits and other necessities, Mom rarely left her home.

"Yes, I think I'll just do that. You go up and get my good white pants out of the drawer. The capris. I'll wear those."

So off my 82-year-old mother and I went, my 1990 Mazda slowing well in advance of the blinking traffic lights on the county roads. After a 30 minute drive, we passed through the gates of the Sand Banks Provincial Park and hit the first visitor area. Mindful

of my mother's age and heart condition, I grabbed the beach chairs out of the trunk and set a slow pace up the long slope, slippery with sand and gravity.

"Here's the path to the beach. Oops, is that a 'Watch Out for Poison Ivy' sign there?"

We crested the summit and gazed down through the tall grasses to the beach area below.

"Nope, it's not this one, Mom," I announced.

I was on a quest to discover the Sand Banks of my youth, particularly a late night swim with my teenaged brothers and sister. We had snuck out at midnight, arriving in my father's old 1960 truck, four of us jammed in the front seat, racing down the path and over the hill, nothing ahead of us but shimmering white sand dunes, grasses weaving in the wind and water glistening in the moonlight. This mess of weeds and transplanted tumbleweeds wasn't it.

We found a second parking spot and started the now familiar trek up.

"Naw, this isn't the place I remembered. Are you okay to keep going?"

We drove to a third spot. There, we settled. It wasn't *the* spot, but it was *a* spot. We never did find the beach of my youth. But I found something else... the memory of my 82-year-old mother, sitting in my little green beach chair, legs stretched out in her white capris, red-painted toes poking out of the sand... gazing out at the water, her beautiful face, with those gorgeous brown eyes, warmed by the rays of the setting sun.

I mentioned this memory to my mother one cold winter day a couple of years later. She was talking about how she didn't think she would make it through the winter.

"It's so long and I'm so tired," she said.

"Remember the trip to the Sand Banks?" I recalled the events of that day, including our stop at Mom's request for an ice cream at a roadside stand 'for the ride back'. I explained that the memory was one of my favourites.

"Why?" she asked.

"Because it showed such a spirit of adventure. What 82-year-old goes off to the Sand Banks at a moment's notice, trailing up and down the dunes after her daughter?"

Smiling, she nodded. “I just thought it would be fun,” she added.

Years later, after my mother’s death, this is the memory I often summon up from my fading storehouse of who my mother was; this memory warms me still.



A View of Sandbanks by M. Hatt

On The Ridge

Eleanor Abra

The stone is warm in the sun, shining bright white. I trace my fingers in the name engraved upon the stone; one of thousands around the base of the monument that reaches up to the sky. I hope the man whose name I feel has been found, and given a grave. I am reminded of a painting I once saw, *The Ghosts of Vimy Ridge*, and try desperately to get the image of soldiers wandering the Ridge, looking out over the Douai Plain, out of my mind.

Too many men are lost, with just names on a monument, at the Menin Gate, around a battlefield cemetery with the headstones that read, "A Soldier of the Great War, Known unto God." Sometimes there is a maple leaf for a Canadian or just a cross for a soldier of unknown country or battalion. Names with no grave attached, graves with no name.

What happened to them, these unknown warriors who perished in mud, and cold and terror? I catch my breath suddenly. I am cold, and feeling a terrible soul wrenching fear. What is happening to me? But it isn't me. I am feeling someone else's fear, with an undercurrent of resolve. Is there someone beside me?

As quickly as the feeling comes, it dissipates, leaving me tired; no, not tired, worn out, as if I could not put one foot ahead of the other. All I want to do is to stagger back to the bus and sit, and think of the experience. But the group is being called and we are to go to the trench area, and then take the tour of some of the tunnels under Vimy Ridge. Too many are unsafe, with unexploded ordnance too near for a careful government to allow the tourists to visit, or crumbling after a century of disuse. Even the historians are dissuaded, kept away from the tunnels that could kill them.

As I make my way to the trench system display lined with concrete 'sandbags' I think of the real experience our soldiers had a century ago. Their days spent practicing, preparing, listening to the enemy tunnelling under or over them, with the threat of massive mines blowing them all to Kingdom Come. I have seen some of those mine craters; big enough to swallow my home, and

leave room for that of a neighbour. Just imagine the thoughts that would go through a soldier's head as he listened to spades working on the chalk underneath the ridge. Or listening to Canadian shovels going toward the German lines, ready to pack the earth with explosive.

My imagination is going too fast. I have got to get over this feeling of being rushed, pushed into something terrifying. In the trench the concrete seems to melt into muddy sandbags, some falling, crumbling a bit into the trench. My feet are wet and cold, and as I follow the group to the entrance of the tunnel, I feel something is going to happen that I don't really want to take part in, although I have been practicing for months. I have the distinct impression that someone is beside me again, but I am not sure. I certainly can't see him when I turn to my right, but that feeling is there. Am I experiencing all that he experienced?

I barely hear the tour guide talking about the way the tunnels were excavated, about the trench art; some maple leaves, although they were difficult to carve. Names, battalion badges or numbers, even a few jokes; the letter box back to Toronto. Working chalk with a pocket knife would keep a man occupied, so his thoughts would focus on the image and home, and not on what would be happening when they spilled out of the tunnel and followed the creeping barrage up the Ridge. My thoughts are on what will come next, on the actual attack. I can almost hear the barrage starting, dim, as in the distance.

As we walk carefully through the tunnel, now safely reinforced, with wire mesh keeping us away from fallen parts, and rooms set up to look as they did a century ago, my breath is coming in ragged gasps. I am so afraid, and my traveling companions are beginning to look at me in alarm. "Are you OK?" asks one, and our young Vimy tour guide stops, not liking to hear that kind of question.

"I don't know. I think so, but it is a little humid down here. I'll be glad to get up into the fresh air."

I hope that reassures the guide and the questioner. I don't really know what I am going to experience, out of the tunnel. I almost feel I am in two different places at the same time; or two different times in the same place. I accept the disconnect, and start

to feel a little more secure. The entity beside me gives me some confidence, but I can't say that I am feeling great, not yet.



The Ghosts of Vimy Ridge, William Longstaff. © House of Commons Collection, Ottawa

Once out of the tunnel I feel the compulsion to run, up the ridge to the monument. I can't go cross-country, too many unexploded lumps in the terrain, with their red signs. I hurry up the road, closer, closer, almost there. My tour companions are walking sedately back up to the bus, not feeling my need to hurry.

I stop. I can see, through the snow, the plumes of the exploding shells of the creeping barrage. Snow? Barrage? And I don't see my fellow tourists quietly walking along the roadway. I see, and feel, my comrades rushing forward, always forward, scrambling through the shattered ground. The desperate need to get there, to keep up with the blessed barrage, to meet whatever fate has in store for me is getting stronger, more compelling. But I can't move.

“Come on, mate! We've got them on the hop!”

Do I hear this, or feel it in my mind? I start forward again, pushing up the road to the ridge. I don't see the monument any more. There are men and explosions, and fear, and snow mixed

with dirt and debris. I push the sight of the battle away, and stop once more.

The other beside me, the one who is not really there, wants me to go forward. I am convinced that he is the one sharing his feelings with me. I can't quite see him, but I know he is there. Maybe he is aware of me. Maybe he is more than aware. I try to communicate.

"It's all over now. You can rest. You won the Ridge, that day."

Did I say this out loud? Or just think it? I feel, rather than hear, the sigh.

"It's all over? We won?"

"You did well, and Canada is proud. Thank you."

Can I say more? Should I say more?

And now I am bereft, standing, staring at the white pylons of the massive monument, as he leaves me.

The Convent

Louise Szabo

*W*hen was the last time you walked by the Convent?"

We had just finished lunch at the Green Door restaurant on Main Street when older sister Elaine asked this question. Neither younger sister Joan nor I could remember.

Old Ottawa East was our childhood neighbourhood and standing on Main Street brought me a feeling of nostalgia. Countless were the days I'd walked or bicycled from our house on Glengarry Road to our high school, the Sacred Heart Convent, on Oblate Avenue. My parents had moved away in 1997 and although I'd driven countless times this way, I hadn't actually set foot on Main Street for a very long time.

"Remember that little side door we used?" said Elaine. "Let's walk over and see if we recognize anything."

We headed north along a once so very familiar path. The area was hardly recognizable with the new development going up on Main Street. It blurred my vision of what life was like a long time ago. As we walked along Springhurst Avenue the construction noise dissipated the closer we got to the Convent courtyard and by the time we got there, I felt surrounded by an oasis of serenity. Bold as can be we made our way to the back entrance to check out the doors, and located the one familiar to us. Anyone spotting us from inside might have thought we were three burglars disguised as old ladies. As we stood in the 'schoolyard' reminiscing, two elderly women walked towards us. No doubt they were nuns returning from their walk.

"We were day students here," Elaine told them. Out of over 100 boarders, only seven of us were students from the former De Mazenod School on Main Street, and therefore given permission to attend the Convent as day students. The nuns seemed thrilled to meet us and as keen to talk to us as we were to pump them for information on the future of the religious community. We were ecstatic when they very graciously invited us in for a tour. This

was turning out to be more of an adventure than we'd bargained for.

I had not been in the building since my high school graduation, 58 years ago. When I entered, my mind flooded with memories and I felt again like that awkward young confused teen of long ago. We took an elevator to the first floor, one that certainly was not there during my former days at the Convent. Our first stop was to look at the graduation class photos on the wall next to the main front entrance. All three of us found our pictures with our classmates on display.

We then headed down a hall to what used to be the classrooms. When I entered my classroom, the one and only room I'd been in during my four years of high school, the surroundings disappeared. The room looked bare; empty of desks. Yet all felt vaguely familiar. I stood where my desk would have been and my mind's eye saw my teacher, Sister Gabriel, standing at the front of the room. During morning prayers at the beginning of the school day, she'd put her hands together, bend her head and immerse herself in prayer.



The Sacred Heart Convent as it appears today

We walked to the chapel and I was surprised at how large it seemed. Sunlight streamed into the beautiful interior space. I felt at peace and I would have loved to linger for a while in the presence of God. We then went to the large empty cafeteria. The smell of delicious baking coming from somewhere hidden from view made me long for a dessert. I'd never been here before. As a day student, I'd always gone home for lunch. We visited the library, a room I would have loved to explore, as I was curious about what genre of books the nuns read. We then toured what

would have been the postulant and novice area, a place that had always been a mystery to me. Along the halls were closed doors that could open to rooms used as small intimate chapels or meeting areas. All was quiet, serene and peaceful. I felt the presence of God and angels.

Walking into the recreation hall was like coming home again. I remembered the bazaars that were held in that area and how, during recess, the students gathered in small groups to chat, and then lined up at the sound of the recess bell. The last time I'd been here was at my graduation ceremony. We went up a couple of steps to the low door the day students used to enter the Convent. Against the wall, in its walk-in closet-sized vestibule, were still the wooden open lockers where we had kept our coats. At the bottom of the staircase leading to the main floor, I could visualize my favourite teacher holding a huge platter of delicious cinnamon buns meant for the boarders' afternoon snack. I'd walk down those stairs, look Sister Gabriel straight in the eye and take one knowing full well that I didn't have the 25 cents to pay for it. I wonder if she ever confessed to letting me steal one?

It felt strange to be here in a place that had formed my mind and helped me deal with the angst of my teen years. The place held many memories of a time when I was naïve and innocent. In 1902 only five sisters arrived in Ottawa from Brittany, France. By 1961 at the peak of the order, 245 Sisters lived and worked at the Convent and 200 students boarded at the school. As I write this in 2017, there are only 35 or so nuns still living there. All in their 80s and 90s, many are bedridden. On our tour through this immense building, we only met four other people. The place was eerily quiet and we saw very few of the nuns.

A development company bought the Convent in 2014. They promised the Sisters to respect their privacy during the remainder of their occupancy, which will be indefinite. Still, with the construction at their doorstep, I suspect the nuns worry and wonder how long it will be before their numbers dwindle even further and they are forced to move. How can they justify so few of them living in such a large space?

Overshadowed by construction, the Sacred Heart Convent already lives in obscurity. In a few years when condo buildings

replace it, creating new communities, will anyone remember what
once stood there?

Besides me, will anyone care?

Section Four

Now, in Fiction...

Let's read about things as they might be now

You've Gotta Be Kidding

Norm Rosolen

Screches and curses emanate from one of the dressing rooms in the Kitchener Aud late on a Saturday morning, at the end of August 2013. Clearly, something is wrong.

A preseason prospects hockey game is supposed to start in half an hour involving young men ages 18 to 22, currently in the Toronto Maple Leafs and Detroit Red Wings organizations. In a few weeks they'll be heading to second and third tier development leagues, but today they have a chance to make a case that they are, or soon will be, NHL-ready. The National Hockey League is by far the premier ice hockey league in existence. Every young, old, skilled or grinder player aspires to its ranks. And the potential payoff, in the millions of US dollars per year, draws them like hungry, scrapping wolves to prey.

Two bystanders, Norm Scully and Ed Little, stand near the boards down the walkway from the Leafs' dressing room and try to make out what the commotion is all about. They finished their Kitchener Seniors, 35-and-over, beer-league game an hour earlier and decided, with three other guys, to stay and watch the young pros. Their sweat-soaked equipment bags and sticks are scattered on the concrete.

As a Zamboni circles the ice, over and over, they listen intently. After a while, they just shrug.

"You got five goals this morning," says Ed. "You think you're Wayne Gretzky?"

"In our league? Yeah," says Norm. "I've gotta be home by four. How about we watch the first period, and head over to the Phoenix for a beer?"

They all agree.

Toronto Maple Leafs assistant coach, Randy 'Red' Murphy, holds his cell phone away from his ear and roars. He walks briskly around the dressing room, shakes his phone at the players, looks

up at the ceiling and says, "Why me, Jesus?" The players sit in their stalls, don their gear and keep their heads down.

"What kind of morons run this fuckin' club?" says Murphy. "The other bus went to fuckin' Barrie? How did those dickheads fuck that up?"

"Our next game's in Barrie," says Finkelstein the assistant coach.

Murphy scowls. "Finkey, we got thirteen of these fuckers," he says. "Four D and a goalie and eight forwards. We need at least another fuckin' left wing."

"I was watching the tail-end of the beer-league game," says Finkelstein. "One of them looked pretty good. And some of them are staying to watch us. Maybe you could get him?"

"We got some paper, like a waiver form?" says Murphy. "Do we gotta pay him?"

"I'll write up a waiver," says Finkelstein. "Give him fifty bucks, should do it."

"Okay, I'll give it a try," says Murphy.

The five beer-leaguers turn their heads when the Leafs' dressing room door swings open, and a frowning Murphy exits and slams it behind him. He marches down the walkway to the beer-leaguers and points directly at Norm.

"What do you play?" says Murphy.

"Why?" says Norm.

"We're short a fuckin' winger. You do that?"

"Left side," says Norm.

"You played pro, right? I can see it. Where'd you play?"

"I was in the ECHL up to five years ago. Kalamazoo with the Wings organization."

"Jesus. I think I remember you. Are you Tank Scully?"

"Yeah," says Norm. "And you're Red Murphy."

"Fuck," says Murphy. "Whadda ya say? Fifty bucks, and you keep the sweater."

"Sure, but I gotta be done by three."

"Easy," says Murphy. "See you inside."

Murphy strides back to his dressing room.

Ed takes Norm's arm and pulls him aside. "Tank? Where did that come from?"

"I was a goon. That's what I did, if I wanted to play."

"You never told me," says Ed.

"Nothing to tell," says Norm. "See these?" Norm displays his hands.

"You did get into fights, didn't you?" says Ed. "They're all busted up, just like your ugly mug. How'd you ever land a hot chick like Amy?"

"Charm."

"Right. Anyway, Amy's going to kill you. And if she doesn't, I just might."

"What's your problem?" says Norm. "I always wanted to play in the NHL."

"You can get hurt," says Ed. "You're too friggin' old. These guys can skate like the wind. And it's not really the NHL."

"It's close enough. And Amy don't need to know nothing. Capiche?"

Murphy puts Norm on the third line with a couple of late draft-pick 20-year-olds. They're fast, but he's not out of place. Murphy tries to keep them matched to the Wing's fourth line, but that doesn't always happen.

A mini war develops between Norm and the highly touted Swedish defenceman Karl Lindberg. Lindberg's good, but Norm has experience and manages to board him in the first period. The kid goes down hurt, but is now motivated and scores on the ensuing penalty. The budding star sneers at Norm as he exits the penalty box.

Norm manages to get away with a good, hard elbow to Lindberg in the second period, otherwise it's uneventful as they don't play each other very much. But five minutes into the third period, Lindberg comes out of his own end like he has the puck on a string, and there's nothing Norm or anyone can do about it.

He's wrong this time, and Norm poke checks the puck off the over-confident young Swede, takes it in on a break-away and scores.

Scoring a goal, especially under these unusual circumstances, results in about as much joy as Norm has experienced as a hockey player. He pumps and swoons across the ice, skates by Lindberg and says, "Hey asshole, how does it feel to get beaten by an old man, eh?"

Players on both teams are smiling and chuckling. Norm high-fives his bench and hears, "Way to go, Tank," over and over. Murphy's perpetual grimace softens. Lindberg glares.

The last thing Norm remembers of the game is at about the 10-minute mark. He's carrying the puck along the left boards and catches a glimpse of a Swedish bull moose charging him from the side.

"Norm, you okay?" says Ed. "I just got here."

"Ed, I got hit by a truck." Norm tries to sit up. "I feel sick."

"A Volvo truck," says Ed. "Has anybody checked you out?"

All kinds of white coats are hustling around the Emergency corridors. None are paying attention to the hockey player lying on a gurney.

"A nurse," says Norm. "She asked me how many fingers and all that kind of stuff. Gave me a pill and said a doc would be by in a bit."

"Know what you're you wearing?" says Ed.

Norm lifts his head and looks down his body. "What's with this Leafs sweater?"

"Do you remember the Leafs-Wings prospects game?" says Ed.

"Kind of."

"We had a regular Saturday morning league game. You scored five goals. Remember?"

"Yeah."

"Then we decided to watch the Leafs prospects play the Wings prospects an hour after we finished."

"Yeah."

"They were short a left-winger, and you played with them as a spare, and then you got a nice ambulance ride here."

"I remember now. That dirty Swede creamed me. Jesus. I'm supposed to go shopping with Amy and the kids at four. What time is it?"

“Three-thirty.”

“I gotta get going. Help me up, Ed.”

“You should wait for the doctor.”

“I’ve been knocked out before. I know what I gotta do.”

Ed helps Norm sit up and take his skates off. He climbs off the gurney and walks to the exit, a little unsteady. He’s still dressed in his hockey gear and stocking feet. Hardly anyone gives them a glance. Concussed hockey players must be a common sight.

“Did Lindberg get tossed?” says Norm.

“Not even two minutes,” says Ed.

“Son-of-a-bitch needs to get straightened out. I’d like to have a talk with him.”

“Forget it, Norm. He’s big, over two-hundred pounds and in top shape.”

“I’m not shabby. Two-twenty, six-four, and I work out.”

They get to Ed’s car.

“Drop me off at the arena, Ed. I wanna get my car. You got my teeth?”

Ed reaches into a pants pocket, pulls out a small plastic container and hands it to Norm. Norm snaps it open and puts upper and lower front false teeth in his mouth.

“Thanks Ed. You’re a real pal.”

“You’re gonna be late,” says Ed. “What’ll you tell Amy?”

“I’ll figure something out.”

Amy and the kids come in through the side door carrying grocery bags.

“Where you been?” she says. “It’s okay. We didn’t miss you. Ice cream cones all round,”

Norm rises from the sofa slowly and stumbles.

Amy’s eyes widen. “What happened to you?”

“Nothing,” he says.

Norm holds onto the sofa’s arm rest.

“Don’t give me that. You got hurt playing hockey didn’t you? You’ve got a bandage on your forehead, and you look like a dead fish. Did you think I wouldn’t notice?”

“Relax,” Norm says and sits down. The kids clamber onto the sofa and crawl over him. He winces and smiles as best he can. Amy sits across from him.

“Don’t say that. What happened? No bullshit,” she says.

“Nothing much. Just a small concussion.”

“That’s it. No more hockey. No arguments. I’m not putting up with it.”

“Look, it wasn’t like that...” Norm tells the story.

At the end of it, she says, “You’re getting too old, honey. What if you got a heart attack?”

“I’ve got special hockey insurance, Amy. They pay me ten grand for that. Twenty if I die.”

“You’ve gotta be kidding. There’s no fool like an old fool.”

“I’m only thirty-seven.”

“You’ve had too many hits to the head already. I hated watching you play pro.”

“Amy, that don’t happen in our league. Anyway, I’d rather die playing hockey, even this shitty beer-league stuff, than sit in some old folks’ home for an extra few years.”

“I never understood playing a kids’ game, chasing around some little rubber thing, bumping into each other.”

“Only by accident, Amy. We’re non-contact.”

“Sure you are. And I can hardly lift your hockey bag, which smells like a dumpster. Why?”

“It’s a rush. Like drugs. I wasn’t a finesse guy when I played juniors and pro. But with these guys, they’re not so good, so I deke and dangle and make good plays. I’m a hero.”

Amy comes over and sits on Norm’s lap facing him. She puts her arms around his shoulders and smooches him on his forehead. The kids hug too.

“Hey, careful,” Norm says, and Amy smiles like she loves him. “I’m not quitting, Amy.”

“For me.”

“I’d do it for you, but I’ll be miserable.”

“Well, okay my knucklehead hero,” says Amy. “No more concussions and no more playing NHL guys fifteen years younger than you. And I get that insurance if you die.”

“You can take the kids to Hawaii like you always wanted.”

“Whoopee,” says Amy. “I’m taking you to a doctor in the morning.”

“Whoopee,” says Norm.

Two weeks later, the NHL Wings and Leafs are about to have their first pre-season exhibition game at the Aud. The Seniors have their usual Saturday morning game, and afterwards the usual five guys, including Norm and Ed, stand by the boards hoping no one will see them. That way, they think they can watch the exhibition game for free.

The Wings players exit their dressing room and wait for the Zamboni to finish cleaning the ice. Norm sees Lindberg, sporting a cocky, sneering grin.

“Fuckin’ dirty Swede,” Norm says and nods in Lindberg’s direction.

Lindberg walks over. With the three added inches from his skates, his head’s about level with Norm’s.

“Hey, asshole,” says Lindberg. He draws the “hole” out with an irritating Swedish inflection. “You gonna play and get your ass kicked again?” There’s a few random chuckles.

“Asshole yourself, you ass,” says Norm. The Swede takes a step forward into Norm’s face.

“Forget it, Norm. Let’s go,” says Ed and grabs his arm.

“In a minute, Ed.”

Norm shakes off Ed’s grip, grabs the Swede’s stick and crosschecks him in the chest with it. Lindberg stumbles back and charges. Norm clocks him, and he goes straight down, like a wet towel. He isn’t a fighter. Norm is.

“Sorry buddy,” says Norm and shakes the pain out of his hand. “Let’s get outta here, Ed.”

Amy hears what happened from the cop who comes to the door, Sunday morning. There’s no charges, but the cop gives Norm a warning, turns to Amy and says, “Try to make your husband understand, Mrs Scully. He’s lucky nobody’s pressing charges. Next time won’t be so easy on him.”

The cop leaves, and Norm says, “Why’d he say that to you? It’s insulting.”

“He said it to me because you’re a stupid child,” says Amy. The kids cover their mouths and titter. “I need to say something. Listen carefully.”

“Don’t worry,” says Norm. “I learned my lesson.”

“No, you haven’t.”

“Maybe the kids should watch TV or something.”

“They should hear what I’ve got to say. You are not my hero, anymore.”

“What?”

“You’ve shown no remorse.”

“What? For flattening that Swedish jerk?”

“He’s not a jerk. He’s a young guy trying to make it. And you showed him up.”

“He was cocky.”

“And you weren’t cocky at that age?”

“No. I wasn’t good enough. What do you want?”

“I want you to apologize to him.”

“He’s gotta apologize first. I’m older.”

“I don’t care what he does or doesn’t do. I want you to behave properly.”

“Okay, I’ll mail him a nice note. Maybe a card, with little flowers and hearts all over it.”

“You can do that too. But what I need, and if you ever want to sleep in our bed again you better listen, is apologize in person.”

“You’re crazy.”

“I’ll give you an hour to think about it and tell me what you’re going to do.”

Norm calls Ed and talks. After 15 minutes, Ed says, “You know Amy’s right. And I’m right. You gotta own up. Fighting like that was a mistake, and you gotta apologize. Put yourself in Lindberg’s place. Young guy from another country, trying to make it, needs all the confidence he can get.”

“I get it, Ed,” Norm says. It’s finally sunk in. He was the jerk. “I’ll do it. I’ll apologize.”

“How?” says Ed.

“Ed, you and me. We’re going to Grand Rapids and catch Lindberg after a game or a practice.”

And that’s why Norm and Ed arrive at the Van Andel Arena in Grand Rapids, Michigan, two weeks later, on a Saturday afternoon and watch the Grand Rapids Griffins’ last pre-season AHL game. The American Hockey League is often the last stop for NHL pros

as they head for retirement, and the first stop for juniors as they begin their climb to the NHL.

Was Lindberg sent to the Griffins because of the altercation? Norm considers that possibility. The crowd is mostly gone by the time the Griffins players walk up to the main lobby. The athletes are easy to spot in their suits, ties and shiny shoes.

Norm carries a box of IKEA chocolates and an envelope labelled 'Karl'. He sees Karl and braces himself for the worst. He's not going to fight, whatever happens. The Swede's startled, and Norm sees recognition in his scowl. Norm has memorized a little speech.

"Hi Karl. Saw the game. You were great. Look, I'm sorry about what happened in Kitchener. I know I was wrong. Trying to prove something I'm not. You're a special player, and I guess I was trying to teach you some kind a lesson. But that's the coach's job. So, here."

Norm thrusts the box of chocolates and the card at Karl.

Karl bursts into laughter and takes the chocolates, reads the card and laughs even more.

"You made my day, old man. How are you guys for a beer? They let me have one after a game."

Norm arrives home on Sunday afternoon. "Amy, it was amazing," he says. He hands her a nice bouquet of flowers he picked up at Loblaw's. She hugs him hard and buries her head in his chest.

"Tell me," she says.

"Karl's a great guy. Still cocky, but if I was that good, I'd be cocky too. We had a beer with him and a bunch of the Griffins players, then dinner with them. Stayed over in a cheap motel. It was a nice trip back today. Even crossing the border was okay."

"So, what did you learn?"

"Lots of stuff. The kid's from up north in Sweden, and he learned outside, like me in Haliburton. And Ed's the best friend I could ever want. And you're the smartest, best, fuckin' woman. Oops, sorry."

"Don't be. I think you got that right. The kids are with Granny and Grampy for another couple of hours." Amy takes Norm's hand and leads him towards their bedroom. "You need a reward, my hunky hero."

The Would-be Snowbird's Lament

Keith Newton

Winter's discontent.
Might call it February blues.
Spring seems far behind.

A week down south. Yeah!
Sunshine and warmth guaranteed.
Freak weather? No way!

Florida beckons:
Just the ticket (pun, sorry)
Sunblock anyone?

Ice on ibis-pond,
Palms bent to wintry blast,
Citrus trees ashiver.

Back to *real* winter.
It's Canada, after all.
Skating, anyone?

The Old and the Young

Rem Westland

*A*s the curtain pulls back in Perth's Studio Theatre on Gore Street we hear two men arguing. They are sitting stage right.

The actor playing the elder statesman, identified as John Alexander in the playbill, is hunched over a low round table. His rumpled brown suit matches the colour of his high backed chair. He fiddles with the frayed end of his red and white striped tie. The wide expanse of wall to his left faces the audience. It is dirty yellow, without adornments.

In an opposing chair of similar design sits Robert Dickey, dressed in a turquoise sweater and grey flannel pants. His was the last voice we heard.

Dickey's thick brown hair contrasts sharply with the white fringe around the head of the other. The younger man's fidgeting shows his impatience with the older man's ideas.

John A clears his throat to signal that it's his turn to speak. The stains of spittle on his tie, visible to those who sit in the first two rows, show this has become a habit. It's a sign of his failing health. His untouched glass of beer is another. In his younger day John A drank like a fish.

"Nation-states, Mr Dickey, grew from the desire of powerful individuals to secure their own wealth. The men and women who became kings and queens began as arrogant individuals with small land holdings. They and their descendants acquired more land for selfish reasons. Political and economic structures evolved in order to keep the inhabitants in the accumulated lands at bay."

"Our subject, sir, is Canada's 150th anniversary celebrations. We are talking about the future of this country. I can't stand your cynicism."

On the heels of another hack, John A resumes. He ignores the insult and returns to his theme.

"In 1867," he says, "we brought British North America into the nation-state paradigm. We then used the powers of the state, Mr Dickey, to bring more wealth to the places where we lived. I,

a poor lawyer, became wealthy myself. But we identified with the people who lived around us. We wanted to make this country great.

“You were saying, Mr Dickey, that today’s elite are linking Canada into a global paradigm. Their goal, I say, remains the same. Their goal is to increase their personal wealth. But the rich today want to make their wealth funds great, not Canada. They draw their identity from the Forbes List of Billionaires, not from their neighbours.”

“Going global, *sir*, is good,” Robert protests. He stresses the honorific “*sir*” as a taunt. “Governments in Canada care about how mothers are treated in Gambia, the poor in India, the desperate in the Middle East. Because of our country’s international stature we have standing at the UN to propose ideas like the duty-to-protect. Our politicians participate in initiatives that address worldwide challenges such as climate change.”

Dickey shifts towards the front six inches of his chair, bringing the two men within touching distance. Two sets of eyes lock, the one in defiance, the other in resignation. Dickey’s hands grip the armrests of his chair as if restraining the rest of his body. The older man backs off into a slouch.

“There is a retreat going on across the western world,” Dickey says. His tone is a mocking one. “The retreat is led by *xenophobes*.” He hurls the word across the distance between them. “I would never have expected you, *sir*, to be on that side of the argument.”

“Your elite,” counters John A, “care about people living badly elsewhere on the planet because it is cheaper to build a workforce that lives in poverty in Asia or Africa than to look after their own.”

John A raises his hand to his mouth. Robert Dickey, fearing another eruption of germs, ducks. Some of the people in the front row rise off their chairs and move towards the sides of the theatre. To a person, the look on their faces is one of disgust.

“The fact is, Mr Dickey, industry today spends its money globally in order to rack up higher profits centrally. The families of the rich no longer live in regional capitals like in my day. They isolate themselves in inaccessible places all over the world. They stay away from people they consider riff raff, like you.”

The audience does not like what the old man is saying any more than Dickey does. A well-dressed young couple who had been sitting in the second row are walking out.

“Globalization,” shouts John A, “is a cover used by billionaire families to siphon the world’s resources to the top!” Anger pushes him off the back of his chair. He bends toward the departing couple. “Why is the truth so hard for you to take?”

The statesman catches himself. He settles back down. He resumes a normal tone of voice and speaks civilly to the younger man. “There is an alliance building, Robert, between your political leaders and the owners of wealth funds. The powers of the nation-state are being used by the former in service of the latter.”

“My God. Now you are a conspiracy theorist!” The young man throws his arms up in frustration.

There is laughter in the theatre. The people sitting in the red plush seats, the ones that used to be fixed to the floor of the National Arts Centre prior to its refurbishment for Canada’s birthday, think the old man is a raging lunatic.

“It has always been about exploitation,” says the statesman. The attitude of the crowd makes him sad. “Mr Dickey,” he says, “give me a moment. I want to talk to the people out there. The Canada they are about to celebrate is being used to enslave their children.”

He turns to the audience.

With his left hand, Dickey sweeps the attention of everyone in the room towards the elder statesman. “Be our guest,” he says. Dickey bends his head in a mock bow and picks up his beer with his right. The old man coughs a couple of times and resumes.

“Ladies and gentlemen I want to tell you about Evelyn Adams. Eve grew up in this small town.” John A looks momentarily back to Robert Dickey, “Like you.” He swivels to face the audience again.

“Eve is like all of your daughters. Robert is like your sons.” John A speaks quickly. The politician in him knows that the subject of children will hold people’s attention.

“Eve has graduated from the university you so proudly sent her to. She has earned a master’s degree in economic theory but she still has no job. The next level at university is the PhD.” John

A raises his voice. "Even after all your help she has accumulated a debt of fifty thousand dollars on which she pays interest only. Sound familiar?"

"It sounds like me!" yelps Robert from his place in the background. "But what does this have to do with the future of Canada, old man?" Dickey's demeanor becomes challenging again.

"You, Mr Dickey, are the future of Canada! Eve is the future! You are being bought and sold and you don't even know it." John A throws his lament into the dark in front of him. He does not look around. He does not see Robert's raised middle finger.

"Take out your pens, ladies and gentlemen," the statesman tells the audience. "Track me here." He stands up.

John A shuffles towards the wall at the back of the stage. A long stick is thrown towards him from off-stage left by a hand that is quickly pulled back. The stick clatters to the floor at John A's feet. He bends painfully to pick it up.

On the blank wall the numbers John A is about to reel off appear as if a notebook somewhere in the audience has a camera fixed upon it. He points to the numbers with the stick as they pop up on the screen.

"Eve will need lots of money—fifteen thousand dollars tuition a year—in order to attend a large university. She will need again more money—let's say another fifteen thousand a year—in order to live in the big city. And Lord love her, she cannot wait to get away. After three years, if she is diligent about it, she will have a PhD and she will owe one hundred and forty thousand to her bank." The numbers are being grouped into an inverse pyramid. Eve's \$50,000 is at the very bottom.

"The university will be forty five thousand better off than before Eve applied. The city where she lives will be at least forty five thousand better off because of the rent she pays and her food. On the bank's balance sheet the hundred and forty thousand Eve will owe, to which will be added the prevailing interest rate, is shown as an asset rather than a liability. Eve, you see, is a revenue source. She is among the best and the brightest. She is unlikely to fail.

"A year after graduation Eve will start repaying her debt, in monthly amounts of two thousand dollars. At that point she will

be thirty years old, five years older than my young friend Robert over here. It will take Eve ten years to pay off her debt, assuming she does not renegotiate terms of payment or add to the debt—buy a car, pay for vacations—at any point in those ten years. But of course she will buy those things. The internet will egg her on. Her debt will grow.

“Eve’s bank, regulated by her government, is taking on one thousand new students every year across all of the country. This means the bank’s assets are growing at the rate of interest on one hundred and forty million dollars per year. The bank uses this base revenue to lever ten times that amount in investments. It means that those thousand students are servicing well over one billion dollars of secured assets for the bank to work with. The amounts owing will be moved into asset-based derivatives that draw investments from individuals and wealth funds in the order of billions more.

“Eve, upon earning the PhD, will become an indebted person who—for her entire life—will be hounded by her bank to keep up her payments. The value of the bank’s corporate paper will depend upon it. Eve is at the bottom of this pyramid.” John A raps his pointer onto the bottom figure of \$50,000.

“The closer Eve gets to retirement,” the statesman resumes, “the greater the hounding will become. Her only hope is to move permanently to a big city and get a big job. But she will be a stranger to the millions of people around her. In her old age she will have a meaningful link only to her bank, via the internet.”

John A throws his stick against the yellow wall and walks unsteadily back to his chair. He sits down, onto the front of it. He leans forward and tries to engage the young man. “Your value, my boy, lies in your capacity to flow money to global centres of wealth.”

Robert Dickey puts down his glass but looks away.

Now it’s John A who taunts:

“Your banks are sucking you dry!” he snaps.

“Your government encourages your debt!” he wags his index finger.

“Your country is a tool,” he shouts, “in the arsenal of the rich!”

Dickey lifts his shoulders and expands his chest in a theatrical sigh.

John A flips his hands toward Robert Dickey as if to dismiss him. He turns again to the audience.

“What does Robert think the billionaires tell prime ministers and presidents to do when hosting them on private yachts and islands? *Use the power of the state to keep our dollars flowing*, they say. In return, the politicians are rewarded with wads of money in brown paper envelopes or multi-million dollar book deals after they leave office.

“These are the people who are spending tens of millions of dollars of public funds—*your* money—to make you feel good in twenty-seventeen.”

Dickey knows that the numbers in his own bank account reflect the truth of what he has just seen displayed on the yellow wall. But he already owes far too much money to back out now. It redoubles his anger when the statesman carries on.

“The hundred-and-fiftieth celebrations are not about preserving Canada,” John A says. He speaks loudly, into the air above him. Then he looks across the table. “The celebrations are about keeping Canadians complacent, Mr. Dickey,” he roars, “while your country’s wealth is vacuumed away.”

The older man tries again to get the other’s attention. “It’s *your* wealth I am talking about,” he thunders. “You, young man, are being sucked by your banks and government into a lifetime of debt!”

John A stands and walks to the front of the stage. As he does so, a pre-positioned white cardboard panel disengages from the ceiling. It dangles unevenly on two thin ropes. The volunteer stagehand who had lowered this prop down must make a brief appearance to grab hold of a rope that had swung out of his grasp.

“My friend Robert over there won’t listen,” John Alexander says, “so I will talk to the rest of you again.” John A ignores the stage hand. He does not see Robert Dickey rise from his chair and move furtively towards centre stage.

“Perhaps nation-states were never the best idea for us humans,” John A says. “Too much poverty. Too many wars. But

I tell you, ladies and gentlemen, the alternative of subservience to wealth funds is going to be much, much worse. Wealth funds are not real. They float somewhere in the air *like that crazy thing bouncing over my head!*” The last few words are spoken anxiously as the white cardboard panel swings dangerously close.

The stagehand pulls hard on both ropes to haul his prop back to the ceiling. The audience has had the opportunity, however, to see the words *Cloud Computing* written on one side of the prop, *Wealth Fund* on the other.

“Ladies and gentlemen,” John A proclaims, “human beings need to inhabit physical space.” He bangs the fist of his left hand into the palm of his right.

“You need to rebuild Canada.

“You need to start where real lives matter.

“You need to start with small towns like your own.

“Tell your children: do not go to London. Don’t go to New York.

“Stay here! Make Canada work. Right here!

“Bring your wealth home. Like we did. In my day.

“Make my country *real* again.”

John Alexander does not hear the footsteps speeding up behind him. The two-handed push on his shoulders, made forceful by the momentum of Robert Dickey’s sprint, sends the actor playing John A flying off the edge of the stage and into the now-empty chairs below. The red of the old man’s blood seeps into the velour of the chairs.

As the play ends we see that Sir John A’s hope for Canada is dying.

Julie's Choice
Peggy Lehmann

The doors opened and the line of people slowly moved into the spacious funicular that would take them down the rock wall to the gift shops and the viewing area below. Their ears were already attuned to the thunderous sound of the water crashing below them, and during the slow 60-metre descent of the incline railway car, the magnificence of this special place began to reveal itself.

Julie wore a light coat to shield her from the mist, and secured her long blond hair with a clip. Slender and agile, she easily circumvented a crowd of tourists and settled into a seat in the back. Enjoying the ride in this unique elevator, her curious green eyes observed the other passengers. Two school-age children were excitedly pointing and comparing the view from each of their windows. A young man in the next row handed his sleeping baby boy to his wife, and she was tucking their little bundle into his stroller. On the other side, a woman leaned over the wheelchair in front of her and whispered in the ear of the seated elderly woman. A serene smile appeared on the older woman's face, reminding Julie of her own grandmother and memories of their visits here at Niagara Falls.

Their first time at the Falls together was during Julie's summer break after 8th Grade. At the age of 13, she was in awe of the sheer volume of water falling. On the boat tour, Gran kept her close as they both got wet from the spray on their faces and raincoats. That first journey behind the Falls was unnerving, as Julie had never been in a tunnel before, and between the vibration in the artificially-lit rock pathways, and the thunderous roar of the waterfall outside, she held her grandmother's hand tightly.

Gran was a spiritual woman, and sat in silence for a period of time each day. She found an area on the observation platform overlooking the gorge that was perfect for quiet reflection. Gran believed the constant, powerful motion of the cascading water released healing energy, giving visitors a greater sense of physical and emotional wellbeing. That first visit to the Falls turned into

an annual summer escape for the two of them during Julie's high school years. Today Julie was here on her own.

The sudden stop of the railway car brought her back to the present at the bottom of the incline. As the doors opened a welcoming mist greeted the passengers. Julie was the last one to disembark, and she stopped for a moment as the doors closed behind her. After a deep breath, she continued into the building ahead, decidedly happy to be back here again.

She walked quickly through the maze of stores and out to the other side, onto the Falls observation area. A short walk to the left and she soon sat at the same spot she remembered from her last visit here with Gran more than 10 years ago. She needed the stillness and calm of this place now more than ever, and believed she would feel her grandmother's spirit with her during this visit.



Three years ago, when her parents came to her apartment to tell her the news of Gran's passing, she could feel their sadness before they said the words. The doctor said Gran had a stroke and

died in her sleep, but he assured them she had felt no pain. Despite their profound loss they took some comfort in that. They honoured Gran's final wishes and got on with their lives just as she would want them to, but lately for Julie it seemed that nothing in her life was clear. She travelled to Niagara Falls for the weekend to sit in silence near the moving water, rest her spirit, and find some answers. Reliving memories at this magical site would be therapeutic. The self-help books, meditation classes, and advice from her parents also helped, but she sensed something deeper inside of her needing to be resolved.

The ride on the train from Toronto was uneventful, and after a short taxi ride from the station, Julie was relieved to finally check into the bed-and-breakfast she booked within walking distance of the Falls. When she got to her room she sent a message to her mom to let her know she had arrived safely, then turned off her phone. Her parents were her greatest supporters, and even though she was now 29 and living on her own, Julie agreed to send a message when she arrived, and they agreed to respect Julie's need for solitude.

Looking down at the ground in front of her, Julie picked up a stone and held it in her hand for a moment before she tossed it in the rushing water below, as she had seen Gran do many times before. The early May sun was getting lower in the sky, so it was time to head back to her room for the night. She would return tomorrow.

The pamphlets in the guestrooms contained interesting information for tourists, and Julie enjoyed reading the facts about Niagara Falls that a seasoned visitor like herself may not have taken the time to acknowledge. Niagara Falls was formed about 12,000 years ago by glaciers that melted and created the freshwater pools of the Great Lakes. Situated between Lake Erie that flowed into Lake Ontario, the power of the falling water caused erosion, estimated today at about 30 centimetres up river each year. The gorge is also said to have taken shape due to this natural phenomenon. Another flyer highlighted the emotional benefits of being near water. This caught Julie's eye and she read about the calming effects of flowing water, as well as the health benefits of the negative ions, present in large concentration at Niagara Falls. The suggestion that negative ions might be responsible for greater

feelings of wellbeing resonated with her. Could that be another reason why she loved coming here? Gran always believed there was healing energy present at Niagara Falls. The next paragraph linked the feelings of happiness experienced at the Falls to its designation as the honeymoon capital of the world. Julie read those words and felt tightness in her stomach.

Her last conversation with Randy revolved around where their relationship was headed. He seemed genuinely surprised that after two years together they needed to plot the future now. He loved her and was willing to allow life to take its course. She thought he didn't care enough to make plans with her. He didn't understand why it was so important to her or why she became so upset. He suggested that they take a break, believing this would help her calm down. She looked at him with disbelief and fury in her wide-open eyes, then dramatically walked away. He let her go.

Dabbing at her eyes, she was surprised at how powerful that memory still was three weeks later. She loved him and could see a future with him. She only wanted to know if he felt the same way. What she didn't get a chance to tell him was that the ad agency she had worked for since graduation had offered her a promotion. The new position was perfect for her and she earned it, but she would have to relocate to their Montreal office. They needed a response from her in one more week. Julie's parents advised her to think carefully about what was best for her, and take her time making any decisions. They assured her they would support her no matter what, and understood her need to have this weekend away.

Before she crawled into bed, she asked for the guidance of her angels to help her use the power of this beautiful setting to find peace and clarity for herself. She also said her usual prayer for Gran, then drifted off to sleep.

The strong aroma of bacon and coffee, and the brightness of the sunshine streaming in her room woke Julie the next morning. Still very groggy, she glanced at her watch and was surprised to see that she had slept very late. She got up, showered and dressed, then went for breakfast and brought it back to her room to eat. During the night she had a dream and she wanted to piece together the details she could remember. Parts of her dream were very real but disjointed, yet Julie felt there was a message in it.

Her grandmother came to her. In her open hand she held four small crystals of similar shapes but they each had a different colour; purple, green, yellow and red. Gran threw them in the water one by one, where they melted and disappeared. Then words floated by. The only one she could remember was *forgive*. The message continued: it is important to let go and trust in the outcome. The last thing she remembered was a beautiful white bird flying higher and higher.

Let go of what? Or who? Let go of Randy? Forgive, let go, and trust. There could be many meanings. Julie sipped her coffee and tried to make the pieces fit. She became more confused, then decided to take her written notes along when she went back to the Falls and trust that answers would come. Today, she must be open to guidance from her angels, from Gran, or even coincidences with complete strangers. She needed to be aware.

A short time later, as she proceeded through the building to get to the outdoor viewing area, Julie looked at the displays in the shop windows that she hadn't taken time for last evening. Bright-coloured clothing, tempting treats and intricate jewellery all grabbed her attention. Entering a gift shop for a closer look, Julie walked up and down the few aisles hoping to purchase some souvenirs. As she turned to enter the last aisle, she gasped with eyes wide in disbelief! There in a display case was a set of four stones in the colours purple, green, yellow and red, just like Gran showed her in her dream! They were called wishing stones. She purchased them and walked out of the building to sit on the bench from last evening overlooking the gorge.

Julie tore open the package and unfolded a small paper with information about the stones.

These are wishing stones. Make a wish as you hold a stone then release the stone to activate your wish. This set of stones has four colours. Suggested meanings for each colour are added here for your information. Purple relates to spiritual connection, forgiveness, and guardian angel realms. Green represents healing, balance, and releasing of stagnant energies. Yellow is for joy, feelings of gratitude, and celebrating. Red is about deep connection, security, and love.

In this text she recognized the words *forgiveness, healing, gratitude,* and *love* from her dream the previous night, and knew this was her guidance. Gran was here with her this weekend as she had been at Niagara with Julie many times before. That was a deeply comforting realization, and Julie felt the inner warmth of true joy for the first time in a long time.

She held and focused on the four coloured stones. Having worked with crystals before, Julie knew that they held energy, but when reflecting on her dream, she realized that she needed to meditate on each one and toss it into the moving water. This would release stagnant energy she was holding that weighed her down. Trusting in the outcome meant being open to whatever happened next. However, something wasn't right. She needed to be closer to the power of the water. Returning to the building she waited for the elevator to go down. Today she felt guided to sit behind the Falls.

After a walk through the depths of the rock tunnel with the thunderous vibration of waterfalls above, Julie found a viewing area behind the Falls that wasn't crowded with tourists, but there was a solid fence in front of her that kept everyone three metres away from the opening. She stood watching the rushing water, and for a time she was mesmerized by the hum of the energy, which comprised the low thunderous sounds and the constant and heavy spray ahead of her. But if she was to release these stones into the power of the Falls' energy, it would work better on the observation deck beside the Falls where she could toss the stones into the moving water more easily.

As Julie approached the opening for the outdoor platform alongside the Falls, the rumbling vibration of the tunnel deferred to the equally powerful crashing of volumes of water into the basin below. Standing at the railing, she stopped to take note of her surroundings. Seeing the waterfall up close and feeling the gentle mist on her face was a very familiar experience. She paused to appreciate this natural wonder for a moment then fumbled for the stones in her pocket, finally pulling out the purple one.

Settling into a familiar breathing rhythm, she easily achieved a meditative state with slow even breaths, then thought about the word forgiveness as it related to her life. Gran always said that you

must forgive people to let go of the bad feelings, but that never means you agree with the behaviour that caused the pain.

In her last conversation with Randy, when he suggested they should spend some time apart, she was surprised and heartbroken. Didn't they want the same future? Didn't he love her anymore? It was hard to understand, but she hadn't allowed him to explain either when she left him as quickly as she could that evening. Was the forgiveness truly for him alone? After a moment she understood that the relationship needed her forgiveness so she could release the hurt she was holding.

With the crystal tightly in her hand, she focused on filling it with all her emotional pain. After a few minutes the stone actually felt heavier, and it was time to release it into the swirling frothy water to activate her wish of forgiveness. She threw the purple stone as far as she could and it quickly disappeared from view in the mist.

Julie took a moment to reflect, then reached into her pocket and selected the green stone. It was said to represent healing. Knowing that healing takes place on many levels, Julie filled the green stone with her will to initiate physical, mental, emotional and spiritual healing in herself and in those present in her life. This time the stone became very warm, and when she was ready, she tossed it in the same direction as the first. Again it vanished into the misty water.

The sun was brilliant and strong in the sky. It was now mid-afternoon. Julie had been here only a short time, but the energy around her and within her was feeling distinctly different in a more positive way.

There were two more wishing stones to work with, and Julie selected the yellow stone next. She took a moment to admire its beauty with its tiny, random flecks of stronger colour, giving it a depth that was particularly beautiful. Yellow was for joy and feelings of gratitude. Julie was feeling very grateful, and she mentally filled that stone resting in the palm of her hand with all her energy of gratitude. There was so much to be thankful for in her life despite loss, sadness and frustration. This stone also became very warm, and when she felt ready, she flung it to join the first two somewhere in the swirling depths.

The last stone was red. Security, love and connection; all these things she felt with Randy. Julie was able to forgive that situation, but she did not want to let him go. She loved him very much and believed their relationship still had a chance if they both wanted it to work. Randy was an accountant and worked at his family's accounting firm in Toronto. It is unlikely that he could move to Montreal with Julie if she took the promotion at her company.

Even though that decision would not be made today, Julie had a stone representing love in her hand. Like the others before, she held it and projected all the love she felt into it. A gentle warmth filled her hand, and as she prepared to throw it into the water, it slipped from her grasp. The red stone clanged against the railing then tumbled down the edges of the rocks and eventually into the pool below. Julie smiled. It wasn't ready to let go yet either.

Feeling a sense of accomplishment, yet emotionally empty and starting to tire, Julie decided it was time to leave this beautiful place once again. As she turned to walk into the tunnel, she saw a waving motion in her periphery. Looking back to where she stood at the barrier a moment ago, she was completely surprised to see that a white dove had just landed. It is not common to see a white dove, and she stood entranced by its beauty while it seemed to look right at her. Then it fidgeted on the railing, gracefully rose a metre above its perch in a circle of flight and cooed softly. After one more glance in her direction, it spread its wings open completely and lifted off, climbing higher and higher in the sky. Julie felt chills throughout her body as she fixated on that beautiful creature and its greetings of love and peace that were intended just for her. That was yet another element from her dream, and she knew for certain that she would never feel alone again in her life, no matter how her future unfolded. The experiences of this weekend truly transformed her.

Now she began the walk back through the tunnels, and several minutes later she was on her way to her room for the last night in these magical surroundings. Julie was content but deep in thought as she ate dinner, then packed her bags to be ready for the morning train that would take her home.

Tomorrow was a new start with so many possibilities. Once she talked with Randy she would know what to do. Had it really

been three weeks? She crawled into bed feeling much lighter, and knowing that in the morning she would get back to her life.

A knock on her door the next day woke her up.

“Check out is in thirty minutes,” the voice on the other side of the door reminded Julie.

She got herself ready and gathered her things. This morning she felt happy and confident.

Soon after, Julie was comfortably in her seat on the train for the ride back to Toronto and her home. That afternoon she turned the key to open her apartment door. As she brought in the luggage, she noticed an envelope on the floor that had been slipped under her door. Her name was on it, written in a style she recognized immediately.

Hastily tearing it open, she read:

Dear Julie:

I do not write letters often, so forgive my inexperience with words.

I want to respect your silence, but I need to explain something, and under the circumstances a letter seemed like the best way.

When I suggested that we should take a break, I meant only to give you time to calm down.

The last three weeks have been tough and I miss you.

I am not ready yet to plan a future, but I want my future to include you.

I am sorry if I said something that hurt you and I hope we can talk about this.

Love,

Randy

Julie was already dialing the familiar number, and was also becoming more certain of the choice she needed to make.

Section Five

Fact or Fiction?

Only the future will tell

*Remembering the
Sesquicentennial*
Martin Bueno



I always like to run along the Rideau Canal this early time of day. And this time you can come along. See, I'm using my new automated recording diary that I bought last week. It's called the DAD, or more technically the Digital Audiline Diary. Actually it's more of an app; when you buy it you have to install the app. With a little alligator attachment mini-microphone clipped to your shirt, it will record on your cellphone and play into the internet in real time, so anyone can either hear, or if they want, read what you say during the day or night. It goes from voice recording to written word simultaneously. So, I'm guessing you are reading this online. Yes, it's more invasive than FaceBook where everyone posts what they had for breakfast as if we were all celebrities.

What has happened to privacy?

Time for something new.

A public audio diary will take away what little privacy was left in our lives but, hey, I'm always willing to try out whatever is the latest techno ware out there. I was waiting for an occasion to use my DAD.

Hope it works.

The reason I'm starting this broadcast is because I've just seen the strangest thing. I'm coming down from Dow's Lake and ready to cross the Pretoria Bridge, in the middle of my marathon stride and looking up I see a guy in a white T-shirt running with a limp. Broad shoulders and curly blond hair tight around his head. His leg is unmistakable. Looks like Terry Fox. Been running this route forever and never seen this guy. Now he's disappeared, into a wispy cloud again, and gone. Wait, there he is coming toward me!

Are any of my friends reading this?

I think I've seen a ghost.

No, I haven't been smoking anything.

Actually my Honda is parked nearby on Waverly Street and I'm going to drive by downtown in front of the Parliament buildings where they are putting up scaffolding for the big July Birthday Bash for good 'ole Canada. It's the 150th you know. Signs up all over the place with an updated colourful centennial logo. I wrote my Grade 13 departmental exams on the old maple leaf Centennial logo made up of stacked triangles. It ought to be crazy downtown on July 1st with everyone from every culture. I'm an immigrant, too. Holland. My public school teacher didn't have a single kid in the class who spoke English as a first language.

Oh, there I go again riding my trusty steed Tangent.

The running adrenalin has been playing tricks with my mind. I've got this feeling something is going on.

Talk to you soon. Turning off my DAD.

Bye.

Hi again. Looking out of the window of the car along Wellington I see a crowd of people standing around the empty pedestal where the statue of Terry Fox used to be.

Coincidence?

Someone took it.

I don't think so.

So, the statue is running around town. I know; I saw it. I've got a hunch.

Talk to you later.

Bye.

Hey folks, I've decided to go public. It's like I thought. It is pretty creepy. Coming past the Art Gallery looking up to the summit of Nepean Point. The Champlain statue is down.

Also gone.

Maybe some crazy goofs are riding around town stealing them?

I'm tired; it's been a long run and time to get home. I think there's pasta in the fridge. I need a coffee.

Yup, going home, then have a shower and call someone about this. Maybe the Citizen. The CBC news. FaceBook. I've got to tell somebody.

Thanks for reading.
Bye.

Coming across Parliament Hill and there is a protest going on. No, it's not a protest. People are standing around in groups where the statues used to be. There's a Mountie riding across the lawn. No, they're not allowed to do that anymore. It's evidently too dangerous for the public. Kids can't even play tag in the schoolyards at recess anymore.

Oops, there's my trusty steed Tangent again. Wait a minute. Where's the red tunic and the hat? Mounties don't ride wearing a long dark cloak like that. It's the Queen Elizabeth statue riding her stallion across the grass! I think other people are seeing it too. It's not just me. Trying to get a photo. Lots of tourists around.

No, this can't be.
It's gone in the blink of an eye.
I'm not going crazy. Am I?
Well, am I?

Yesterday I got my seatbelt stuck by jamming my coat string into the buckle. Had to drive into the garage for help. It wasn't funny. I was trapped in my own car. The straps were tightening like a boa constrictor. First seatbelts in planes, then seatbelts in cars. Soon we'll be wearing spacesuits to keep us from breathing the air.

See you at home.
Bye.

I live alone in the top-floor executive suite in a condo tower in the heart of Westboro. Can see along the Ottawa River from the big window and balcony. Wish Susan was still around to share it with me. Used to be great coming in the front door and hearing and smelling the food cooking. I'm in the lobby now. The elevators aren't working.

Again.
None of them.
Be back soon after I climb the stairs.
Bye

Yes, as Paul Simon said, “One man’s ceiling is another man’s floor.” I was singing *Fifty Ways to Leave your Lover* on the way up. It took every cent I had plus a mortgage to get this beauty. Even after settling with Susan. It’s worth it. Small but modern. Compact and sleek. I’ve saved long and hard for this and I know I deserve it. Also a place to get reunited with myself while I get over the divorce. I hope the kids can stay with me this summer and travel to Italy with me. Yes, you need a note these days to say you’re not kidnapping them from the mother. That is until they’re eighteen. Su’s ghost wanders around this place all the time.

Now everyone is seeing them.

Ghosts, that is.

It sure looked like Terry Fox on the Pretoria Bridge.

Turn on the TV and Ian Hanomansingh is talking about a young couple sitting on an empty bench in front of the National Arts Centre where the bronze statue of Oscar Peterson is reported missing. Lots of cameras around. Onlookers looking puzzled. But, I know where the statue is. It’s going around downtown looking for a piano!

I’m going for some air out on the balcony.

Time out.

Bye.

Dear DAD, dear diary, dear whoever is reading this, it can’t get any more insane. I’m looking down at the sidewalk here in Westboro where mothers are jogging with three- wheel pumped-tire designer strollers with coffee mugs in the arm rests. They are heading for the Byron strip for a workout in between the yoga classes. I should get back into doing yoga, but there are these impossible positions my body doesn’t want to go.

Sorry, riding Tangent again.

So I see a tall man, huge boots, with a very tall hat and cape and sword looking like he just came off the set of *The Three Musketeers*. It can’t be. But who else can it be? Samuel de Champlain is walking the boardwalk of Westboro.

I’m heading down.

I’ll turn this thing on again later.

Bye.

I caught up with him down at Mountain Equipment Co-op and a small group of us are following him down toward the Ottawa River. Everybody thinks he's a dress-up guy to celebrate this year's Canada Day. Long curly hair, mustache and goatee. They're trying to take selfies with him. I know better. He seems to be looking into all the alleyways, behind bushes and turning in all directions. He's searching for something. He's taken off his hat with the long feather and he's scratching his head. What's he looking for? The astrolabe he's lost? Maybe.

I'm going to approach him before he evaporates.

"Excuse me, *monsieur*, are you lost? Are you looking for something?"

"*Je cherche mon ami*. I'm looking for my friend, Sky-Raven. Have you seen him? Wearing a feather and buckskin. Also carrying a quiver of arrows on his bare back. He called himself Pachu'a. He was crouching with me on the Point before they took him away. He saved my life you know."

"Tell me."

"Well, I had lost my navigating astrolabe and was looking for it in the swamps near Cobden just two days upriver from here. My men were at the campsite resting and Pachu'a and I had seen a snowy owl in the morning. Pachu'a and I have been lifelong friends. I first met him when I set foot on Canadian shores. I was crossing a beaver dam and fell in. I was sure I had dropped my astrolabe there and was leaning over too far. I can't swim very well and soon I was drowning. He dived in and saved me."

"I hope you find him. By the way, they found your astrolabe."

That was all I got to say before he disappeared. I'm not really sure why they moved the statue of Pachu'a...

Just a minute. I've got a phone call coming in.

It's from my daughter, Stephanie.

I've had enough of the diary for one day. Going to give it a few weeks before I'll try it again.

I'll put in one more entry to let you know what happened.

Bye.

I've decided. This will be my last entry with the DAD.

I'm throwing it away.

Going to remove the app from my phone.

Well, it's because nobody on the internet would believe me. My FaceBook page is filled with nasty comments from friends and trolls wondering if I should seek professional help. No one in the city has come forward to say they've seen the missing statues come alive and then evaporate into smoke. Everyone is afraid of what people will think. It's like saying you've seen a UFO.

Maybe I saw Terry Fox and Champlain, the Queen and Oscar Peterson, or maybe I didn't. When I phoned in to the *Ottawa Citizen* they kept me waiting on hold for over an hour and in the end said someone is probably stealing the statues around Ottawa and the police are investigating. No one but me has seen them walking around. At least, no one *admits* they did. Anyway, I am going to let you know that thankfully Steph and Julie are definitely coming with me to Italy this summer. I've got the handwritten letter from Su. I've booked a bed-and-breakfast in Florence for all of us. I've looked through their promotional materials and on their website they claim their villa is haunted by ghosts of famous Italians.

I can't wait to meet them.

Bye.

Oh, I lied, sorry. *This* will be my last entry into the DAD before I discard it.

It can get you into trouble.

Nobody needs to have everyone know what they are doing all the time.

What is happening to privacy?

I wanted you all to know that I'm in Florence and the villa is fabulous. The cathedral is stunning especially from the inside. We are having a great time. Where we are staying is definitely haunted. I swear I saw this naked marble giant with a stone sling over his shoulder strolling in the garden...

Take care...

Twelve Years
Meghan Negrijn



“Oh, she’s precious. What kind of child is she?”
“We’ve decided not to modify. Just the standard set.”
“Really! How daring. How old is she?”
“They released her to us last week. Another week or so and she’ll be ready for another upgrade already.”
They both gazed down at the child with affection.

Twelve Years Later

Luci stretched her arms in the clinic. Her new hand implants were stiff but she’d expected that. She wiggled them dutifully for the mechanical doctor and performed the tests provided for her. Finally, she was released to go back to the human end of the hospital again. The doctor, all traces of gender lost in their occupation, glanced up at her and then back down to the files. Their face didn’t change expression at all.

“Luci, you know you are eligible for a number of upgrades?”

“My parents have chosen not to.”

“But, a feature of the Canadian Free Choice Program is that you will be of legal age to decide for yourself in three months.”

A thrill of excitement surged through her heart. She felt almost evil for even asking. “What... would you suggest?”

The doctor’s eyebrows rose and she could see the electrical irises whirling with thoughts she couldn’t fathom. Every space in the office, except for the clock, was plastered with posters advertising human implants. Even the windows had images laid on them.

“Do you not wish to look like everyone else? You simply need to decide what you wish to do with your life and we can modify your body to make that happen. There are many options.”

Two of the doctor’s hands tapped at a keyboard while the second set of arms remained resting on the desk. The work was so seamless Luci couldn’t tell which set they had been birthed with and which had been installed. Maybe they were both installed.

You couldn't tell anymore. The doctor released some more information and Luci stored the thoughts away to think about when she was alone.

Later that evening she found herself stirring her soup instead of eating it. Both her parents, tired with the day's labours, had finished theirs.

"Why am I not modified?"

They shared a gaze before her mother began to speak. "You are modified to a degree, Luci. We've never held you back from the required ones. We're not asking you to forgo any manipulation, like some people."

"But not like my friends."

"No... I know."

"The doctor says in three months I get to decide."

Her parents' shoulders seemed to sink under the news and she felt the first bit of guilt.

"Why is that such a bad thing? I can make decisions about my life, move forward."

"What's the hurry, my love?" her father asked. "Why don't you take some time, grow up a bit more before you decide?"

"Time?! I don't have that time. Everyone else is already modified. If I want a future here in Canada, then I have to keep up."

"There are other places..."

"No, Mom! I don't want to go overseas with the developers. I want to stay here."

"Don't yell at your mother, Luci. You're still young. All we want is for you to grow up a little more and make sure you get any enhancements for the job you choose, not to be stuck in a job because of enhancements you were pushed into."

She pushed to her feet. "You don't understand! It's not like it was for you when you were kids. I'm so much more advanced than you were at my age. I'm going to be an adult a full decade before you. I don't have the same time. You just don't understand!"

She left the kitchen and hid in her sleep alcove, slamming the door behind her. No, they didn't understand. She didn't want to be an artist or a gardener, living in the 100-square foot space their meager positions allowed them. No, she was going to be

something bigger, something better and in three months she wouldn't let them hold her back. She just had to bide her time. Burying her guilt at their sadness, she lay down and began to work out how many days remained.

Twelve Years Later

"Luci?"

"Yes."

She forced her body to stand up and staggered after the robot. Something wasn't right again. She could almost sigh with frustration. She'd been pulled out of every line she'd started in for the last two years. As soon as one thing seemed to be fitted, another fell apart. She wasn't even 25 yet. Two tries and she was sitting on the exam table, one leg stuck out in front of her. There was an injection and the pain eased off. The robot plugged in the electrical outlets and she waited until the one at the back of her neck was set off. Now she could finally relax. They'll have her working again soon.

"Luci?" She opened her eyes with concern at the human voice.

"Yes?" The doctor in front of her had the standard four arms and the lack of gender but there was something soft about the figure that brought up memories of her mother. She couldn't help but think of the person as a woman, sacrilegious as that would be.

"We've run the last of the tests." The figure settled down in front of her. "You know all about the Canadian Free Choice Program."

"Of course I do. I am part of it."

"You were. It's long over now. But that is part of the problem we're facing right now with your body. You're done now. Your body won't take another change. We cannot recruit you into another position."

"I don't want another one. I'm good where I am."

"You've had eight different positions in the last ten years, and you've been on the broken list so many times at this job, they don't want you back."

"But..."

"Please, calm yourself. The adrenalin is not helping. You have two options. We can set you up as a teacher..."

Twelve Years

“I don’t want to become a robot.”

“It’s not that large of a step.” ‘Her’ voice cooled. “Or you can become a developer. They always need security. Those are your two choices.”

Twelve Years Later

Luci brushed back the spikes of her hair, narrowly missing her facial implants. She knew her face was the only thing that bore any resemblance to what she had once been. She mentally hooked into the intranet and searched for her parents’ address. If she had a stomach, it would have sunk in regret. They were long gone. Standing in position with all the other guards newly returned from the development lands, she looked out over the landscape. It was the first time she’d been home in 10 years, and this was the celebration of the 250th anniversary of Confederation. Then it would be back to the field, to expansion and development. That was her home now.

She checked to make sure her red and white armour was immaculate and then posed once more.

Tricentennial
Benoit Chartier



*A*pril 2nd 2167

Automated tillers dotted the landscape, huge and silent through the double-paned glass of the speeding bullet train. Mya Abdulrahman watched them furrow the brown earth, culverts still pockmarked with the dying, tail ends of winter. Manitoba and Saskatchewan were waking. Soon summer would arrive and the fields would sway with purple flax, golden wheat and reddish-green marijuana. Moisture tents would cover them, protecting them from the blistering summer's heat. The whine of the engine a subdermal hum as she considered her mission on this, the Tricentennial of Confederation. What made Canada great?

As every year, a special envoy was chosen to travel the country from coast to coast, to speak to Canadians and find what the true spirit of the nation was. Being chosen by Prime Minister Ashaageshiinh was truly an honor, but Junior Assistant Mya felt nervous. Three hundred years was a huge landmark, after all. Other countries were either doing much better, or much worse. Japan, for example, was in the final stages of building its vertical city project, an engineering feat never seen before in human history. Mya sighed and put her head against the window. One of those great beige concrete containment walls flashed by, holding back the rising river waters that invariably rushed in every spring. She thought of the continuing troubles south of the border; the fracturing of the United States so many years ago was still felt in border skirmishes, refugee repatriation and attempts at peaceful resolution among the warring states. Just last month another ceasefire had failed between Texas and California; talks held in Regina ground to a halt as the Texan delegation walked out of the conference. Did that define Canada? Its relationship to the dissolving country south of the border?

"Next stop, Winnipeg," the kind voice announced over the intercom. Fields gave way to highways and traffic, the train rising several meters to the level of the city, then darkness as it entered

the tunnel leading into it. The engines whined down and she picked up her simple carryon by the handle and hustled to the exit. She flashed a smile to an elderly black man, allowed him to go before her, and was rewarded with a smile and thank you.

That doesn't change, at least, she thought.

Mya had wanted to take her time in Winnipeg. As well as being the most central city, it was the Prime Minister's birthplace. She wondered if she might be brown-nosing a bit, but shrugged it off. Outside the reproduction Union Station, traffic flowed easily around the square Greystone building. Small driverless cars popped in and out of underground on-ramps, most streets off the main levels. The electric cab she hailed stopped a foot from the curb and the door opened.

"The Four Seasons," she said to the computer, as it silently drove off. She caught a glimpse of the Human Rights Museum before plunging into the penumbra of the underground streets. White LED streetlamps flickered as the car rejoined traffic, darting expertly into the proper lanes.

Her room was ready for her, on the 25th floor. Travelling incognito meant that her living quarters swayed more on the side of small and cramped than large and lavish, but she was used to that. The window of the downtown hotel peered north, and she could observe the arc of the sun as it set in the west. In the distance, a dirigible took off, headed to northern communities, filled to the brim with supplies and passengers. Some, inhabitants of those far-away places, others tourists, eager to escape to the wilderness and visit their neighbours.

She rehashed some past national exploits, like becoming one of the leaders in green technologies, or building one of the best space launch centers on the planet in Nova Scotia, second only to Japan's. Was that truly what made Canada great? Or was 'greatness' too strong a word? She turned on the holovision and kept watching outside as the sun slipped into its sheets of burnished fields.

"Bombings in Turkey..." the holovision announcer said. "Increasing clashes between Thai and Myanmar armies have forced thousands from their homes on both sides of the common border, near Tachilei..."

She turned it off with a wave of her hand and clicked on the virtual shades of the window, the sun now a razor-thin arc of orange light. The world was a mess.

Supper was a vegetarian meal, served at the hotel's restaurant on the main floor. Sadly, there was nothing halal, but she'd found a workaround. She stepped out into the Winnipeg evening, the last vestiges of chill melting away as the month paced forward ever-so-slowly. She'd been here before, as an undergrad in communications. The University of Manitoba offered an excellent program, and being only a few hours by train from Ottawa, made it all that much more appealing. Why was she attracted to this place?

"Evening!" a young girl called as she walked down the street.

Ab yes, now I remember, she thought. She walked through the city, the sidewalks full of people checking out the street markets, smiling and greeting each other. Downtown was blocked off to traffic at night, making it pedestrian only. A large floating stage had been set up near Portage and Main, the windiest place in Canada, and a Sri-Lankan/Pakistani duo was in full swing. Mya pondered the wisdom of having placed it there, and the image of a stage blowing down the street, out of control yet still rocking made her smile. Further down Portage covered stalls stood in long rows, filled to the brim with artwork. Their creators stood by proudly, talking to curious passersby. Mya walked up to a stall filled with soapstone carvings, an older Inuk woman sitting on a yellow plastic folding chair, polishing a walrus with a soft cloth.

"How much is this one?" she said, picking up what must have been a polar bear. The white bears had recently been reintroduced in the wild after successful genetic manipulation had brought clones back to life.

"Two-fifty, but I'll let it go for two-ten if you get the walrus," she said, holding it up for Mya to see. The stone was a soft grey, entirely smooth, with whalebone for tusks. It shone in the light of her stall, and Mya smiled.

"Where are you from?"

"New Rankin Inlet," she responded, with the Inuit habit of putting the accent on the final 't'.

"I'm Mya."

“Yuka,” the older woman replied, a smile pleating the skin around her eyes.

“How long have you been in Winnipeg, Yuka?”

“Couple of weeks. Took the balloon since the ice roads are melting.” She craned her neck, and Mya got out of the way so she could show off a gorgeous carved seal to a Sikh man in a blue business suit.

“What do you like about this city?”

Obviously, asking about Canada would have been a weird and overtly political move, and that was why it always was easier to start off at the micro instead of the macro. Mya could then deduce the larger picture from all the stories she collected.

“It’s okay. People are friendly. I have family in the North End of Winnipeg. They send money up to Rankin, and I come down to sell carvings for artists in the spring.”

Not really what she wanted to hear. Then again, what was she expecting? Glowing reviews of every town, hamlet and city through which she travelled? People could only appreciate what they had when they were taken away from them, perhaps. Mya walked off into the night, feeling a tad depressed. It had been a lot of the same throughout her journey. A lot of “It’s alright, I guess,” and “At least we’re not like (insert name of country/place that was surviving civil war, terrorist bombings and environmental upheaval).”

The lit windows of *The Toad*, a small pub, attracted her attention. Open doors allowed jovial music to escape into the night, so she climbed the four steps onto the establishment’s patio, then through the stained glass door. The old, gritty carpet went well with the peeling striped wallpaper, and she slipped onto a barstool in front of the carved oak bar. A lone, old television up on the corner flashed images of some local newscast. She ordered a glass of apple juice over the quizzical bearded bartender’s raised eyebrow, and let herself sink into the environment. A couple drank tall pints by the window, and a group of students animatedly played some sort of board game in a booth over in the corner. As she considered her next course of action, her boss appeared on the television set, and the red ticker spilling sideways announced that the country would be taking in more refugees, as the situation in south-east Asia was degrading.

In a lot of respects, Mya's story was intimately tied to Canada's history. Her grandfather's family had come here during the Succession Wars that had rocked the United Arab Emirates. Open borders had always been a mainstay of Canadian culture for those seeking help and a safe place to live. But what made it *great*?

"What do you like about Canada?" she asked the bartender, who looked like the question was a stick-up.

Too direct, she thought, mentally kicking herself.

"I like the outdoors, you know? I go for long bike rides in Whittier Park when it isn't flooded. The Trans-Canada Trail is pretty sweet, too," he said, rubbing a large earring. "I wanna take the summer off someday and bike it from coast to coast."

Good point, but not exactly what she was looking for, once again. She thanked the man and left, leaving a couple of extra bucks on the bar. He smiled and thanked her.

She walked back to her hotel room, the city lights angular and comforting. As she stared from that high tower onto the darkened prairies in the distance, she smirked, thinking that, yes, you probably could see your dog running away for three days. Animal services would then pick it up and bring it back to you.

On the muted holovision, images of the chaos elsewhere on our tiny blue dot arrived in flashes, but her mind was on the blank screen of her computer.

Greatness. When she thought of the word, it conjured up images of conquest and destruction, bravado and hubris. Things that she could hardly associate with the country she'd known all her life.

How difficult it is, she thought, to capture the spirit of a nation, such as it is. What if it isn't greatness that I should be looking for? From what I know, there have never been any military parades, or rallies of backslapping, congratulatory heroism. Canada quietly coasts along, addressing issues of inequality and tries to right them, as a matter of course. Sometimes taking far too long, yes—the thought of her First Nations Prime Minister and her people's history coming to mind—but at least keeping an open mind. It doesn't interfere in other's business except to lend a hand where it is needed or wanted. Its people are flawed, like people everywhere, but they at least attempt to be kind toward each other. Never with a fanfare or a marching band, but with a

polite word, a smile, or an apology. Maybe that's why I've met so few 'proud' Canadians, and so many contented ones. I would have to say that compassionate humanism characterizes this nation, and I hope it continues to do so for a long time to come.

She contemplated a long time before putting these thoughts on the page.

She hoped the Prime Minister would find this conclusion to be as true as she did, as well as all those who looked forward to celebrating another 300 years of Confederacy.

*Not Seeing is not Proof
of not Being*
Majid Kafai



So far, all the works presented here have focused on our Canada, the place we live, in celebration of our 150 years of Confederation. We conclude this volume with the work of a New Canadian whose vision spreads from our shores out across the world, across the galaxy and to infinity, a fitting expression of mankind's insignificant existence within the fathomless mystery of time and space.

There are billions of human beings
on the planet Earth
but I have not seen them all

My not seeing them
is not a proof
that they do not exist at all

Undoubtedly
our story
is the same vis a vis the boundless World

In the immense field of the Universe
which has no frontier
we have billions of galaxies

Galaxies which are
billions of light years far from us
and inside those galaxies
there are billions of suns, moons, stars and planets
as well as
billions and billions and billions of living creatures

who are more civilized
more advanced
more knowledgeable
and more powerful than us

The appearance of a luminous flying cigar
which more than half a century ago
I saw at night in the Tehran sky
is a testimony to what I say
a claim
which has crossed over the border of imagination
and has indeed become
a thrilling fact

Undoubtedly
in the fecund field of the Universe
the Earth particle
is not an extraordinary knitted piece

I said particle
because
if we circulate inside the Milky Way
not only we do not see the planet Earth
but the Solar System as well
a Solar System
which is lost
among billions of stars and planets
that are in our galaxy

And if
with the speed of light
we fly for millions of light years
in the boundless Universe
we will not be able to see the Milky Way anymore
despite the fact that it contains many Solar Systems and Stars

It is
sheer selfishness
sheer egoism

and
sheer ignorance
if we maintain
that we are the only living creatures
in this immense World
a World
which is boundless and full of mysteries

If we say
we are the only living ones
because
we have not seen any other living creatures
outside our galaxy

WELL
I say
those who are in other galaxies
they have not seen us too
does it mean that
we do not exist?

To say that we are the only creatures in the whole World
is like saying that
in a huge profound thriving ocean
there is only
one tiny fish
and nothing more
or that
on the planet Earth
there is only
one human being
and not more
one ant
and not more
or that
on this turning and wandering Blue Ball called Earth
there is only
one tree
one piece of grass

Not Seeing is not Proof of not Being

one flower
and not more

O! kind reader
think a little bit more

Biographies of the Contributors

Abra, Eleanor

Eleanor Abra comes of Loyalist stock, seventh generation in the Ottawa Area. After many years of teaching Writer's Craft at the high school level, she now has the time to do some writing of her own. Her passion is Canadian History (which *is* interesting) and Canadian theatre and literature, to all of which she is hoping to contribute more.

Barclay, Robert

Bob is author of three novels (*Triple Take*, *Death at the Podium* and *Ask Me About My Bombshells*) and a range of technical books in the field of musical instrument studies. His present book, due to be published this year, is *Jacob the Trumpeter*, a historical novel set in the Thirty Years War in 17th century Germany.

Bueno, Martin

Martin Bueno de Mesquita was born in Holland and immigrated to Canada in childhood. He has a Biology and Chemistry degree from the University of Waterloo, and has a professional career as a Pharmaceutical Representative with several major drug companies. He is author of *The Rainbow Alchemist*, a sci-fi/fantasy novel, and he has published a short story, 'The Wooden Dragon' in *Hero & Heroine*, an anthology of sci-fi stories. He has played violin in the Divertimento Orchestra for 30 years.

Chartier, Benoit

Benoit is a sci-fi and fantasy author living in Gatineau with his wife and sons. He is the Director of Communications for the OIW. He thinks he has what it takes to become a fulltime author. No one has told him the opposite. Yet.

Cowan, Judith

Judith is a retired educator, living in Ottawa. After decades of writing reports and newsletters, she is enjoying writing various forms of fiction and non-fiction targeted to a wider audience. Judith is currently working on several projects, including a picture book about marauding squirrels and a

short story about a hapless runt-of-the litter kitten named Zeus.

Cox Bernardette

Bernadette Cox lives near Ottawa. After working 10 years as a journalist and 21 years in agriculture communications, she became a solopreneur, writing and editing for several clients. She now specializes in not specializing, and her projects involve diverse subject matter including the environment, municipal affairs and health.

Fenwick, Janet

Janet lives in Ottawa and has been writing as hobby for many years. Finally, she will see her name in print in a real book.

Florio Graham, Barbara

Author of *Five Fast Steps to Better Writing* (20th anniversary edition), *Five Fast Steps to Low-Cost Publicity*, and the award-winning *Mewsings/Musings*, Barbara Florio Graham is a publishing consultant and marketing strategist who offers mentoring, contract review, and online courses.

Galay, Gladys

Gladys is a Canadian writer with a murderous bent. After a career as a public servant, she is becoming known for her murder mystery stories. She was awarded 3rd prize in the Capital Crime Writers 2015 Short Story Contest. She received an honourable mention from the NYC Midnight 2016 Short Story contest for 'Doctors Orders'. Her story 'Snow Day' was published in the OIW Anthology *Thirty at Thirty*. Gladys is currently working on two novels; a young adult espionage novel and an adult fiction novel inspired by events from the past.

Horne, Bill

Bill spent much of his working career as a manager with Bell Canada, and spent some time in Bogotá Colombia with Nortel, where he created the Terry Fox Run. He has been an OIW member for years, having held all Board positions. He was the Association of Personal Historians President in 2016, and wrote *Could You Pull the Duvet Up, Please?* as part of the grieving process for the sudden death of his beloved wife Dannie in 2015.

Huffman, David

Debut fiction writer David Huffman describes himself as an engineer by education, a website designer by initiative, a contractor by trade, and an occasional musician and artist by avocation. After retiring from a lifetime of transactional writing he is now immersed into fiction, inspired by the likes of Raymond Chandler.

Jerome, Darren

Ten years ago Darren discovered that he could combine his passions for history and storytelling into a single pursuit. He has published a collection of short stories entitled *Rideau Whispers In Stone* and, more recently, *LowerTown*, a novel set during Ottawa's Shiner War.

Johnson, Hazel

Hazel is the author of two books, *RV-ING and Other Adventures North of 60* and *My Roots from Prairie Pioneers*. She has published articles in local papers, the *Ottawa Citizen* and *Fifty-Five Plus*, and in the online news source *True North Perspective*. She has also contributed articles to past OIW Anthologies. Her other interest is making pottery.

Kafai, Majid (Abdol)

Majid has a degree in Law and served as a diplomat for Iran from 1955 to 1980 in Geneva, Kabul, Vienna, Moscow, Milan, Rome, Ottawa and Paris. He was a Refugee Judge in Canada from 1984 to 1999. Majid is the author of several books in Persian, English and French, and had a show of his paintings in Paris. He was awarded the title of Poetry Ambassador by the U.S International Library of Poetry and the Poetry Ambassador Program in 2006 and 2007. More than 800 of his poems are on his Facebook page. He has recently finished writing his memoirs, which he hopes to publish soon.

Lehmann, Peggy

Peggy is a writer with a focus on spirituality. Her inspiration often appears as insights through her work as a medium and teacher of energy balancing. She is busy writing her first book about the deeper meaning of our everyday lives, which is not yet titled.

Negrijn, Meghan

Meghan is a writer and editor currently based in Almonte. She focuses on novels, specifically science fiction, but has written in just about every genre. When not sojourning on Mars or in outer space she can be found, with pen in hand, in a horror or romance setting (so far...)

Newton, Keith

With several dozen more-or-less academic articles and books behind him, Keith Newton's publications record dwindled when he retired and tried writing fiction: five short stories, a satirical essay and a wee poem so far. The opportunity to contribute to the current anthology has encouraged him. Onwards!

O'Connor, Molly

Molly O'Connor has published a collection of short stories, *Fourteen Cups*; a creative memoir, *Wandering Backward*; a children's book, *Snow Business*; and *When Secrets Become Lies*, her first novel. Her stories appear in five *Chicken Soup for the Soul* anthologies, OIW anthology *Thirty at Thirty, Not Your Mother's Books*, and magazines and newspapers in Canada and the U.S.

Prattis, Ian

His moving and eye-opening books are a memorable experience for anyone who enjoys reading about primordial tendencies. Beneath the polished urban facade remains a part of human nature that few want to acknowledge, simply because it is easier to deny the basic instincts that have kept us alive on an unforgiving earth. Prattis bravely goes there in his outstanding literary work.

Rosolen, Norm

Norm's a crotchety senior citizen who believes that writing is better than watching TV. He hammers away at some short stories and a dystopian novel. He has short stories in *CommuterLit.com* and the OIW anthology, *Thirty at Thirty*. He will take any praise he can get.

Saba, Maria

Maria has published three books and over 100 articles, interviews, and stories in print and online. Currently she is writing her second collection of short stories about the aftermath of 1979 revolution in Iran, with a focus on women and children.

Schubert, Philip

Philip is the author of the biography, *Letters to the Granddaughter: The Story of Dillon Wallace of the Labrador Wild*. In 1999, after reading Dillon Wallace's *The Lure of the Labrador Wild*, he began retracing the challenging rivers and lakes linked to what Newfoundlanders and Labradoreans refer to as the Hubbard and Wallace Saga. The article printed here summarises these perilous journeys.

Southall, Margaret

After a career as reporter sub-editor, news editor and editor with daily and weekly newspapers both sides of the Atlantic, Margaret's first historical novel *A Jacketing Concern* is due for publication this year. The memoir printed here recalls an experience of hers while working as editor of a weekly newspaper in Northern Ontario.

Szabo, Louise

Louise Szabo is an Ottawa resident and the author of *Lucy's Road Trip: RVing Across Canada* and a co-author of *Travel Dreams and Nightmares: Four Women Explore the World*. Her short stories have been published in *Our Canada* magazine and she has twice won the City of Ottawa 50+ Short Story Contest.

Taylor, Maggie

Maggie is an Ottawa playwright who has written and directed three Murder Mystery Dinner Plays. Her stories have twice been shortlisted for the Audrey Jessop Award from Capital Crime Writers Short Story Contest. Some of Maggie's poetry can be found in *Cutting the Keys*, a University of Ottawa publication. Her fourth play opened on May 5th 2017.

Taylor Meehan, Susan

A native of Edmonton, Alberta, Susan Taylor Meehan grew up as an Air Force brat, living in Canada, the US and Europe. She spent most of her working life as a writer and editor with the former Canadian International Development Agency. Since retirement, she has spread her wings to include a wide range of genres, including historical fiction, short stories, biography and poetry. Her novel, *Maggie's Choice*, is set in World War I and reflects the experiences of her great-aunt, who served as a frontline nurse in Boulogne, France.

Villeneuve, Alberte

Alberte Villeneuve-Sinclair has published three novels: *Le jardin négligé* (1990), *The Neglected Garden* (2005) and *Une prière pour Hélène* (2007). She has given presentations to women, writers and students, discussing women's issues, violence, the importance of friendship and mental health. She has written articles for *True North Perspective*, *Canaan Connexion* and Arts Ottawa East's *Art News*. She currently writes 'Seeds for thought', in *Perspectives Vanier*. *Le génie de Jessie*, a book on bullying, was published in 2011 and later translated in English.

Wadden, Nix

Nix Wadden is an Ottawa writer of life stories founded on his Newfoundland background and career in journalism and government communications. He has written two memoirs: *Gower Street* (Flanker Press, 2015) on growing up during the Depression, World War Two and its aftermath, and *Yesterday's News* (DNC Publishing, 2008) on his journalistic experiences during the Smallwood era in Newfoundland.

Westland, Rimmelt

After careers in Canada's military, public service, and consulting, Rem's writing began with a non-fiction account of his run for public office, *Running for the People?*, published in 2015. His first novel, from which the story *Thanks for Your Service* was drawn, will soon be published. His current project is a novel about the impact of the global economy on a small community in one of Canada's eastern provinces.



OTTAWA ONE FIVE O

An Anthology of Prose and Poetry Celebrating 150 Years of Canadian Confederation

I am honoured to provide an introduction to this special compilation of prose and poetry to mark our country's 150th birthday. The Sesquicentennial will be an important milestone for an entire generation, as we all take a moment to reflect on what it means to be Canadian. This special anniversary has particular significance for our country's capital. This anthology brings to life our collective creative spirit, whether through works of fact or fiction, and to have it showcased for everyone to appreciate. These pieces reflect on our country's history and heritage, on our present, and upon the potential and possibility of our future. Each work, in its own way, is a reminder of the unique beauty that is Canada and how blessed we are to live in the best country in the world. I hope you will enjoy *Ottawa One Five O* as a piece of celebration of our Canadian culture in this special year.

Jim Watson
Mayor
City of Ottawa

