

Tagish Tlaagú

TAGISH STORIES

By Mrs. Angela Sidney



recorded by Julie Cruikshank

drawings by Susan McCallum

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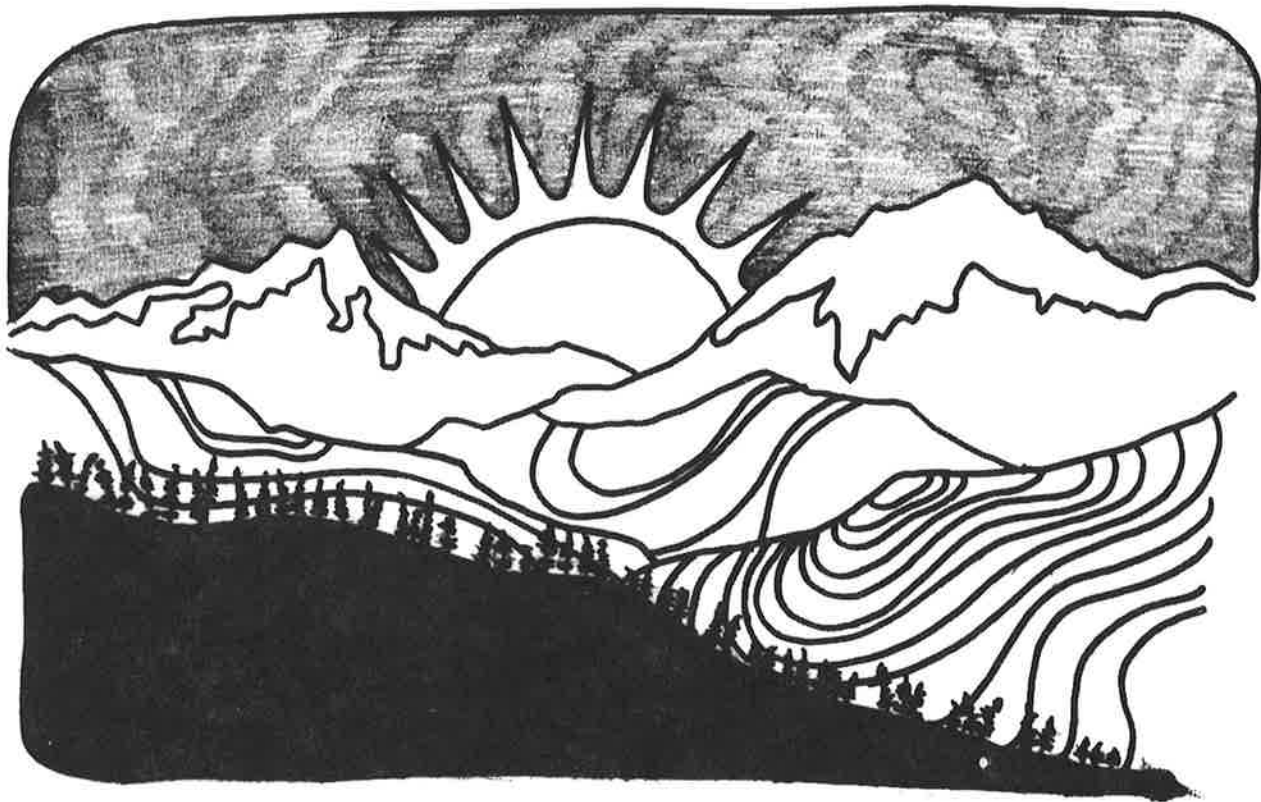
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Introduction and Acknowledgements:

This is the second booklet of stories narrated by Mrs. Angela Sidney at Tagish in the southern Yukon. During the four years between 1975 and 1979, Mrs. Sidney recorded a family history for her own immediate family, and a number of stories which she wanted published for a wider audience, particularly for young people. In 1977, some of her stories were published by the Council for Yukon Indians in *My Stories are My Wealth* together with stories by Mrs. Kitty Smith and Mrs. Rachel Dawson. This present booklet of *Tagish Tlaagú* (Tagish Stories) contains additional stories recorded in the winter of 1978-79.

Mrs. Sidney was born in 1902 near Tagish, of Tagish and Tlingit parents. Her father, *Kaajinéek'* also named *Haandeyéil* (Tagish John) and her mother, *Kaax'anshée* (Maria), were raised in what is now the southern Yukon Territory, but her mother traced her ancestry back to the coastal Tlingit village of Angoon. Like her mother, Mrs. Sidney belongs to the *Deisheetaan* clan or 'nation'. During her lifetime, she has travelled throughout much of the southern Yukon. She now lives at her home in the community of Tagish.

Mrs. Sidney learned these stories from her parents, aunts and uncles in both Tagish and Tlingit languages. Although they are told here in English, some have also been recorded in the original languages.

Until recently, Indian children in the Yukon learned about their world either from their own personal experiences or from instruction by elders. Older people told stories about how the world as we know it came to be. Many of the stories deal with the origins of the world and the transformations or changes which took place in the time when animals acted and looked like human beings. They also describe ways to deal with the tremendous powers present throughout the universe. Dealing with such powers is an important theme in most of the stories. The stories give both practical instruction about how to survive and philosophical instruction about the nature of the universe.

The stories also dramatize relationships between human beings. To understand story themes it is necessary to have some knowledge of the way people ordered their social world and the social context in which the stories were told.

People traced their family history through their mother's line and all clan names and affiliations followed this 'matrilineal' descent. The society was divided into two groups (also called 'moieties') Crow and Wolf; membership in these was also inherited from one's mother. Throughout the southern Yukon, the rule was that Crow must marry Wolf and Wolf must marry Crow.

There was much travel between the (now) southern Yukon and the Alaskan Panhandle in the late nineteenth century, and southern Yukon stories include both coastal and inland themes. Consequently, characters like Killer Whale (*Kéet*) play a prominent role in some narratives.

When a girl became a woman, she went to live separately in a hut especially prepared for her. She wore special clothing, notably a long "bonnet" which hid her face, and received instruction from her mother and from other women. After this time, she was not supposed to speak directly to her brothers, although a younger brother might speak respectfully to his older sister. This kind of 'avoidance' is mentioned in some of Mrs. Sidney's stories.

Ideally there was good friendship between a man and his brother-in-law. Often two brothers-in-law and their families lived and worked together. This is also important in stories: when a man calls another man or an animal 'brother-in-law', it is understood that they must behave as good friends and help one another. In the stories both humans and animals are included in the kinship system and can be addressed by such terms as 'brother-in-law'.

A very important relationship existed between a man and his sister's sons. Because descent was traced through the female line, they belonged to the same kinship group and a young man expected to learn from and assist his maternal uncle.

A number of short notes are included in the back of this booklet. They usually refer to versions of similar stories which have been recorded elsewhere in the Yukon or Alaska, or to aspects of society which are dramatized in the story. Many of the stories are very old and are told by Indian people in areas far from Tagish where Mrs. Sidney lives. Some of these story themes appear in oral traditions throughout the world. Additional readings suggested in the notes are available at the Yukon Archives.

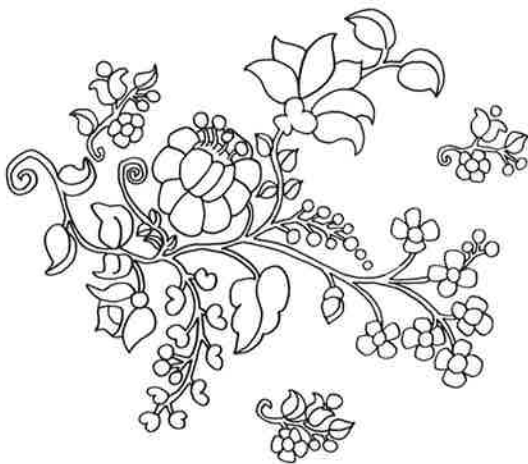
The stories are written as they were told, in idiomatic English, with some minor

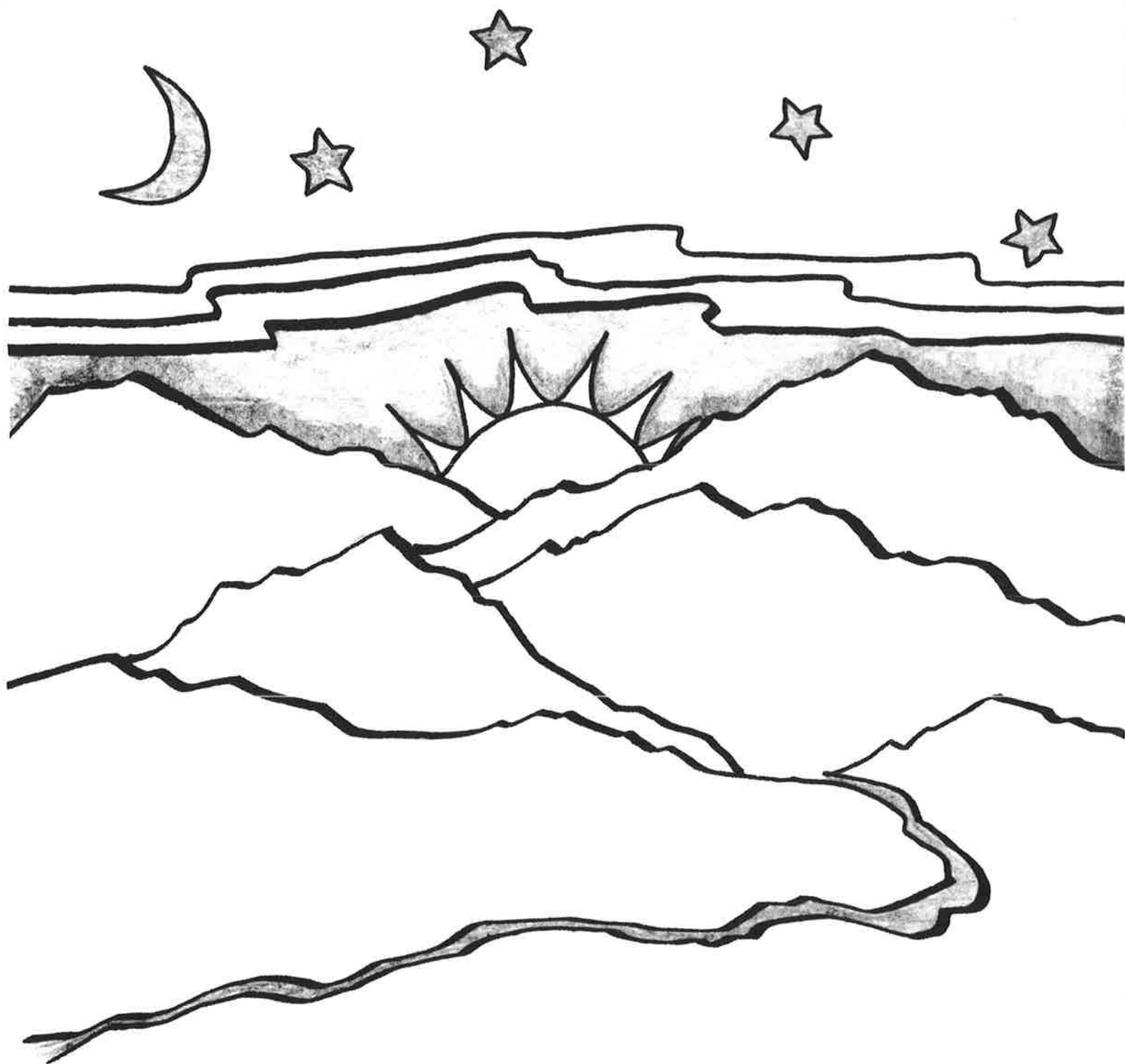
changes. In Athapaskan languages pronominal reference can convey a much clearer identification of subject and object relations within a sentence than do English versions translated by a narrator. For that reason, I have sometimes added proper nouns for clarity; for example, "he saw him/her" may be written "Crow saw his brother" if that meaning is clearly implied in the text. Similarly, plurality is marked differently in Athapaskan and English languages; narrators may use a plural subject and singular verb or vice versa when translating stories, for example "Crow go to see his brother" or "Crow had six basket". When a singular or plural form of verb or noun is clearly implied I have usually followed English usage. Occasionally I have added explanatory words in brackets. While a certain amount of the original style and flavour inevitably disappears when stories are told in English, this is how most children hear the stories. Original tape recordings and verbatim transcripts are retained at the Yukon Native Languages Project.

When native expressions, personal names, and place names are used by Mrs. Sidney in the English versions, I have attempted to include them in the text. Some of these are Tlingit and some are in the Tagish Athapaskan language. I have attempted to standardize the spellings of some of these words with the assistance of two linguists, Mr. Jeff Leer of the Alaska Native Language Center, and Mr. John Ritter, Director of the Yukon Native Languages Project. When the spellings are correct it is because of their patient assistance, but neither Mr. Leer nor Mr. Ritter is responsible for errors in my final transcriptions.

Mrs. Sidney has been a patient and cheerful teacher to me during our continuing collaboration. She has asked that the stories be published both in the *Yukon Indian News* and in her own booklet. Mrs. Sidney and I wish to acknowledge the support of the Yukon Native Languages Project and the National Museums of Canada, in preparing this booklet during the winter of 1978-79. Publication of this booklet has been made possible by funds from the Council for Yukon Indians and the Yukon Department of Education. The stories told here belong to Mrs. Sidney and should not be reproduced without her permission.

Julie Cruikshank,
May 1979





Ch'eshk'ia Kwändech

I'm going to tell you some more stories about Crow. *Ch'eshk'ia Kwäníndéch yé kwädéshndéch.*

Crow was married two times they say. His first wife was that Fish Mother. She was just like a human being to him. That's why he married her, that Fish Mother.

Every day he goes out eating seaweed. He eats seaweed all the time. Late in the evening, he always comes home. But he never saw his wife eating anything. Never saw it.

She's got a slave, always sleep across the fire, other side. He's always sleeping. Ashes are always on him.

One time Crow came home. There were hardly any ashes on that slave. Crow sees something different, just like somebody been's cooking something. He recognized that slave. He asked him,

"How come your ashes are not very thick on you?"

He (that slave) said nothing.

Then Crow jumped over there, started tickling him. The slave started laughing and Crow saw fish meat between his teeth. Here Crow picked on them, he ate them up, and he asked,

"Where did you get that fish from?"

That slave said, "I went to get water for my boss and I got fish. She put her fingers in the water and I catch the fish that came. That's the way I always catch fish." Now and then he eats fish.

Crow tickled him. That's why he laughed. That's the time he saw the fish meat between his teeth.

And so he went back across to his wife.

"My wife, please, let me get water for you."

He went down and got water for her and here he caught those fish. After he cooked them and ate them he said,

"My wife, let me fix fish trap."

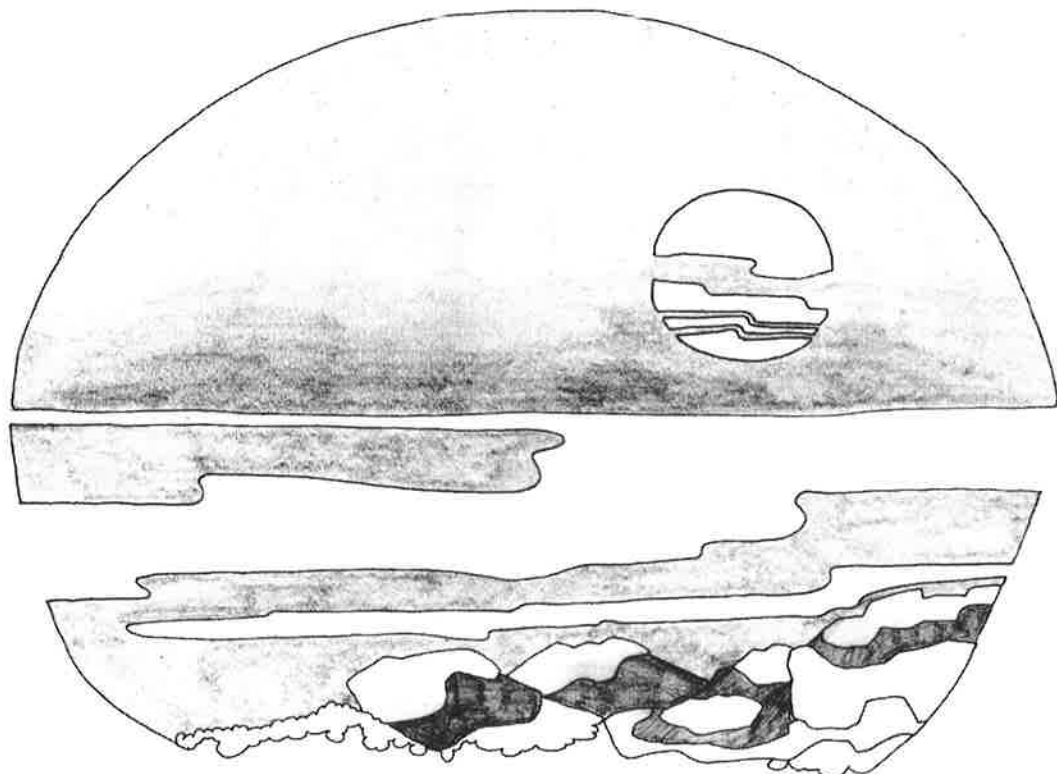
That's how fish trap began at the beginning. He's the one that made first fish trap, that Crow. So he made the fish trap and when the water was running down above the trap, there she bathed instead of putting her fingers in the water and he got lots of fish. Oh, every day they catch lots of fish.

That slave started to dry salmon too, and Crow too. Oh, his fish is all getting dry good. He started going out eating seaweed again around the beach. And finally his boss (Fog woman) told her slave,

"He's going to say something against me. You pack up your fish and make cache for it in the bush. Put it there. If anything happens you could lose all your fish. But make a big club and club your fish and you're going to keep your fish. But my husband is going to lose his all." That's what she told her slave.

One time Crow went out like that, go fishing. Oh he always cooks fish after when he comes back. Here one of those dry fish has got head on, you know, and here his head got caught in that fish teeth. And he swears at it.

And here that woman said "Hee — what else you going to say?" she said. She started turning around and packing up her things. Well, she's got nothing but she started to get ready. And here she walked out. As soon as she moved that fish just started following down. While Crow was grabbing this fish and this fish and this fish, here his wife started going down to the beach. His wife's fish go and he runs after it. She just disappeared — he never sees her go in the water or anything. She just disappeared all of a sudden — she's Fog, you know.



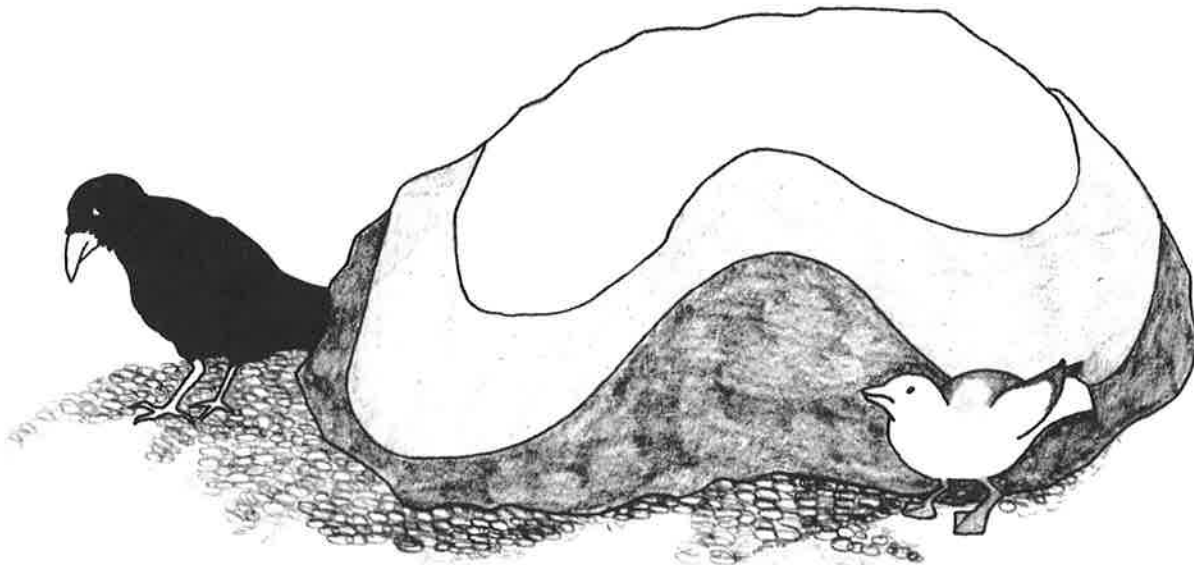
And the slave he ran back in the woods where he's got fish cache. He's got club there, here he clubbed them all while they're trying to get loose. But Crow, he had not one fish there! All come down and go back to life, to the river.

Oh he feels bad, feels bad for his wife.

"I shouldn't have talked too much", he said. That's what he said. All lost. That's why he can't do nothing.

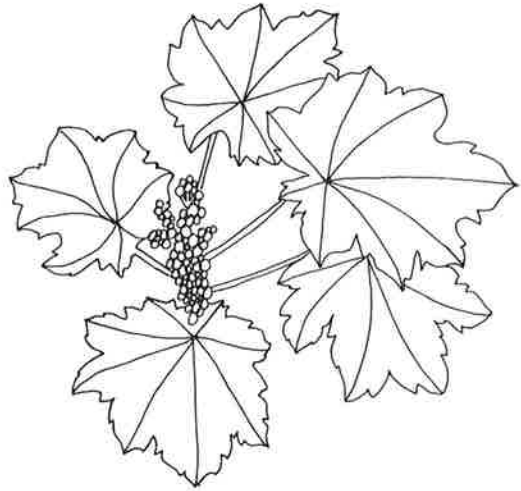
Anyway, after he gets over his trouble, starts to feel better, he starts to go on the beach again. Eats seaweed, goes here and there, eats seaweed all the time.

One time he came to a big rock. Here, just as soon as he starts to go close to that rock he heard somebody make that sound like eating that fish. He went past it. Soon as he goes so far he can't hear it again; then he turns back, goes again. He did that two or three times.



Then he thought, "I bet that's my wife imitating me". So he kicked that big rock. Here, sure enough big door open. And here his wife was sitting down in the back there. All she was doing was weaving baskets, just like those coast baskets. I guess that's where it started from, that woman making baskets.

Something must have been telling him things what to do. He had devil's club and he packed it around all the time. Here he took it off his pack and started spanking her with it, spanking his wife with it.



And his wife said “Aye, aye.”

“Say, ‘water go down’ ”, he said to her.

“Water go down, water go down”.

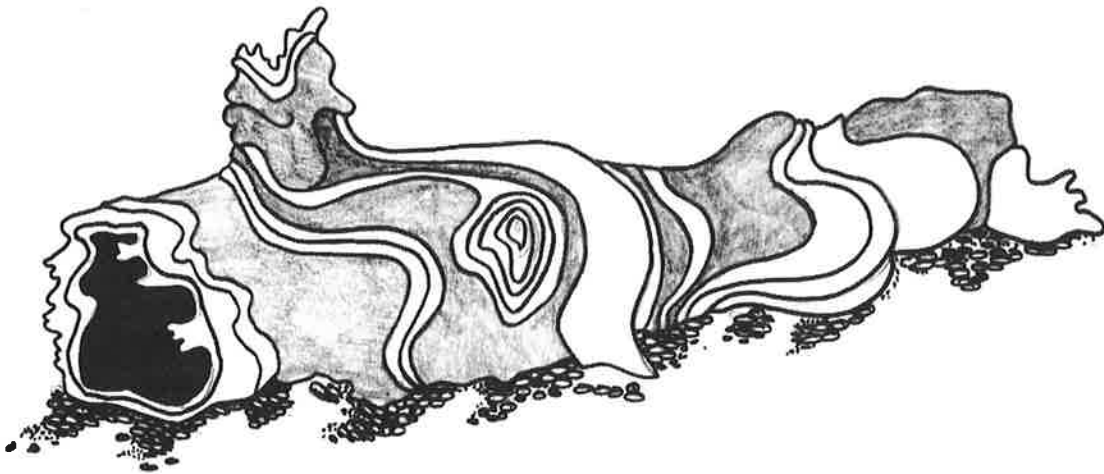
That water started to go down, you know salt water. That’s how water began to go back and forth like that. Finally he sees the water way out and her breath just stopped like that. And he ran outside and clubbed some fish. Fish all over. He started clubbing fish — pack it up, pack it up.

He kicked the stone and say, “Brother jump up. Lots of fish”.

And that stone (groans) “Ooo . . .”

“Stay asleep then.”

Just little ways he kick that driftwood.

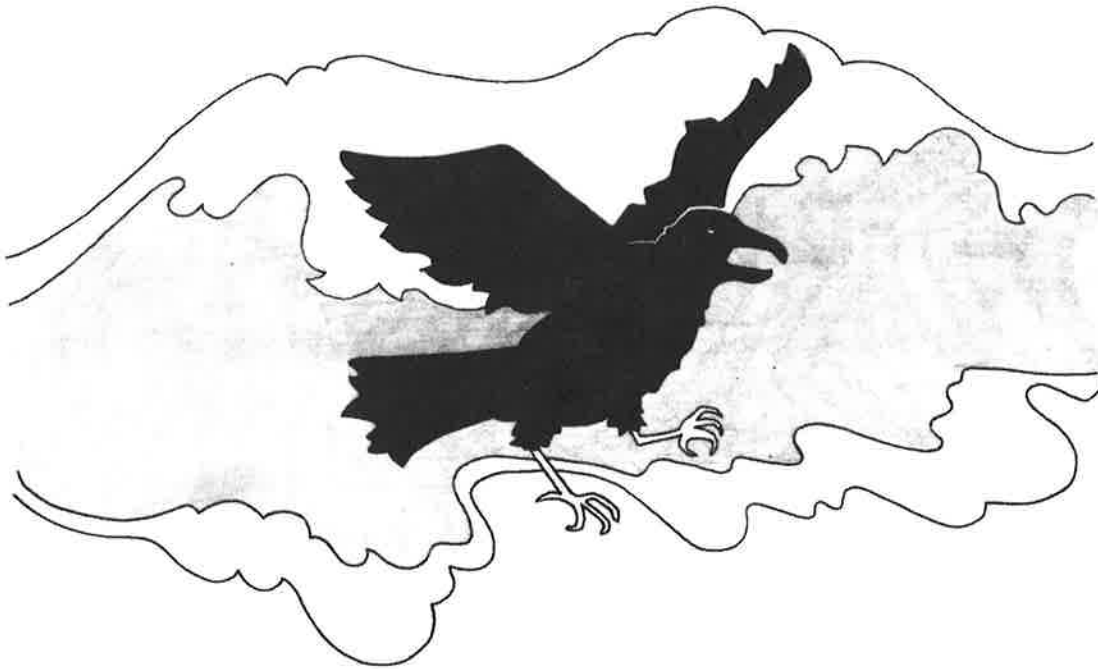


“Brother jump up. Lots of fish.”

So that driftwood just flies up. You know how it’s dry? It flies way up. Started packing fish too.

“You pack the salmon. I’m going to pack the ling cod.”

They pack fish up. They pack fish.



Way out on the beach where that water’s all gone, here all of a sudden water is rushing back. And he was carrying one too. Oh, he pretty near got drowned that place, that time. Maybe she did that on purpose.

After he did that he went back to look at that rock again. That rock was just sealed up again — no door, no nothing. Well, he lost his wife for good.

He dried that ling cod. They say the liver he threw it away. That’s why the liver is still fat yet, but that ling cod has no grease in it. Just the liver he didn’t cook it, he just threw it away. That’s why the liver is still fat yet. That ling cod was fat before — get lots of grease out of it. Now this ling cod up here is just white — no grease on it. No fat on it no way.

Now that he dried all that fish he starts to think how he’s going to fool his brother.

One time he pretended he’s dreaming in the night.

“Ooh, ooh, my brother jump up. We got war come upon us.”

His brother wakes him up. “Wake up. You make too much noise.” So he woke up.

“Uh, uh. I dream bad.” That’s what he tells his brother. “I dream war came upon us and I told you to run down on the beach and me up this way. I’m going to go out and get some spear handle poles.”

So next day he went out and got poplar tree bark. He made sharp end, tied it on to that pole. He gave one to his brother.

“This is your spear and this is mine.”

Next night he dream the same thing. That’s the same time he starts to make that noise.

Here one night, two or three nights after, early in the morning, “Whoo”. Big noise.

“Oh! Brother, brother, war upon us! Run out. Run out! You run down toward the beach, me up this way.”

His brother ran down to the beach. All was just birds around. All kinds of birds, they flop around his face — he’s dodging this way, this way.

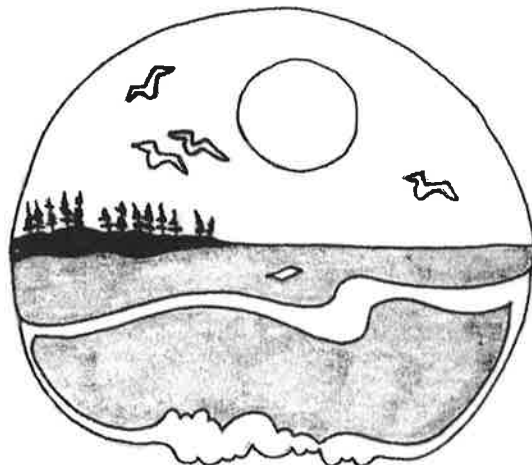
He says, “Whee, I thought you mean real people.” He starts to go back in house. Here his brother drank up all his grease already and ate up all his fish. Soon as his brother found out that one,

“Eee” he said. “I thought you mean real people.” He went back to where he was laying down. He went back to driftwood.

After Crow finished that he starts to walk the beach again.

One time after his pretty wife’s gone he comes on a pretty green blanket.

Looks like the Chilkat blanket, lying in the water. So he says, “I’ll take that one.” He threw his goatskin blanket out in the water. That blanket drifts out, disappears.



Then he picks up that green blanket. Put it on. Little by little that blanket falls to pieces. Piece falls off as he walk along. That blanket is made of seaweed! His wife did that to him. Makes it look like Chilkat blanket.

“Oh, what have I done?” he sings to that gopher blanket that floats away. “Come back from a deep place. South wind song: From Way Out the Middle Drift Back my Blanket.”

Pretty soon drifts back to him. Blanket is nice and white again. He dries it out. Starts travelling again.

“That’s my wife do that to me. She don’t beat me after all.”

One time Crow’s walking along beach. Came to blueberry patch. He took his eye out and put it on a rock.

“Look for boat. Watch out,” he tell it. He goes off to bush to eat blueberries.



That eye hollers at him. “Boat’s coming. Boat coming. *Yawk gun aat koo.*”

He runs out. He looks. No boat. He picks up that eye.

“Don’t lie to me. That’s bad luck.” He tells him. He throws that eye up and down to punish it. He sets it back on rock again. “Don’t lie,” he tells it. He goes off again to pick blueberries.

That eye hollers again. “Boat coming . . . *Yawk gun aat koo . . .* Boat coming . . . Somebody pick me up!”

Crow doesn’t believe him. No more holler.

“Maybe it’s true,” says Crow. He investigate, he check.

“Too bad my eye.” Where’s that boat gone? He thinks. He knows.

He takes huckleberry and puts it in his eye. He comes up to the people

on that boat, where they're camping. He comes up real sure of himself.

"Surprise! Surprise! We find a talking eye on a rock," they say.

"Let me see," he says. They give to him. "Boy you sure look like the Crow's eye." Bang. He sticks it in his eye. He took it. He took off.



Then he came to a camp. There was a widow there. She's got a daughter — nice pretty girl. Everybody tries to marry her. No, she wouldn't.

Her mother said, "I'm having a hard time. I'm going to let her marry the best hunter."

So everybody sits around the camp. You see this blue mark here? (vein on palm of hand). That's supposed to be good hunter, for man, and the woman, she's supposed to be good sewer, make money. And here that Crow put black there! Makes it look blue. Sat down by the fire like that. Well, that old lady knows he's going to be best hunter so she choose him.

"You, I want you for my son-in-law." Here he was just lying. Every day he goes hunt, he can't kill nothing. Finally that old lady got sick. Here he falls in love with his own mother-in-law. He said to his wife,

"You know your mother could go up into the bush where there's some medicine there. Here he sneaks up there too. Here she comes up and he grabbed her! Gee she got mad at him. She went back home.

"So that's what you want to do eh?" She took off and so did his second wife.

After that they pack that tree crackers they call it. It grows on rock or stump, just like mushroom. He pack it around. Here he sees this whale. He calls it. "Come closer. This tree crackers swear at you." He said, "You big mouthed thing'. That's what he said to you, this tree crackers."

So he did come closer, that whale. And here when he came closer, Crow flies into that hole he blows out. He had little kindling wood too.



He starts to live in that whale's stomach. Starts to eat all the fat in that whale. Makes smudge with that kindling, fire in that whale. That's how he cooks that fat. He came to heart only left.

"What's that hanging there for?"

That's the heart. Here, he cut it off. Heart's gone, so that whale start to die.

Crow says to whale, "Land in most capital city." Finally, it stops in one place.

Crow say, "I wonder where there's big shot like me to cut that stomach open?"

Finally it took lots of people to chop that whale open. Took lots. Soon as they cut whale open Crow flew up and out 'til people can't see him. He rest there. Gives them chance to make grease.

He came back to people like before.

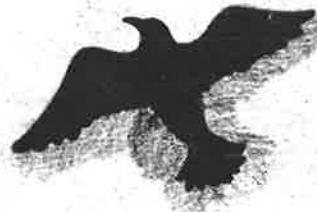
Then Crow dropped down a little way. After he got rested up good here he came back to camp, came to people again. He waited a while 'til they got the grease out and dried up some of the whale meat. Then he came to people.

He went right to the middle of town. The chief always lived in the middle, you know. So he came to the chief.

“Stranger come to town!”

They call him in, they feed him. And then Crow says,

“There’s something happened here. There’s a big whale landed. And just as soon as we cut it open, here something flies out, flies way up in the air 'til we can’t see it. Don’t know what that is.”



He made it so they can’t see him clearly, just like he got fog around him or something. That’s why they don’t know what it is. Then Crow said,

“Oh my. That’s bad luck. When my father and mother were going to die, same thing happened. And here, war came upon them. All the town got cleaned out except me, I was saved. I hide away, that’s why I got saved. You people should move, go away. Just leave everything like that you fellows and go away. Go on island”.

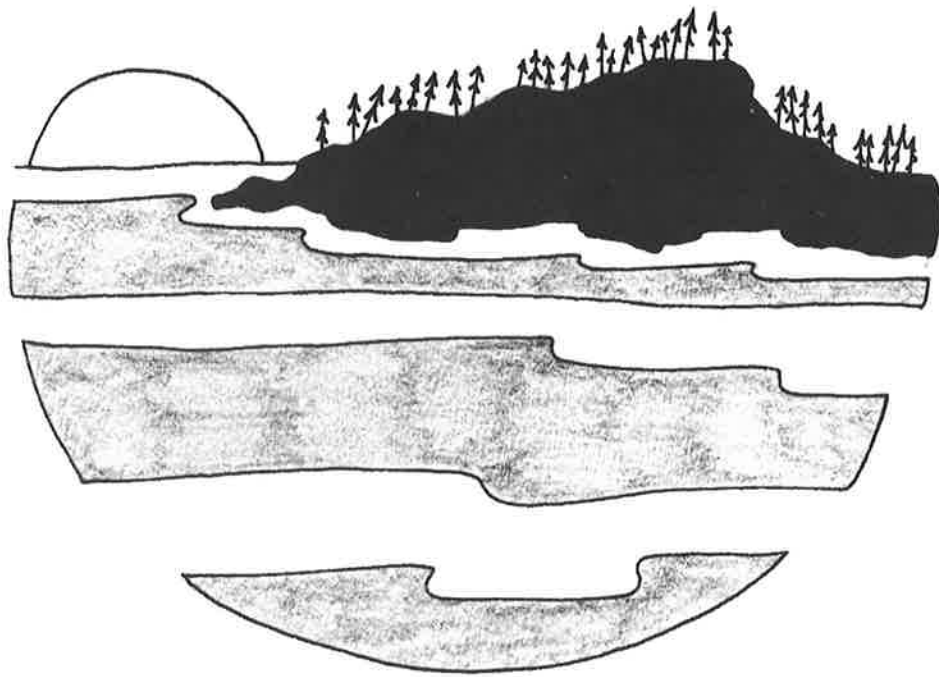
So they did. There was an island there too. So they started to move. That’s the time he gets a boat, wants to stay with the kids.

“Well the boats are leaking”, they tell him.

“Put fat on it. Chew fat and put on it. When you get in the water it’s going to freeze, it’s going to stay on it.”

Here, soon as people go in the water he jumps in the first boat; he eats all that fat up. Everyone of those boats, except the kids’ boat last.

When all those boats start to leak, everyone got drowned. Those kids were last. Here they sink too. He flies, him. He tells those kids,



“Turn into fish duck”. That’s why you hear those fish duck go “ah, ah”. Little Atlin there are lots. *Cháax* they call it, Tlingit way. Diver. “Turn into diver you kids.” I guess he loves them a little bit to do that.



Other Crow stories told by Mrs. Sidney appear in her earlier book, *My Stories Are My Wealth*, and are repeated here because she feels they should all appear together.

(Birth of Crow)

One time there is a girl whose daddy is a very high man. They kept her in her bedroom all the time. Men try to marry her all the time but they say no, she's too good.

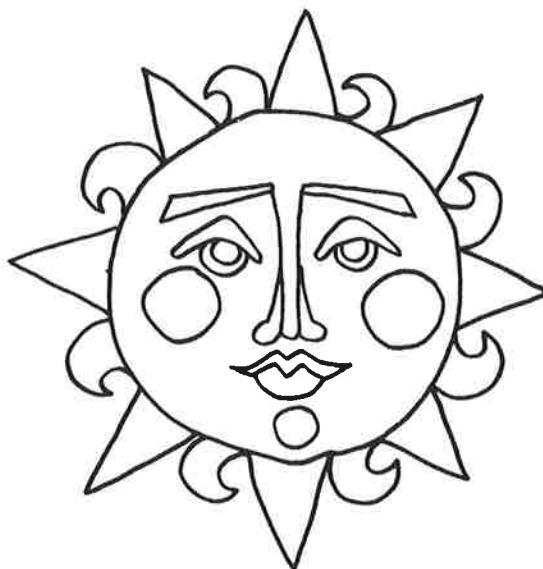
Crow wanted to be born. Wants to make the world. So he made himself into a pine needle. A slave always brings water to that girl. One time he brings water with pine needle in it. She turns it down. Makes him get fresh water. He brings it again. Again pine needle there. Four times he



brings water and each time it's there. Finally, she gives up. She spits that pine needle out and drank the water. But it blew in her mouth and she swallowed it. Soon she's pregnant.

Her mother and daddy are mad. Her mother asks her, "Who's that father?"

That baby starts to grow fast. That girl's father had the sun, moon, stars, daylight, hanging in his house. He's the only one has them. The world was all dark, all the time. The child begged for them to play with.



Finally the father gives his grandchild sun to play with. He rolls it around. He plays with it, laughs, has lots of fun. Then he rolls it to the door and out it goes. "Oh!" he cries. He just pretends. He cries because that sun is lost.

"Give me moon to play with." They say no at first. Like now if baby asks for sun, moon, you say, "That's your grandfather's fire." Finally, they give it to him.

One by one they give him sun, moon, stars, daylight. He loses them all.

"Where does she get that child from? He loses everything," her father says.

Then Crow disappears. Has those things with him in a box.

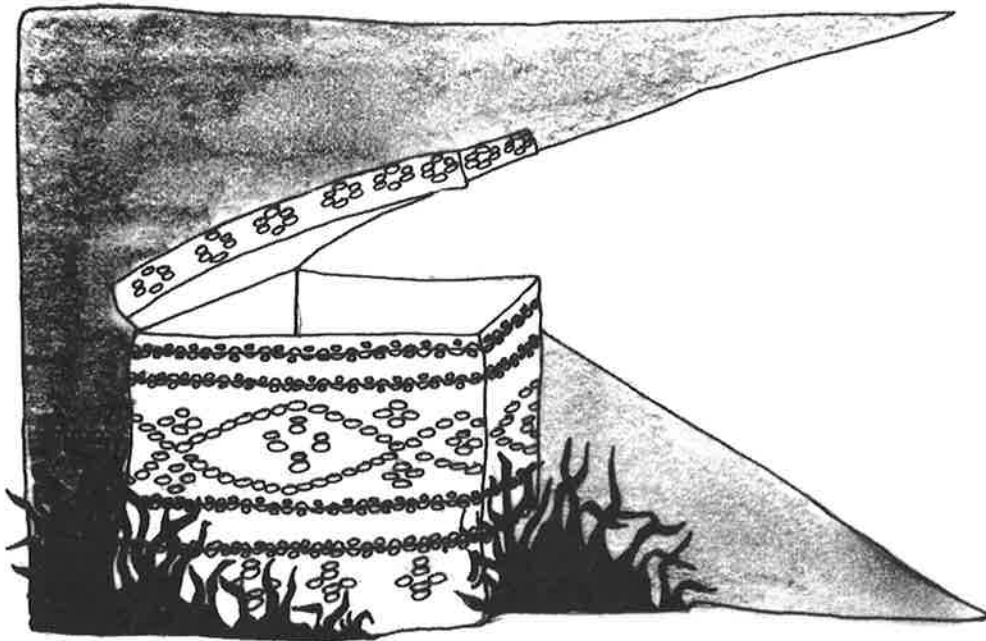
He walks around. Comes to river. Lots of animals are there — fox, wolf, wolverine, mink, rabbit. Everybody's fishing. That time animals all talk like people talk now. The world is dark.

"Give me fish," Crow says.

No one pay any attention.

"Give me fish or I bring daylight."

They laugh at him.



He's holding a box — starts to open it and lets one ray out. Then they pay attention. He opens box a bit more. They're scared. Finally he broke that daylight box and throws it out. Those animals scatter, hide in bush and turn into animals like now. Then the sun, moon, stars, daylight come out.

“Go to the skies,” Crow says. “Now no one man owns it,” he says. “It will be for everyone.”

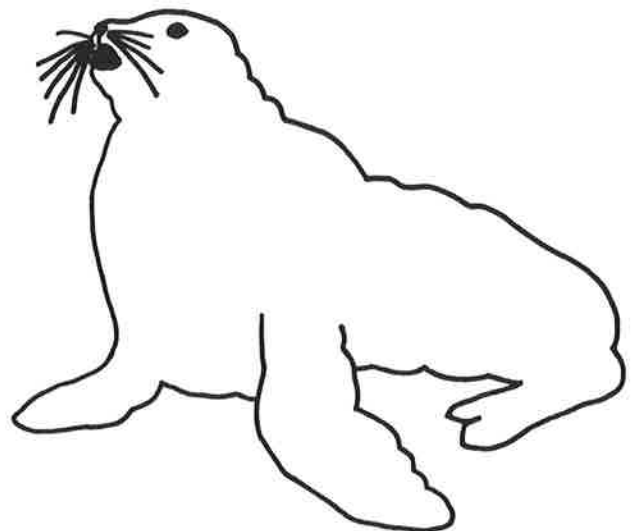
He's right, what he says, that Crow.

After Crow made the world he sees that sea lion owned the only island in the world. The rest was water. He's the only one with land. The whole place was ocean.

Crow rests on a piece of log. He's tired. He sees sea lion with that little island just for himself. He wants land too.

So he stole sea lion's kid.

“Give back that kid,” said sea lion.



“Give me beach — some sand,” says Crow. So sea lion gave him sand. You know how sand in water floats? Crow threw that sand around the ocean.

“Be world,” he tells it. And it became the world.

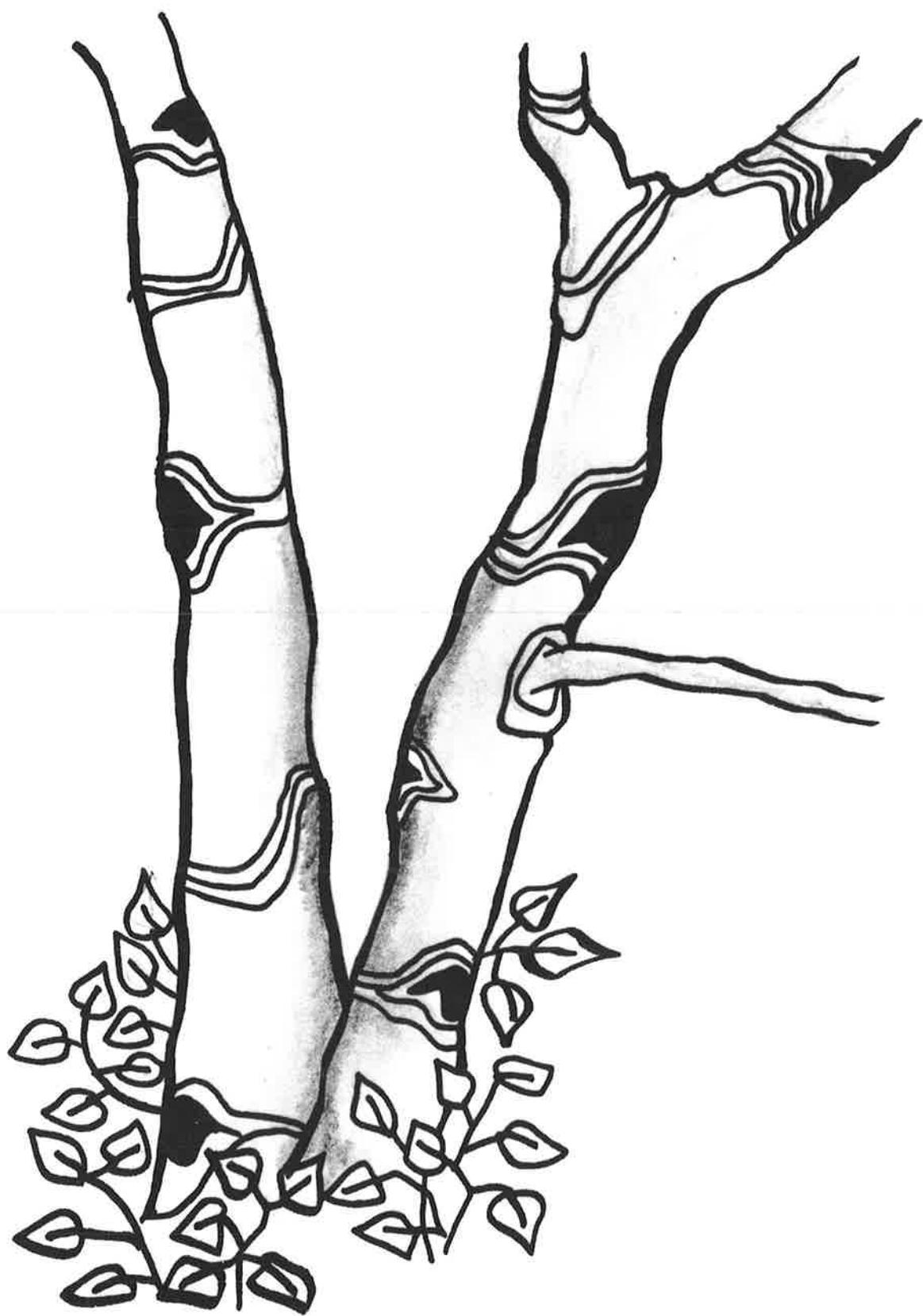


After that he walks around, flies around all alone. He's tired. He's lonely. He needs people. He took poplar tree bark. You know how it's thick? He carved it. Then he breathed into it.

“Live,” he said. And he made person. He made Crow and Wolf too. At first they can't talk to each other. Crow man and woman are shy with each other — look away. Wolf people same way.

“This is no good,” he said. So he changed that. He made Crow man sit with Wolf woman and he made Wolf man sit with Crow woman. So Crow must marry Wolf and Wolf must marry Crow.

That's how the world began.



How People Got Flint

Bear was the only one that had flint one time. There was no flint, they say. People were having a hard time — sometimes fire would go out, you know. Mice are the ones that really got it. They say bear tied it under his tail where he had long hair under there. So one time, mice tried to get fur from him.



“What are you doing?”

“My kids all froze up on me,” Mouse said. “I want some of your fur.”

“Well, get it from under my tail. There’s lots.”

So he did. In the meantime, he chewed that flint off. The bear noticed it right away. Mouse threw it to the animals.

Fox ran away with it. Oh, he crossed two valleys and here the bear can’t catch him. Finally, Bear gave up. Fox threw it down to a big rock and here that flint broke up. He threw the pieces around and said,

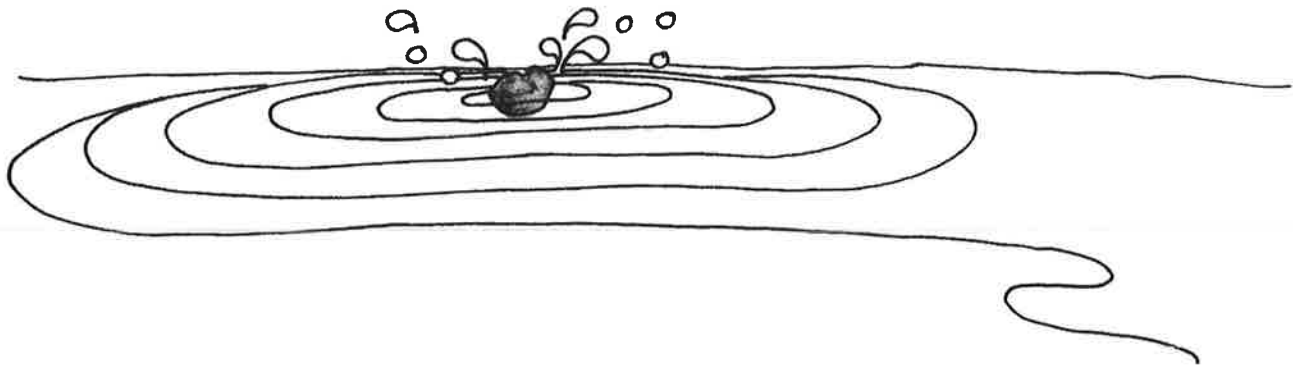
“Go all over the world. People need you. Make lots of flint for people.”

And it did fly all over the world.

Oh, Fox waited to see if Bear would come. No, he never came, so Fox started to backtrack. Here, he came to a little lake and he got dry rhubarb, hollow in the middle. Here he went down to the lake and shoved it in the lake and it came up.

“I wish that when people are dead they come back like this”, Fox said.

But that Bear was sleeping pretty close to him, and he heard it. Here he picked up a rock and threw it in the water.



“I wish that when people die they would be like that. Let them die like a stone”, Bear said. He was mad.

“Oh grandpa, I didn’t know you were there. I guess you’re right”.

If he didn’t do that, I guess people would come back.

That’s why people when they die, they die for good.

The Flood

They say a long time ago, in the Bible, there was a flood. They've got a story like that in Indian, too.

They say when that flood started, lots of people made rafts. They got on the rafts. But they say the animals were the ones that really killed the people. Some of them would have been saved, I guess.

Animals like moose or bear or others tried to get on the rafts with the people, and they tipped the rafts upside down when they tried to get on. That's why hardly any people got saved. Somebody got saved, that's why they know about the flood.

Uncle Titus Jim told us that at Jubilee Mountain, near Atlin, they saw something built like rafts sticking out of the mountain. There is dirt on it but that raft turned into rock. Just looked like a raft tied together. Part of it sticks into the earth.

Another place is way towards Primrose Lake, that highest Mountain they call Primrose Mountain. *Del Dzéte'* Blood Mountain, they call it in Tagish language. I guess they've got Tlingit name for it, too, because Tlingit travel that way too. I guess that's the way they travel to Laberge. And the ones who go by Dezadeash Lake go to Selkirk, or further down.

They saw something like that there. A raft sticking out of the ground. It's turned to rock, that one, too.

They say the rope is made from the bark of trees. It's been twisted. That's how they hold the raft together, like rope. They say that, too, all turned to rock — just like rock. Spruce tree bark maybe.

When the water started to raise — I don't think it raised all of a sudden, all at one time — I guess they know it. Maybe they take off half-way up the mountain or something. Maybe they got chance to make rafts. That's how they got chance to do it.

The Old Woman Under the World

There are two old ladies down below who look after the world. One is supposed to be sleeping; the other one holds up the earth, with a pole. When she shakes it, that's when there is supposed to be an earthquake. That old lady there with the pole is supposed to be death. She always argues. She's the one who always says:

“Let people sleep for good when they go to sleep. Let them die.”

That Death Woman always wants to kill people before their time.

But Sleep Woman says:

“No. Can't you see how my boss puts good pillow for me to sleep on? And you want me to let her go to sleep for good? No. No — I won't do that.”

Those two old ladies — one is Sleep Woman, the other is Death Woman.



Eclipse

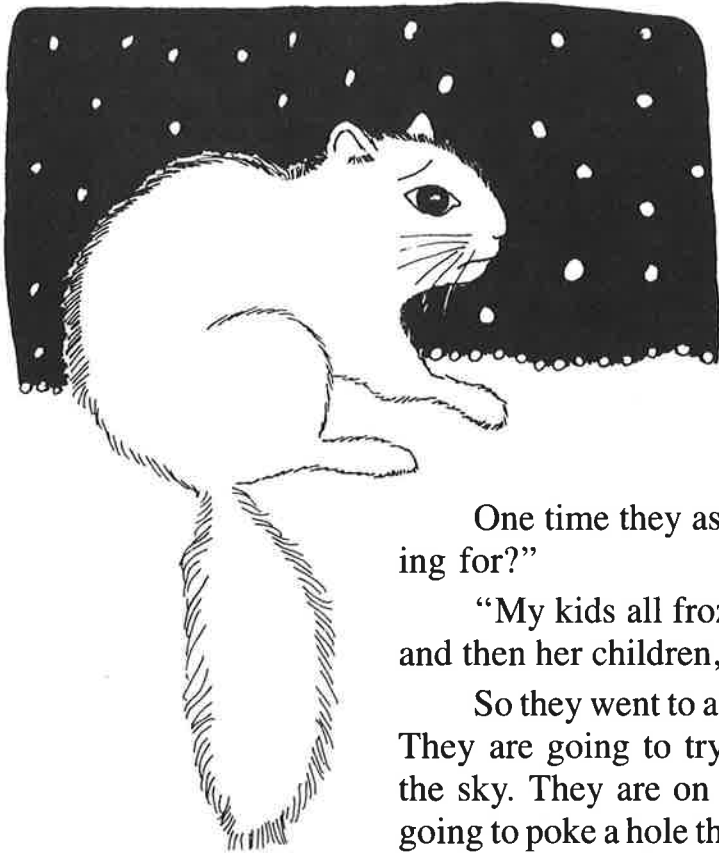
My auntie Mrs. Austin told me about the sun eclipse. It happened when they were at Log Cabin she said. They all put out a line, all put out their blankets. Then they started singing their song and waving their stick with a gopher snare tied to the end, waving it up and down. They were swinging it around and singing, hoping the sun would come out again.

“Come on out and go where you are going.”

That's what they sang. So the sun came out again. They think that it was their song that made it come out again.

How Animals Broke Through the Sky

One time, the sky used to come right down to salt water like this (vertically). Here the animals lived on the winter side. Cold. Squirrel always came amongst the other animals, crying all the time.



One time they asked her, “What you crying for?”

“My kids all froze up again.” Every now and then her children, her babies, all froze up.

So they went to a meeting, all the animals. They are going to try to poke a hole through the sky. They are on winter side and they are going to poke a hole through the sky so they can have summer-time too. Summer is on the other side too.

So they gathered together with all kinds of people — they’re animals though. Bloodsucker is the one they picked to go through that hole. He poked that hole. Then different animals went through. Wolverine is the one who made that hole bigger. He went through with dry mooseskin, made bigger hole. That’s how they all got through.

Now they are going to steal good weather. They went to a high person. He's got the weather. He's got hot air, cold air, he's got flowers and leaves. So they took all that. They stole it when people weren't home. Here there was one old man, there. He went outside, took his blanket outside and waved it around his head.

"Get winter-time over there and summer over here. Don't go for good," he told them. He kept them from taking summer completely away.

That's how, when winter goes for good, that's the time we get summer. When summer goes back to south side, that's the time we get winter.

He waved the blanket and said, "Don't go away for good," he told the weather. "Go back and forth."

Those two worlds were side by side — winter on one side, summer on the other. On one side were winter animals — on the other, summer animals. They broke the sky down and, after, it went up.

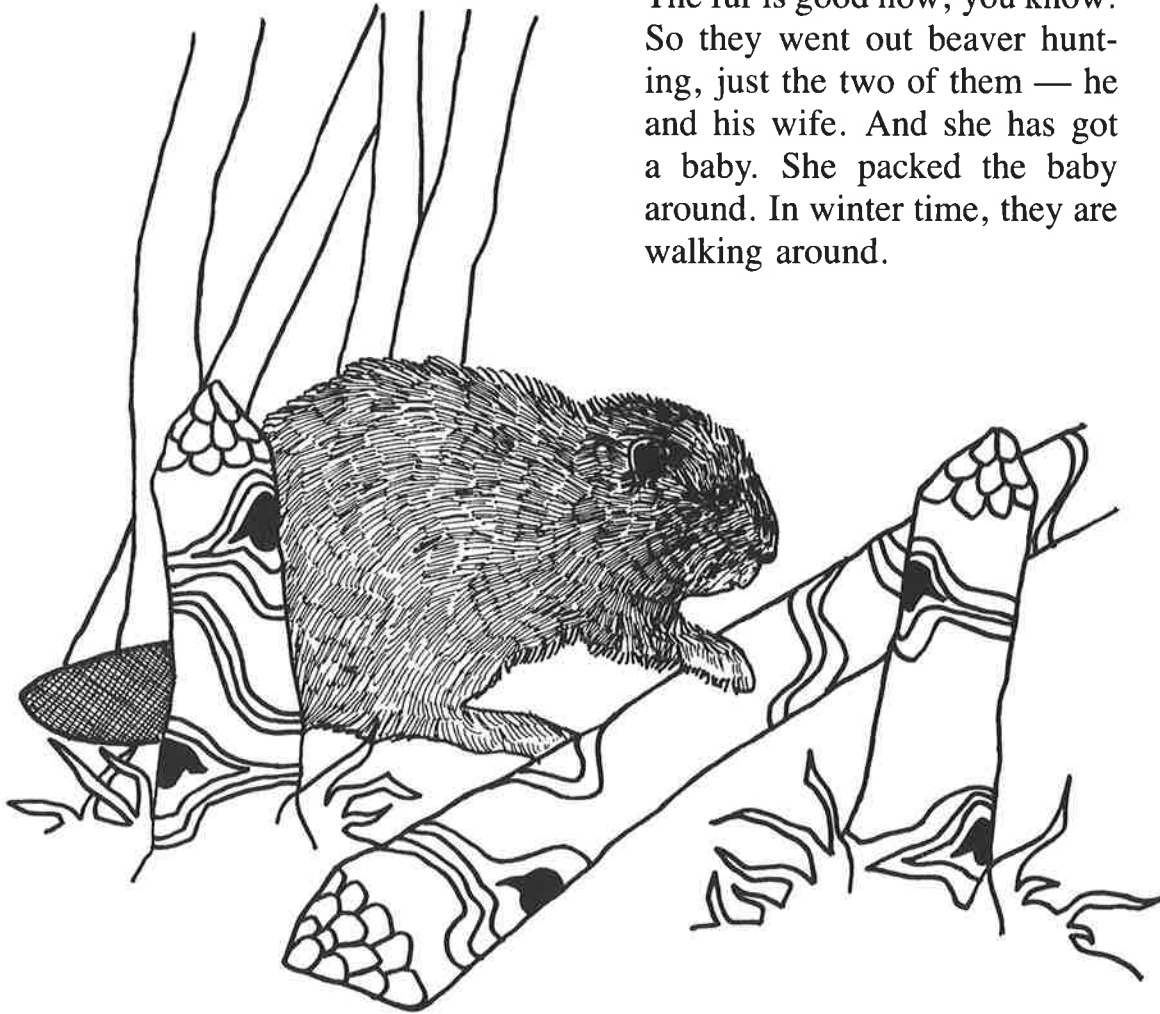
After they got it across, they bust it, the summer bag. Pretty soon snow melt, everything melt. They got leaves. They had all the leaves tied up in a balloon. They bust the balloon. And all the summer things came out.



Story of the Great Snake, Gog Cho

A man and his wife, in the fall time like it is now went beaver hunting. It used to be people hunt beaver in the fall time, a long time ago.

The fur is good now, you know. So they went out beaver hunting, just the two of them — he and his wife. And she has got a baby. She packed the baby around. In winter time, they are walking around.



One time, they were going back to the camp, the main camp where people live. They always live where fish spawn in the fall time. They were going back to that place where people always gather. Just like Klukshu, I guess.

They were going on. One night in fall time, it started to get dark early, getting dark. She packed her little boy backwards and that little boy could talk really good.

That little boy said, "Mama, Mama, *Izi*", he said. It means "I'm scared". That's what he said, that little baby. Don't know how many times he said "Mama, I'm scared."



So finally, she turned around and looked. Here was something crawling behind them, a great big snake. His eyes were as big as the moon, they say. She saw it, and she pulled her knife over. She's got beaver skin toboggan. She had all her skins and her dry beaver meat on it and she cut it off. She let it go and she took off. She ran away without it. Her husband

was going ahead. The men, they always go ahead in case they kill something, if they see caribou or moose or something. That's why they always go ahead.

She came to her husband. She tells her husband. Here her husband had his moccasins all taken off — he was drying it already.

She tells her husband, "There's a snake following us, a great big snake following me. Our little boy saw it."



She fed her little boy; she fed him from her breast, and she changed him and everything. In the meantime, she dried her husband's moccasins too, dried his mukluks.

She tells her husband, "Let's go, let's go. Let's take off. He's following us."

Here, it makes noise too, just like icicles bumping each other. Here it was his fur, you know, it was all frosty. The ice was touching each other and making that noise. She heard it coming.

He didn't believe her, I guess. He's mad because she cut off that toboggan, let go all those furs.



“Ah, it’s coming now. Come on, hurry up,” she tells her husband. Finally, she couldn’t wait any longer — she took off. She took off on that trail where her husband packs in wood. At the head of the trail, she stood there and listened for a while. And she hears that thing coming, right to the camp. And she heard, “My wife, you were telling the truth. I hold it good. Come help me.”

And she heard sound just like animal opens its mouth. Well, she knows. She took off. No more noise, so she took off. She knows where these people used to gather together in fall time, putting up fish. She took off anyway. She walked all night and next morning, day and afternoon. Here she came across that lake.

She got to the people. She told the people, "There's a snake following us. The old man had a fire going. I left him. I don't know whether he's coming or not, or what happened."

Anyway, she tells them to chop a big hole where she came out on the ice, where she started to cross the lake. They chopped a great big hole then. Then on this side, where she came out, they chopped another hole, not too big though. They just guess at it. And here the snake, finally he's coming. He went right in that hole and came out the other side, just his head sticking out. The ice hole wasn't too big, so he got stuck there. They killed him then. They killed him with spear. They poked it, killed it.

After they killed it, they chopped open that ice. They took the worm out. They say the other side (of the worm) was still not in the water yet, that big it was. Finally, they took it out of the water and they cut it open. Sure enough, her husband is in the stomach. They just do that to prove the snake swallowed him. Sure enough, he swallows him. Funny how they got snake up in this country.

Gog Cho they call that snake, just like big worm.



A long time ago, Jack Chacoon's mother, her name was *Nádágháat Tláa* was hunting gophers back behind Coal Creek Mountain. When you go by boat to Carcross, across from those three islands at Windy Arm, there is a creek comes down; they call that Coal Creek. People used to mine coal there, but the coal wasn't rich enough. Even Indians, Tlingit, call it *T'ooch' Lutú*, Black Point. That's the way they call that place.

She was running her gopher snares. It's fall time. It's easier to kill gophers in the fall time; summer time they get scarce down here, but in the mountains they still make noise, even in fall time, even if there's snow on the ground. They come out through the snow up on the mountain. That's why people go up in the mountain to hunt gophers and groundhogs.

She was running her gopher snares when she saw the stick of one of her snares going up and down, hard. When she got to it, she bent down and

untied it and picked it up, but it was still pulling hard, so she bent down and looked in. She saw two big shiny eyes, so she got scared of it and she just let it go. She took off.

They wondered — they think it was a snake. It was bigger than a gopher, they say. It was black. At the end of a gopher snare, there's always a knot. That's why gophers can't pull it off — they think that when it got going, it got to that knot and choked itself (just the way the great snake choked itself in that ice hole). That's what they think. It choked itself. That's why no-one else has seen snakes since. My father is the one who told us this.

Gox kasák or Hushkét Ghugha

I don't know how old he's supposed to be. He's in his teens, I guess.

Here, he's staying with his uncle and his uncle's wife. She's always mean to him, don't give him much to eat.

One time . . . she had goat fat. The fat around the stomach is always fat. It was hanging up and he pulled some off. While he was still chewing it she came in from outside.

"What's that you're eating?" she said.

He said, "I tore off some fat."

She went over to him and made him open his mouth; she scratched it out, took all that fat out of his mouth and spanked him for it, gave him a licking, told him not to steal.

"I was hungry", he said. "I'm hungry, that's why I did it."

Here he went to bed without eating. He falls asleep, he went to bed. Next day same — he's sleeping. He never eats. He wouldn't eat in the morning, just because his auntie did that to him.

His uncle asks, "What's wrong with him? He seems to be sleeping how many days now, sleeping?"

"I don't know. He's just lazy", she said.

Here, all of a sudden, he got power. Indian doctor comes to him. He made himself a different camp, this time in a cave. He wants fresh camp, different camp.

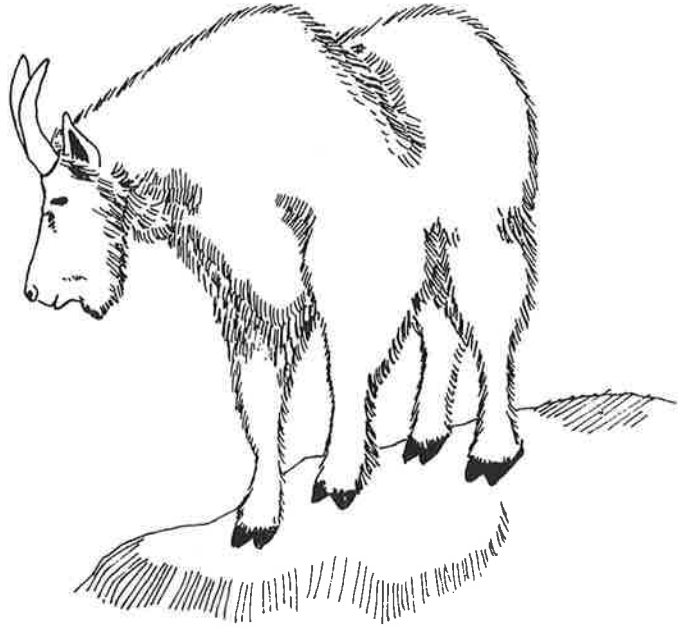
"Heep," he said, "heep".

He stayed there, made fire there. He's making doctor. He tells his uncle he's got doctor, he's got power. He told his uncle to get his knife ready, everything.

"You're going to see an animal come in here. Whatever you see, you kill," he said.

In that fresh camp, new camp, here he was making doctor. First thing

they know, a goat's coming into camp. His uncle grabbed his horns and cut his throat.



“*Heep*”, that boy breathe, “*heep*” until his breath is gone and he falls over backwards. Before that, he told his uncle not to worry about him if anything happens like that. I don’t know how many he killed. Finally, his breath came up again, so, no more. The rest of those goats took off. Finally, all set there. Big pile of goats he got there.

He told his uncle, “Cook one of those goats — whole thing. That stomach fat, too.” He told him to give it to his auntie. “There. Eat fat”, he said. “You were stingy with that little piece of fat I was chewing. Eat fat.”

So she eats fat. She eats so much fat, here she broke in two. That fat froze solid, hard, in her stomach and here she broke in two. They say goat fat is just solid.

Gee, that uncle cries — cries all the time for his wife. So finally, that boy put her together again. Cleaned that fat off her stomach, I guess. That fat turned to grease, you know. He cleaned off her stomach and then he put her together again and she comes to life again.

Oh, he became big Indian doctor. His uncle don’t go out hunting any more. What he wants, animals just come to them. That’s where he killed them. Every time that boy just loses his breath until he keels over. When his breath comes up, no more. The rest all disappear.

One time, they were going up a salmon river creek coming down the mountain, salmon river. Like at Marsh Lake, that McClintock River, I guess. Here, he hears somebody holler ahead of them. He was coming towards and somebody hollers, "Save me" — "*Hushkét Ghugha Khát gás né*", it sang.

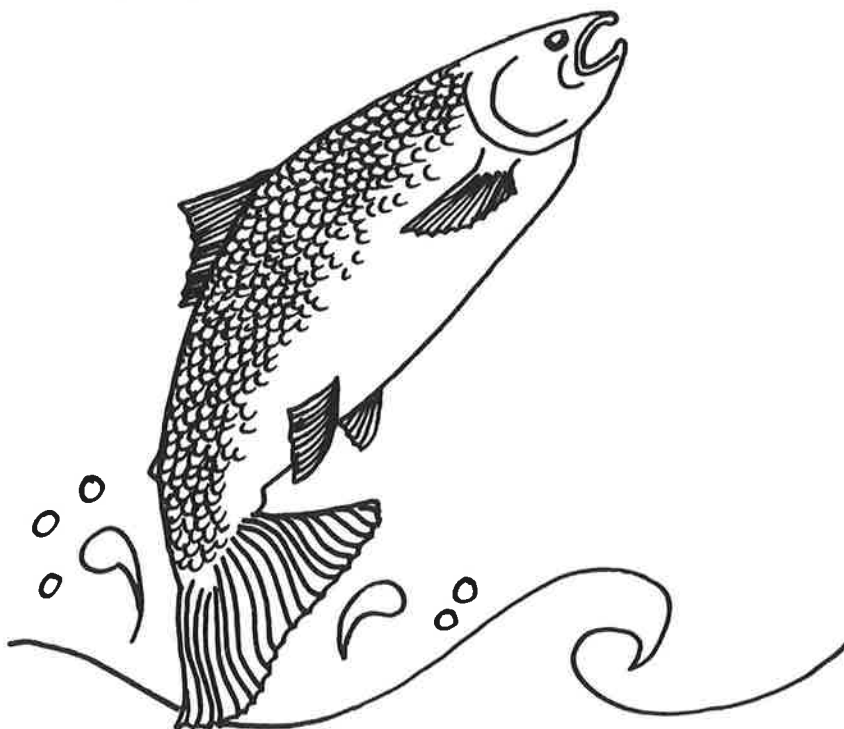
When he came by, all he saw was salmon, dry salmon; backbone there, and the skin. Everything is gone though. Meat all gone. Just the skin and the tail and the head there.

When he walked back, he hears somebody call again:

"Save me! "*Hushkét Ghugha Khát gás né.*"

So he went back and looked at that fish skin. Took it to that river. He washed it out good, washed the head out too. He washed all the big maggots, everything, out of it. Then he just put it together. "*Heep*", he blows into it. He said that four times and then he let it go. That's how its breath came up, that fish.

That thing just started to swim, started to come back to life. Just a little way after, here he floats up again. So he pulled it to shore again and he opened it up again and way back in the tail there were four big maggots. He took them out and he washed it out again. Then he tried once more. He put it in the water again. "*Heep, heep,*" he blows. He put it in the water and it swims around, came back to life. And when he did that to that fish, that fish gave him power, so he had more power. His doctor got stronger. He had both fish and goat power.



When they came back to people, people paid him to make doctor. Here, they got rich in no time. His uncle got rich. He had lots of power. Anybody, he could make them better. Everybody knows it from all over the country. So they got rich after a while.

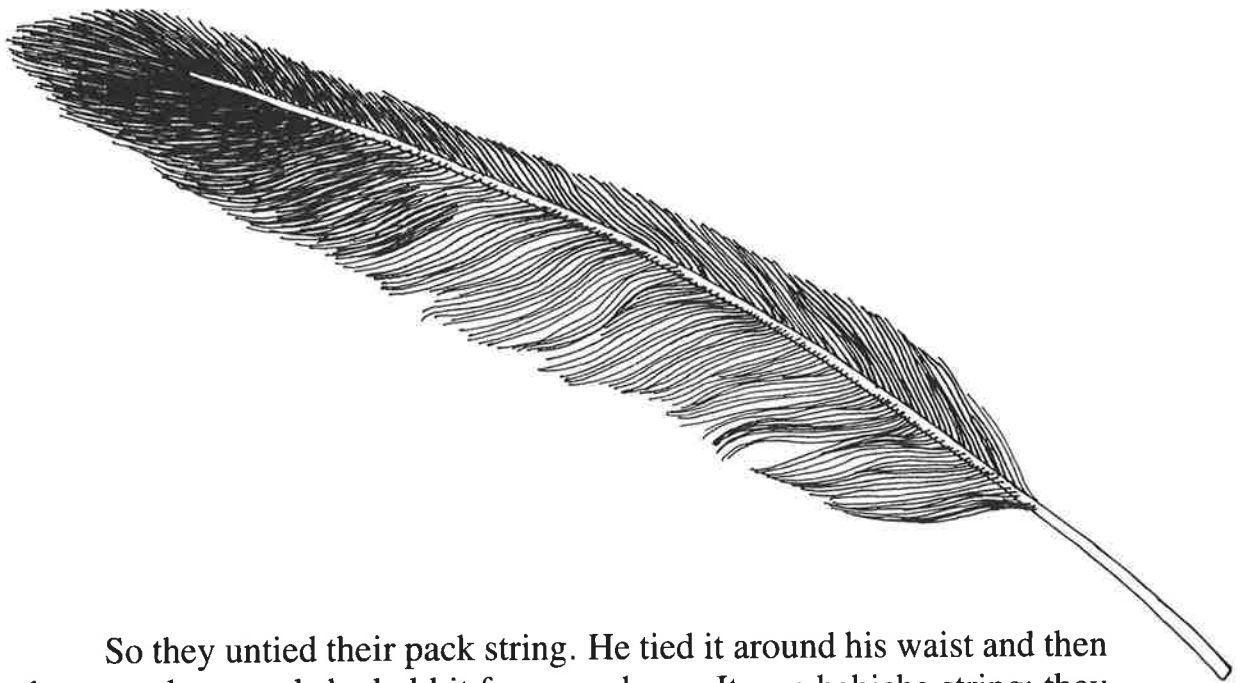
That boy's name was *Gox kasák*. Gox means slave. He was a slave. Fish called him *Hushkét Ghugha*, meaning "he wander around all over the country" — it's like he fly around, like doctor.

The Woman Stolen by Lynx

This is a story of a woman who married Lynx.

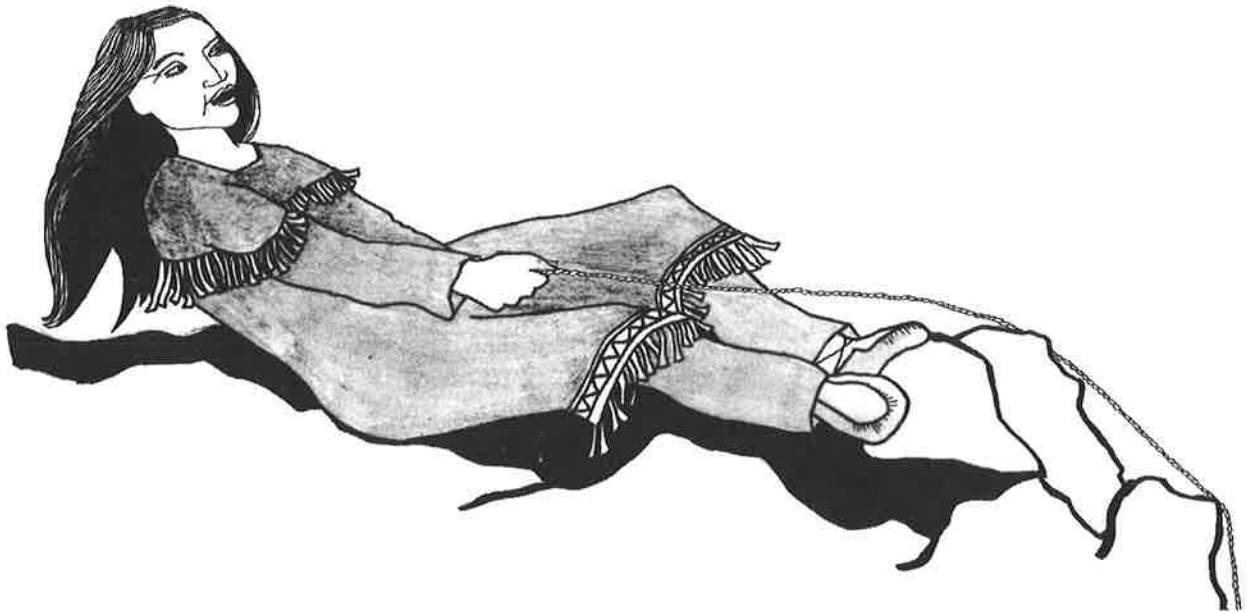
People always travel around and put meat for winter. One time, a man and a woman were travelling.

You know how eagles make their nest on a rocky cliff, where no-one can get to it? People used eagle feathers to sew with — they split them and do fancy work with them, just like they do with beads now, like porcupine quills, like moosehair. They dye them — cranberries for red colour, that moss that grows on tree limbs for yellow. She ran out of that eagle feather. So her husband told her, “You let me go down that cliff there. I’ll get some eagle feathers for you.”



So they untied their pack string. He tied it around his waist and then he went down and she held it from up above. It was babiche string; they braided it like rope. That’s how they made string long time ago.

“When I want to come up, I’m going to pull on it like that,” he said. “Then you drag me up again.” That’s what he told his wife.



So she lowered it down, went down to get the eagle feathers.

In the meantime, while she was sitting there, her husband never pulled that string. Here, somebody came to her. A nice young fellow. Gee whiz. Pretty looking man. You know, Lynx has some pink on his face? Here, that boy told her he wanted to marry her.

"No, my husband's down that cliff," she said.

"Let him go, let him go," he told her. And he started to drag her away.

There was a big rock there and she put that string around and tied it up. That's the way she let it go.

That Lynx dragged her away from there. Not very far, I guess.

"Oh, this place is good enough." Great big tall trees there. So he made camp there, and he married her. But he's got a camp on the other side of the fire. He always sleeps on the other side, across the fire.

He went out hunting. Here, he would bring back lots of rabbits all the time. She skinned rabbits, skinned rabbits, put it up high to dry all the time. He brought back lots of rabbits.

I guess where they are is not very far from that rock cliff. So one time, here her husband tracked up that track. He was tracking that Lynx. Here, he came to her. Day time.

Her husband told his wife, "What you doing here?"

"Well," she said, "that man packed me away, that's why."

“What does he do?”

“Oh, he just kills lots of rabbits for me, all the time.”

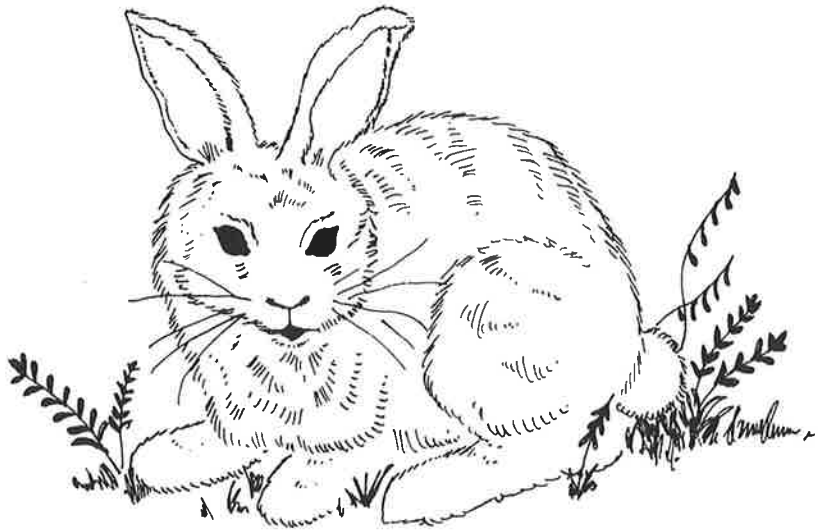
Her husband asked her, “Well, you want to stay here? Do you want to go back with me?” ‘I want to kill him,’ he was thinking. “You fool him,” he told her. “Put blanket across the fire. Pretend the wind is blowing so I can sneak up there.”

In the evening she put the blanket across there.

She told him, “What for you sleep there? Why don’t you sleep here with me? You wanted me.”

“It’s not March yet. I can’t sleep with you yet,” he told her. You know, lynx mating season is in March.

She talked cranky to him. “What is this you bring me all the time? My hands are just getting rough from skinning those rabbits. My husband used to kill nice fat moose all the time. You — you just kill nothing but rabbits. My hands are getting rough from rabbit blood.”



“What do you mean?” he asked her. “That’s animal too. Rabbits are animal too. What’s the matter with you?”

That night, she put that blanket across.

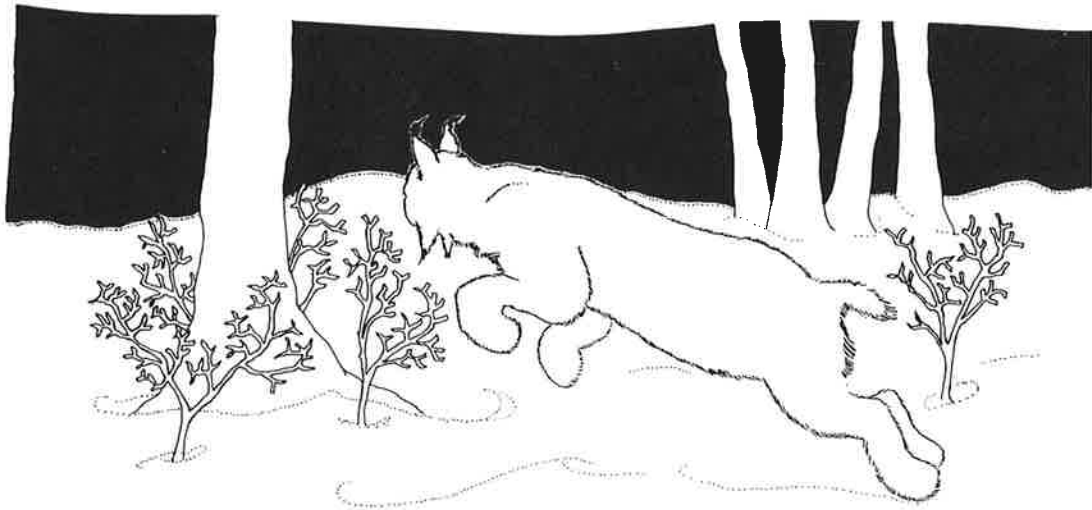
He said to her, “What for you hang that blanket up? What you think? Do you think I’m not good enough to kill anything? You put that blanket up there so I won’t see something?” He got wise to her.

“Because wind blowing this way,” she says. “It smokes up.”

Here, just while he was saying that, that man, her husband, shoots an arrow right here (base of his neck). From behind the blanket, that's the way he killed him.

When that arrow hit him, he jumped up, saying, "I'm going to be Lynx." Here he ran up that tree. Not very far later, he fell off. That's how they know it's Lynx stole her.

He died and he turned into Lynx when he died.



Southwind Story

This is southwind story I'm going to tell you.

There was one rich man who lived right in the middle of the town. They've got a daughter. And all the boys in that village there, they want to marry her. Their parents go to see her parents.

"No," they say. "No." They won't let her go. They don't let their daughter go.

Finally, somebody stole her. Don't know how long after, her and her husband come back.

In the evening, people always went out to play ball. All the boys get together and play ball. That girl's husband wears a blanket on his back all the time, no matter if it's a hot sunshiny day, just the same he's got his blanket on all the time. Finally, one time, they tell him to play too. They want to get even with him somehow because that rich man wouldn't let his daughter go to any one of them; they were jealous of him, I guess.

Here, somebody pulled the blanket off of him, tells him to play. And here his back was all covered with big lumps, like balloons, tied up — all the way down his back. Here they laugh at him.

"So that man's got lots of lumps on his back. That rich man's son-in-law. He wouldn't let us have her."

When they pulled that blanket off that boy, he just lay there. He wouldn't get up. He never went home. They laugh at him, kick him around, and he just lay there.

Finally, towards evening, it started to rain. Rain, rain, rain — don't know how many days it rained. Pretty soon the water started to raise, coming up, coming up, coming up. Pretty soon the whole town was in the water. Water comes in that girl's father's house, and her brothers were all running around in the water. Just that girl, that wife and her little sons, were sitting on dry land, her two sons. All the rest was just water.



Finally, her Daddy tells her, said, “Daughter, daughter. Do something, do something. Can’t you do something? Your brothers are having a hard time with that water. Try to do something.”

She said okay. She got up, put her blanket on, put her little boys with her too. They started to go out. Just as soon as they started to walk, that water started to go ahead of them, go ahead of them. They walk right down. In front of that town is a big rock. They just went right to that rock and they went under it. That’s where that man was living — South Wind. He had turned himself into a person. That’s how he married that girl.

Those bags were rain. They bust them. Some of them was rain, and snow, and wind. Those people bust them. That’s how that water started to raise. They bust the rain bag. That’s how it rained so much and killed off all the people.

At night time, he must have picked up his blanket and went back to his big rock. He wouldn’t come out. He wouldn’t go to his wife any more. So his wife followed him.

Her father said, "That's the way you were made, I guess. You might as well go back to your husband. We would know where you are and we wouldn't feel so bad. But do something for your brothers." That's how come she got up. And as soon as she walked, that water started to go down the way it used to be before.

That's how come salt water started coming up and down.

South Wind story.



The Stolen Woman

My aunt, Mrs. Whitehorse Billy, told me this story.

A man and his wife and their two boys were out hunting. They have a daughter too. That daughter was living outside. She had her bonnet on.



War came upon them. Her mother and father were killed, both of them. She threw her bonnet off herself. Two boys found her, two brothers. They asked her:

“Were you like that?”

She said, “No, I was out here because I’m going to get my month’s sickness again.”

So anyway, they kept her. They take some dry meat. Then they tell her, “Are you alone?”

“Yes, I’m alone. Now my father and mother are gone.” She didn’t tell them she had two brothers. She’s smart.

“Well, who gets meat for you?”

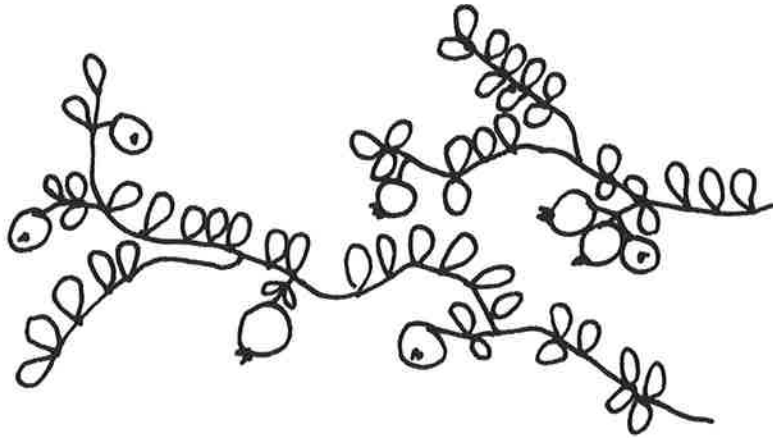
“Well, people kill moose for us and we go there and dry it. Long ways people. You can’t tell where they are.” She hid it.

They all go away, go back where they came from. They go all day and then they come to a big creek from mountains. And she wouldn’t go across it. She just sat down. They put bridge. They chopped down a tree. And she just sat down, saying, “I always fall in the water when I go over a bridge. I don’t want to go over.”

She’s sure smart, that girl.

Those two brothers are going to stay with her for her husband. They met quite a few of their people. One of those boys packed her across. That’s her husband-to-be.

While she was going close to the camp, here she picked some cranberries. She picked some up and here she put them on her legs to make it look like she had her month’s sickness. One of those boys saw it.

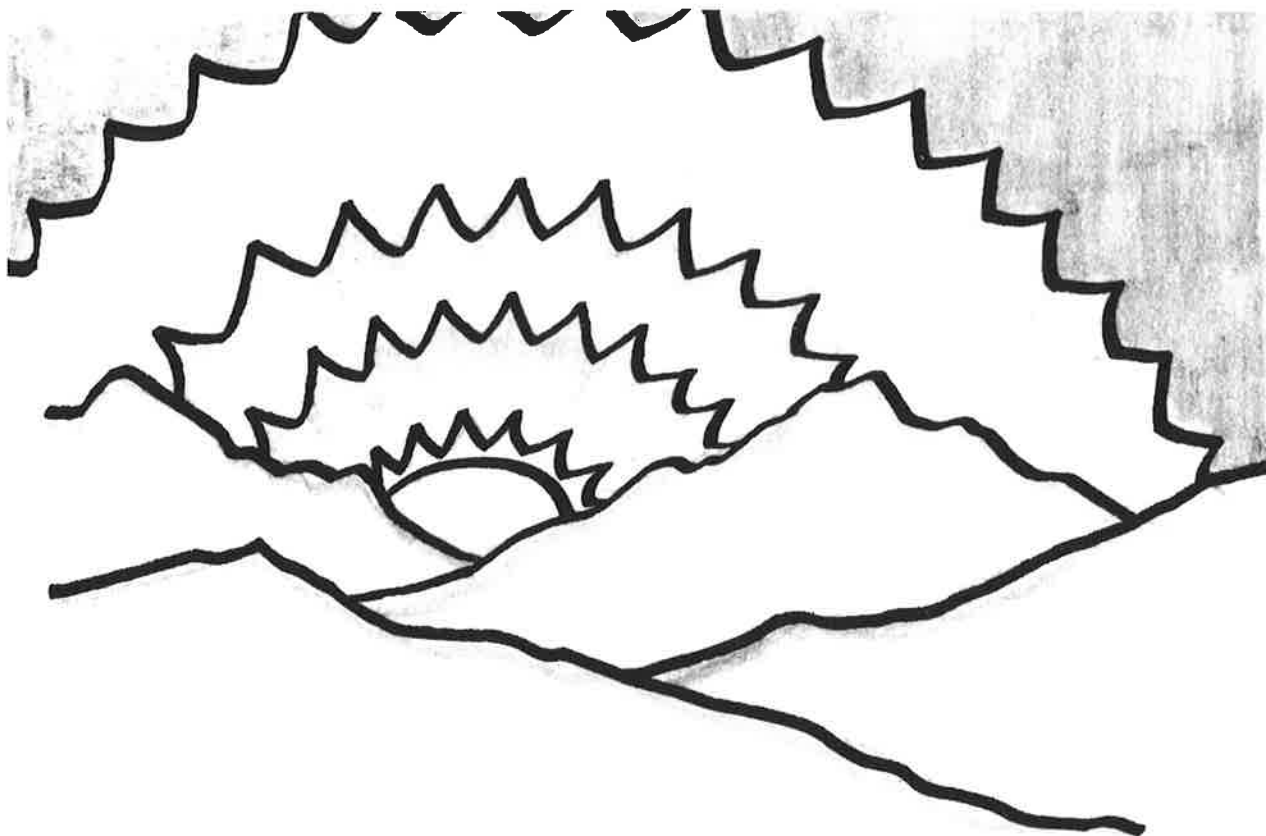


“What’s the matter? Are you like that?”

“Yes,” she just lie, you know.

That night, they gave her a big pile of moccasins to patch. One slept one side — another slept on the other side. She just patched those two boys’ moccasins and then she just stepped over them. People all sleeping around them to make sure she won’t get away.

She stepped over them and ran as fast as she can back to the creek and she went in the water, up the creek, where moss falls over. She watched the bridge from there.



Sure enough, the sun was up already and people started to come. Both those boys were looking for her. All those others were looking for her too, but they didn't study very hard.

"Maybe she fell in the water?" They look down the water too. They look down the creek. Pretty soon started to get dark.

She looked out — no more people.

She came out of her hiding place and started to run back. Here she met her two brothers, going after her I guess. They told her to go right straight home, and they went after those people.

After running around for that girl, those people slept in. That older brother had doctor, so he put sleep on them.

They killed them. They clubbed them with sheep horn club. He killed them all off except those two who saved her and here those people never got up.

When she got back to camp, here her mother was scraping skin and her daddy was cutting meat. He had brought them back to life. She's sure surprised.

The Stolen Woman

One time, there was a woman with one daughter. She's a widow, I guess. She has only one daughter.

She became a woman and she lived behind the village, I guess. Her mother has a little camp for her. She stayed there. She lived right there with her daughter.

One time, in the night, she didn't hear any noise any more. There is supposed to be a town there, I guess. So she went down there to check on the people. Here, there were no people there — nothing — everybody got killed off. She doesn't know what happened.

Anyway, she took that bonnet off her daughter and they went away in a boat. They start to go to different place, different town. Here, while they were going, they met somebody.

It was Lynx Spirit.

"Can I marry your daughter?" he said.



“What do you do when a war comes upon you in the night?” that mother asked.

“I just slap them,” he said.

“No, that’s not enough.”

So she went on. Here, every animal asked her, “Can I marry your daughter?”

“What do you do when war comes upon you?” she asks them.

Some of them say they just hit them, or something like that, and she’s not satisfied.

Finally, one time, she kept going. Somebody said, “Can I marry your daughter?” Somebody said that up in the air. Before she could look up there, here her daughter is gone. Disappeared from there. They think that was God who took her to the sky.

“Well, what do you do . . . ?” she started to say. Looked up. Here her daughter’s gone. Anyway, she landed there. Thought her daughter might come back sometime. She landed there, stayed there.

She stayed there and . . . no . . . no . . . nobody comes. Long time after, about a year or so after, here two boys came to her. Two young boys. They said they look like white people. Twins.

Those boys tell her, “You’re our grandmother. Our mother tells us you’re our grandmother, so we came to fix a house for you.”

They build a house for her, and then that ridgepole on top of the house, they drop it. When it touch the ground, here it rings like a church bell. Then they pick it up again and they drop it again. It rings just like a church bell. They did that four times. Then they let it go.

That night, war came upon them. But those boys never slept. They killed off all those people, whoever come to them. They do that, don’t know how many times.

When they dropped the ridgepole and it rang like a bell, that’s what brought the people. Everybody heard it from all over the world. Those boys watch out for people and when the people come, that’s when they killed them.

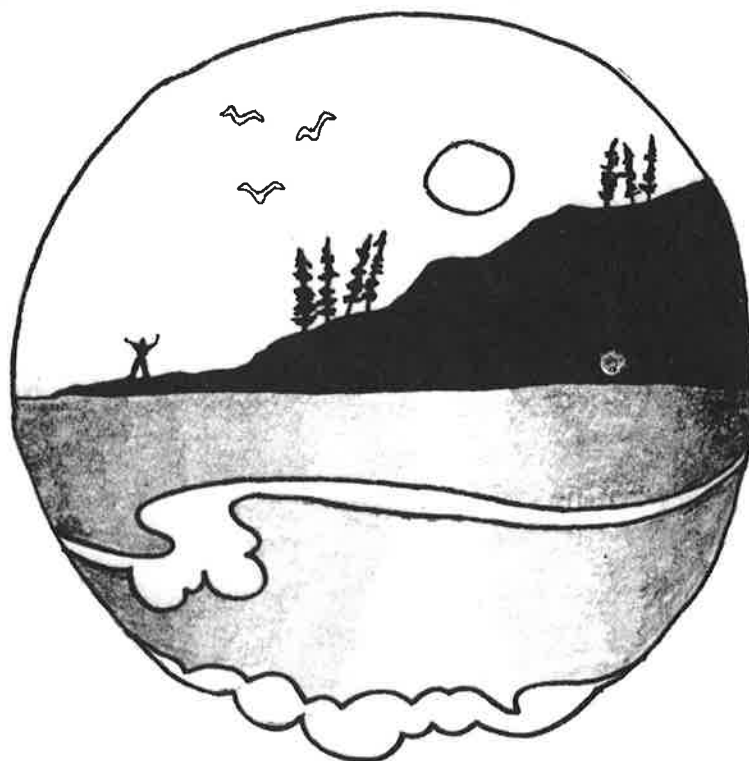
Finally, those boys said, “Well, Grandma, we’re going to go now. We got even for you. We killed off all the people that were making war on you.” They told her they’re going to go but they’re going to come visit her every now and then, any time she needs help.

Killer Whale

One time, there were eight brothers who went out hunting, salt water.

Naachilné he's *Gaanaxteidí*. He went out hunting with his eight brothers-in-law. They went out with a boat and here they landed on island.

Pretty soon, here they left him. These brothers left their brother-in-law. The youngest one tried to row back to him, but there's seven of them moving against him. He hollers at them but, just the same, they left him.



"See you. We'll come back next year," they tell him.

So they left. He didn't know what to do. He had a little knife. He started thinking how he's going to make a living. He walked around. There's lots of ducks always land there. He gathered pitch and he put it on those flat rocks. When those rocks got hot, that pitch thawed out and spread. When those ducks landed, he clubbed them, then he cleaned them and sliced them up and dried them. That's the way he ate it.



He walked around all the time, tries to figure out. On the northward side there's a rock cliff where the tide comes in. Easy, he thinks, to roll off cliffs and let the tide come over him. "That way, I won't know I'm dying. I'll drown in my sleep."

Two or three months already. It's fall time. Starts to get cold. So he took his blanket. Those days, people didn't use coats — they had blankets.

So he lay there. Don't know how many days he lay there. He never rolled off. Somewhere he hears somebody singing, somebody making doctor. When he lifts up his head, he can't hear it any more. But when he lays down, he hears it. It's just like it's under-water.

So one time he thinks, since he can't roll off in his sleep he might as well throw himself down. He landed in nice sandy place. Just as soon as he landed, a little boy ran out. As soon as he looked at him, he ran in again.

"Somebody drop out here," he said.

"Tell him to come in. He might help," they told him. So he came in.

Gee, people sitting around all over. Way back there, just like a shelf, there was a sick man and somebody was doctoring him. He looked and looked at him and here he could see spear sticking out of him some place, under his arm.

Just as soon as he thinks something, they can see it.

“Ah, that big doctor says he can fix him” — that’s what they tell him.
“Let him try it.”

He looks around and sees a balloon tied up high and he wonders, “I wonder what’s that.”

Just whatever he thinks, they see. And they tell him:

“That’s to go to shore with.”

“Well, I wish I have one of those, then I could go home.” That’s what he thinks.

“Well, we’ll give you one if you’ll help this man,” they tell him.

Okay, he pretends he’s making doctor, the way he’s seen Indian doctor do, rubbing his hands. He goes over and just as soon as he touches that spear he starts to holler. And all of a sudden he pulls it right out. After he pulls it, he just sucks that blood out. He sucks it out and he spits it out. He sucks as much as he can until his spit is clear.

That sick man says, “*Hę, hę*, I feel better already”. Just little while after, here he wants something to eat, so they gave him something to eat. And he stayed there amongst people, I guess.

Here, it was Seal people — *Tsaaxo Kwáani*.

“Whenever you’re ready, we’re going to give it to you.”

So they stay for a while, and finally he wants to go home.

Whatever he thinks, they see it always, so they take it down.

“You go inside, and wherever it takes you, that’s where you’re going to go. Don’t think about this place. Don’t drift back here. Just think about one place where you’re going.”



So they put him inside that balloon and they let him go.

"Close to my home town," — that's what he thinks. "Close to my home town."

All of a sudden he thinks, "Gee, I wonder what they're doing now." And by gosh, he came back to where he left.

They told him, "Don't think. We told you not to think back. You're going to come back every time you think back."

So they try again, this time. They put him in again and he tried again. He drifts and drifts and drifts. Finally, he think he drifts on shore. He could hear the waves when they go back. So he untied. And he came out. He shook it, and he folds it up good. He dries it up. He stayed there 'til it got dark.

When it got dark, he sneaked home. They always make a camp in bay. Middle of night, he came to his wife. Here, his wife tells him:

"You got lost — they say you got lost."

"They lie. They left me. They know I got nothing; just the same, they left me. I just come back to get my tool box. I'm going back there again."

He's going to get even with them. He wants his tool box. He's got his knife, matches, flint, hatchet (*xú't'aa*) and more blankets, I suppose, and grease to keep him alive.

He went back to that point before daylight and he got back in that balloon again. And he went back.

Here, *Tsaaxo Kwáani* are still there but he can't see them now. He never saw them again, never heard them sing any more. They just bring luck to him.

He got off. Now he's got hatchet he made a better camp under tree, house for winter. He had more blankets. He studies all the time. He's going to make *Kéet*, Killer Whale. That *Tsaaxo Kwáani* gave him power.

So he gets all kinds of wood — pine, red cedar, poplar tree, willows, and here he made them in the shape of that fish, Killer Whale.

"*Heep, heep,*" he tries each wood; when he let them go through the water, they just run in alright, but here they float up little ways, doesn't work.

Well, he let it go and he made another one. He kept doing that. The last one he tried is red cedar. Here, finally, they turn into *Kéet*. They came alive.



Well, he did that again with red cedar. "*Heep, heep*" — they go running in the water. They run little ways, bring back fish for him. When they ran back, they turn to wood again. He washes the blood off of them, wraps them up in nice clean skin; he keeps it clean all the time. He talks to it just like he talks to Tlingit. And, finally, he stayed there all winter.

Spring-time — start to get spring again.

Summer-time. Certain months it's always clear, don't blow for a while.

June. He watches for them all the time, which way they left. Here's boat coming. He could hear them talking.

They said, "I wonder where his skull is dried up."

And when they got close enough, he took his Killer Whale down on the beach and he breathes to it, "*Heep, heep,*" he said, "You see that boat there? Chew it up. You fellows chew it up."

So they came out and here, they chew that up.

“Just save the youngest one — throw him on board.”

When they came back, he let them go for good then. He washed the blood off them. And then he told them:

“Don’t you do that. Remember that Tlingit, me, human being made you. I’m going to let you fellows go for good now; I’m going to let you be alive for good. Don’t be mean. If you see boat, don’t bother with it. Just one time you’re going to do it.”

So he let them go for good.

That’s how come Killer Whale is *Teikweidí yádi* — means ‘Child of the Nation *Teikweidí*. That’s why Wolf claim Killer Whale. He’s Crow’s child; that’s why he’s Wolf’s brother.

Finally, he went home for good. Probably he took that youngest brother. He never killed him.

He told his wife he saw wild animals kill off her brothers, saw Killer Whale kill them all.



The Girl Eaten by Téhcha'

One time, there is a girl. I don't know what happened to her parents. Anyway, she is staying with her brothers. She's got eight brothers. Funny how these stories always have eight boys . . .

That girl is wearing her bonnet. Those brothers are looking after her. Those boys can't talk to her because she is wearing her bonnet, but that youngest one can because he is younger than she is.

Her brothers went out hunting. They went with boat on salt water. They don't hunt like they do here, in the bush. They hunt with boat for seal and stuff like that.

Here, her brothers are overdue. I don't know how long they're overdue. They never came back that time they're supposed to come back. She is staying in the back room of their house — they do that those days when they wear their bonnet.

She ran out of water — gee, it's getting dark. That's the second night she's got no water. She thinks to herself. She's going to make kindling, for a torch, and she's going to go down and get water — those people are on salt water, so it must have been a creek or something. So she made kindling and she went down to get water.



When she turned round, her bonnet lifted up, and here she saw a light, way out someplace. She watched it. Here it goes out and comes out again, just like it was moving. Moon was shining on something, making it light. So she stuck her fire in the water and she went home. She watched it all the time — here it started coming towards her.

Finally, it landed at their boat landing, where they always land. It landed down there, that fire. Just like it blazes up, then dies down.

Finally it started coming up. She took her brothers' spears, iron knives, sharp knives — put them around the fire. She locked the house with big pole or something.

"Which way you come in?" it said.

"On the roof, through the smoke hole — it's open."

"How do you get there?"

"I climb up. I throw myself down," she said. Here, she went and stuck those knives all around the fireplace!

Here he climbed up there, he dropped himself down there. First thing he asks is, "What do you do? Are you alone?"

"No, I got brothers," she told him; she told him that so he wouldn't murder her or anything.

"Well, where are they?" he asked.

"Well, they're out hunting. They're supposed to come back soon, any time," she said.

"Well, what do you do when your brothers come back?"

"When I see them coming back, I always go down to meet them. I hold my bonnet up one side and look out from it, and I put my other hand on my hip and I sing, '*hi hít ha ha, hi hít ha ha.*' I dance down to the beach like that. And when they get out of the boat, I just go home. I bring up all the seals they kill, and I always swallow the littlest one. And when I bring the others back, they always say, 'There's one missing.' When they say that, I always go back again and throw myself over the head of the boat, and that seal always slips out of my mouth again. Then I wash it and bring it up."

"Okay, take off your hat." Then he starts telling her to take off her clothes. Well, he'll kill her if she doesn't do it, so she took them off, one by one. That last one she takes off, just as he swallowed her. Whole thing! Then he put on her clothes.

Here, he watched for that boat coming. That same morning, towards morning, he sees that boat coming. Where she locked that door, she told him how to lift it up. When they started to land there, here he did the same thing she told him.

He holds up that bonnet, one side, and dances down to meet them, singing, *'hi hít ha ha, hi hít ha ha.'*

They come up — they didn't touch the seal. They know there's something wrong. She never did that before, their sister. She just made that up!

So her brothers say, "What could that be?"

(She) brought up those seals one by one; here, the smallest one is missing.

"Where's the one that's missing?" they ask.

"It's down in the boat yet." She ran down again.



They tell that youngest brother, "Sneak down after her. See what she does."

So he sees what she does: she throws herself on the bow of the boat; here, the seal came slipping out again and she washed it. So he told his brothers that.

"It's not her," he said. "It's something else, somebody else. She's coming up now."

So anyway, they're going to kill her. And all those knives she had around there, they were still like that. Well, that's tattletale too; they never had it around there — they had it in a box!

Anyway, when she came in they started to fight her. They poke and poke. Just like iron, her skin — you can't do nothing.

Finally she tells them, "You poke me right here (right in my hand). You're going to kill me — that's where my heart is," she told them. They did. They poked her in there and she bled to death, I guess, and they killed her. They chopped her open. Here she is supposed to be waterbug — you know, those sea beetles, their wings are just like iron. That's why they couldn't kill her. *Téhcha'* they call it in Tagish. In Tlingit they say *Hinteyéeshi*.

Long time ago, everybody talked Tagish language. Then Tlingit started coming up here. That's how they always start Tlingit.

When they chopped her up, they found their sister's body and they tell their youngest brother to bath her. That oldest brother had Indian doctor. That youngest brother bathed her and put clean clothes on her. Then they put her in nice brand new white skin and put her where the smoke goes out, smoke hole.

And he started to make doctor, started to make doctor that boy. So none of them eat for four days. On the fourth day they eat a little bit. Then they fasted again. He made doctor for another four days.

On the eighth day, he said, "If you see the feathers blow up, take her down."

On the eighth day, here the feathers blow up. They took her down. And her breath comes up again. They brought her back to life.

They never put her hat on any more. They let her go without it. And they went amongst people after that.

That's how they save her.

Wolf Helper

This story happened here, this head of Tagish, someplace.

Some people didn't put up much food, started to have hard time in winter. No rabbits in the country; hardly any grouse.

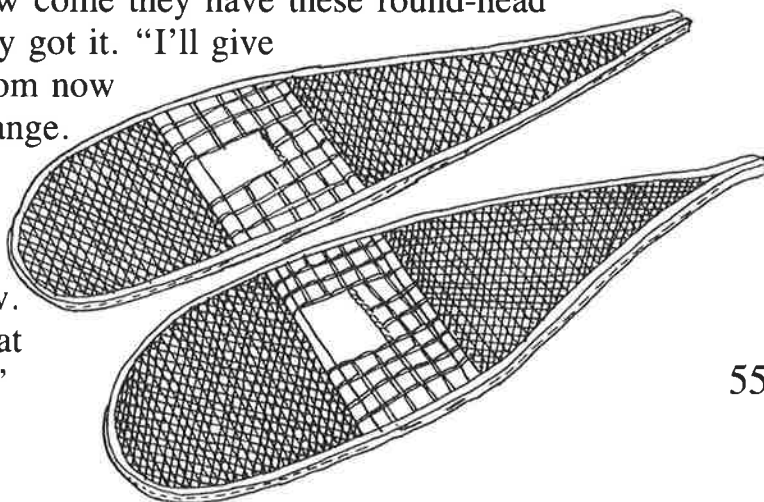
The man hunts every day, keeps the family going somehow. They've got a little bit of grub, but they're stingy with it. They just eat little bit at a time. He hunts, hunts, hunts, but kills nothing. Finally, he hunts up this way, towards Carcross there someplace, behind that big white rock. Up toward Ten Mile. There's a big rock there on that beach. That's where it happened. *Kaax Teiyí* — Saw-bill Duck Stone, they call it. (Tlingit). Back of *Kaax Teiyí* is a big meadow, open places there. Here, he came across by snowshoe track, round-head snowshoes.

So he thought, "Gee, could be somebody help me." That's what he thought.

Sure enough, not far it started to get dark; here big campfire in front of him.

Soon that man told him to come in, and here across the fire he made camp for him and he camped there. By the campfire in the evening, that's the time he told him:

"I'm Wolf. You're my brother-in-law. I'm same people as your wife. I kill all those caribou for you. You can have it. And I give you my snowshoes, too." That's how come they have these round-head snowshoes; that's where they got it. "I'll give you my snowshoes, too. From now on your luck is going to change. You're going to have good luck. But look after my snowshoes good!" And he gave him his bow and arrow. "I'll give you everything that I use to keep myself going."



It's just like his gun, I guess. None of these people had bow and arrow. It's just like his gun. None of these people had gun. Before that, they kill animals by snares.

That's how they got bow and arrow from Wolf and how they got snowshoes. That's how it started. Of course, they had those sharp pointed snowshoes before. That's the only kind they had then.

"Tomorrow, you go home — take a load home. I'm going to leave you in the morning and you can have all that meat."

Early in the morning, that man woke up, got up and here there was no fireplace there. It was just like he had been seeing things. His camp was the same, but where his brother-in-law slept was just like a wolf slept there, right in the snow.



Anyway, he got up, made fire, got warmer and he went over to where those dead caribou were supposed to be. He fixed them up and took them home. And he thought to himself, "Maybe Wolf camp up this way."

So he just took enough for two or three days. They've got to take enough to get their strength back.

He buried that meat, put it all in one pile and buried it, so it would be safe. He came back to camp and he told his wife everything. They stayed two or three days and then finally they went there. And here they had enough meat to last to springtime.

And his luck changed. From now on he starts to kill moose, started to kill game. At same time, he had bow and arrow, and snowshoes to help him.

Fox Helper

There's another story like the Wolf Story, but this time it's Fox.

The man was Wolf (moiety or clan). People always put up meat in summer-time. They cached it up high, made good cache. Then they went back down to the lake in fall time to get fish.

After they finished fishing at the head of the Tagish River, right up here, they float down in a boat. They have little torch made of kindling. They tie it to big stick. That's the way they make light. They see down the bottom of the water. They have spear; they fish with it.

After they finish fishing, they went up on the mountain to get their winter food. They went up to get their cache.

They have two little girls. They got up there, make camp — *Shashu-hídi*, they call it, Tlingit way — Mountain house. They got camp up there already. Every year they go up there, so they got a house, open on both sides, only it's a house. If they come year after year to one place, that's where they put house. Both sides open, though, so they can come in from both sides. In the evening they made fire and they told those two little girls to stay home.



“Don’t leave the camp. We’re going to get to the cache. We’re going to bring our meat back.”

Here, when they got to the cache, something had stolen their cache. Everything is gone! Hardly anything there, just a few little things.

So they came back. Told those two little girls there’s nothing there — no gophers, no groundhogs. That’s the head of the river, up this lake toward that big mountain.

Those little girls said, “Somebody comes to visit us. He’s got fox tail tied on the back of his hat. Nice man.”

“What did he say?”

“He said he’s going to come back later on when our father and mother are here.”

So they don’t know who’s that. They’re ready — here he comes. Nice red jacket, nice red foxtail hanging behind his hat.

Ax Káani, he said. “Brother-in-law.” He happened to be Wolf (moiety). “From here, you go; you get down the lake, from here. You go to that *K’aa’ Deitl’ óoní* — means ‘spears tied up to the shore’, now called Frying Plan Island — it’s across from Ten Mile — “Put bait in water. From here you go on . . .” He’s the one, Fox, gave Indian names to all those points. They still use them, Indian way.

That was Fox. “Me — I give up hope,” he told them. In winter Fox has hard time. They live on grouse.

It was Wolverine stole that cache. That’s how come they have no grub, but that Fox gave them luck.

“From here you go. You go to *K’aa’ Deitl’ óoní* and put hook in the water. You’re going to catch fish. From there, you go up the lake — next place, same thing. Pretty soon, spring-time. You’re going to pull through. Me — I give up. *Khaníschat*.” That’s Tagish language.

That man camped with them. Camp across fire. Here, next morning, just hair stuck to snow, so they know it’s red Fox. And he had red foxtail. That was his own tail. Looked like he had tail tied to his hat.

Early in the morning, he’s gone.

Land Otter Story, Kóoshdaa Káa

There was a woman who drowned a long time ago, got lost. They never found her body — she just got lost. Her brother always goes to that place where his sister got lost in the summertime. He always put up food for when they live there, I guess to keep himself company at that place.

One time, in the evening, a lady came to visit them, this brother and his wife. A woman. And that woman said to the other lady, the real lady:

“I’m the one who got lost a long time ago. I am married now to somebody. I’ve got a son and I’m going to send him over here tomorrow evening. He’s going to come and help his uncle put up food for winter. It was me that got lost. It’s me — now I’m here to visit you. It always makes me feel bad that you come here every year, every year. That’s why, this time, I’m going to visit you, get in touch with you. I’m going to send my son tomorrow for you to use, for him to help you out with everything. But



don't give him a blanket to sleep in, and *don't* give him any cooked meat or cooked food; let him eat raw food what he wants himself."

That real woman had a baby and the Otter woman asked:

"Can you bring me my nephew?"

So she handed the baby over and here the Otter woman started singing a song to him — started to make him dance, jumping up and down, singing:

"*Khet'itl'di, Khet'itl'di.*" That means, "Tail coming, Tail coming" Tlingit way. Tagish is "*Mache'e, Mache'e*".

And here that little baby, his tail starts to come out just like otter tail. His father saw it, that little tail coming out through his clothes, and he nudged his wife.

"Take that baby away", he said to her.

So she said, "*Handide Ax Káani* — Give me back my baby."

So she handed that baby back. She just slapped that baby's tail again, and here it went back again. She gave him back to her sister-in-law. And she said:

"I'm going to go now, sister-in-law. I'm going to go. Tomorrow night I'm going to send my son over."

Here she disappeared all of a sudden.

The next day, in the evening, without the door open or anything someone brought a seal to them. He just pulled up in front of that lady and let it go there. Then he went across that fire and sat down, lay down. That's his place there. He can't talk, that boy. He's just built like a monkey or something; he's got a long tail. But he can't talk to them.

He did that every night he brought something back. He stayed with them I don't know how long. Every night he brings salmon or anything back for food and they tend to it, they fix it up, they dry it. Pretty soon he's got lots of food, lots of dry salmon and lots of grease and everything.

So they went back to town. They're going to take him, but they don't tell him where they're going.

The town was in a bay and when they came out on the point, when he saw that town, they just jumped in the water, that Otter man. And here his uncle stopped the boat and his uncle tried to find him.

"Come on, come on; you've got to go amongst people. I want to show people to you."



But, no, they can't catch him. They just have to let it go anyway.

"Well, go back then; go back home. We're not going to be very long. We'll come out again," they told him.

So they let him go. They went back to the bay, and they went on, into town. They didn't stay there long. They sold all the grub there, all the food. They sold it. Then they went back to their camp. Here that night he went back to them and stayed with them again. All winter, I guess; I don't know how long he stayed with them. They never take him to town any more.

His mother showed up again. She said to them:

"Don't take him to town any more. You're going to lose him for good if you do because he's not used to a bunch of people. It's just for only you to know him, to see him. Nobody else can see him."

So they stayed there. I don't know how long they stayed there; they stayed there quite a while — I guess . . . two or three years.

Finally, that woman, she got tired of him, I guess. She wants to go to town, gets tired of staying there. Here she handed him cooked food and a blanket to sleep in. She give him blanket, saying:

"You sleep in this blanket. You're not a dog. You can't sleep like that without blanket!"

And she give him cooked food, saying:

“You’ve got to eat cooked food. Human beings cook their food. They don’t eat raw food just like dogs!” she said.

And here he ate that food, he slept in a blanket that night. Here that morning he disappeared and when they woke up there was nothing but foam where he had been sleeping.



That night, his mother came crying to them.

“You killed my son,” she said. “He’s dead now. Therefore you’re going to have nobody to help you. You gave him cooked food which I told you not to, and a blanket to sleep in. He’s dead. You killed my son.”

She cried like everything. All of a sudden she disappeared.

That’s the end of that story. They never saw him again. He got tired, living there, that old man. His nephew never came back to him.

Finally, they went back to town and they never came out any more.

Land Otter Story

This is another story about *Kóoshdaa Káa*, Otterman.

A man went out hunting and got swamped and Otter people saved him. His boat got wrecked or something, and their people came to him and saved him. They're just like ordinary people. Here, he went in with them to their place, to their camp.

When they eat, they cook something for him all the time. They feed him. When their food started boiling on top, there is always grease, foam. And he always takes that sheephorn spoon and licks the spoon.

Those Otter people tell him, "Don't do that", it's bad luck for them. But he keeps on doing it.

Finally, one time he farted, making a noise — "Pfittt".

"What's that? What's that?" they said.

Just for that, here he makes some more noises, big noises. Big stink, too.

They said, "Eeh, it's that man *Kaaká*". (That's what his name was.) "Shove him out; shove him out. Throw him out," they said. They can't talk very good.

So they throw him out. Here, he found himself between roots of trees, you know, standing between roots, his head sticking out. He had a hard time getting out of there. They throw him out because he fart amongst them and he eats that soup which they told him not to eat. It's bad luck.

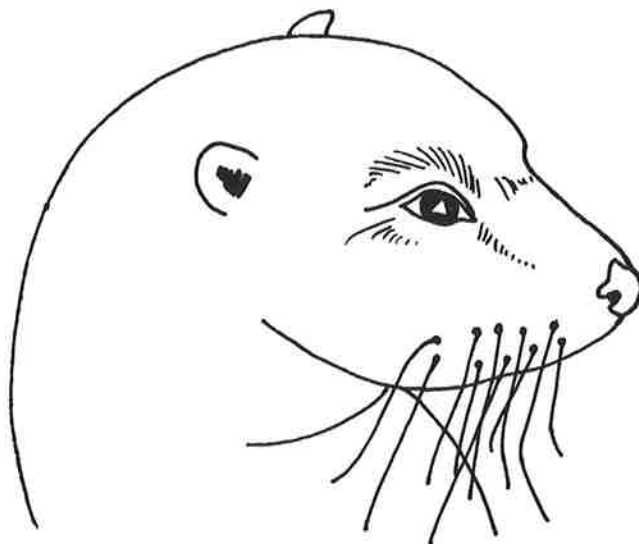
"Throw him out. He's giving us bad luck every way", they said. So they throw him out. That's why he found himself sticking out between roots.

Don't know how he got back home. Anyway, he got back home somehow. They found him. They look for him, I guess, when they miss him. This is what he told them, that story of how the Otter people save him. He come back to his own people, though, because he fart amongst them.

He do all the time. Finally, they throw him out for good. They don't want him there because he makes that noise.

That's a good way to escape, eh? He's a smart man.

Lots of times Otters save people and after they save them so long, they turn into Otter too. *Kóoshdaa Káa*, yes; they call them *Kóoshdaa Káa*, Otter man.



They say if you meet Otter you have to have tobacco in your mouth all the time. That keeps you in your right mind. No tobacco, your mind gets funny and that's why you turn into *Kóoshdaa Káa*, too. As long as people got tobacco in their mouth, they're in their right mind all the time.

A ring, too. If you've got a ring, you've got to keep it on; don't let them take it away or else you lose your mind. And if you lose your mind, you turn into *Kóoshdaa Káa* altogether.

One man got swamped at Haines, mouth of the *lkoot* (Chilkoot) River. He had tobacco in his mouth and when those people (Otters) came to see him, he tried to give them tobacco. They just say, "*uhn, uhn*", turn away like that. That's how he knew there was something wrong. He knows they're not a human being. So he escaped.

Land Otter Story

There's another story. This is true. It happened lately. It happened around Marsh Lake, right-hand side coming up; across the lake from the road. *Tséi Jah* they call that rocky point, just across from the island.

That's where an old lady was sick. She wasn't sick, but she's too old to travel, I guess. She could get up day-time, melt snow for herself, cook



for herself. Maybe those Otter people been around there long time. They do something to people, slap their head, or they whistle at you. That's how come you lose your mind. They just steal you.

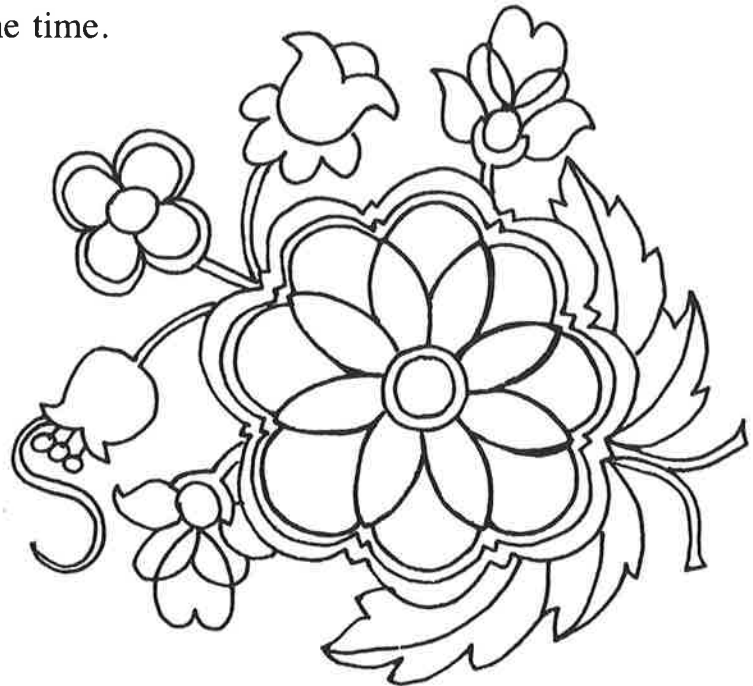
So this man, her son, kills moose. Those people kill some moose or caribou way up there. So the whole family went up there to dry it. Uncle Patsy (Henderson) said he was a little boy. He's the one who told me about that story. He was with them.

They packed lots of wood for her. And then they left her because she could make fire, but she's too old to travel; so they left her.

Four days after they come back, my Uncle Patsy and that woman's husband, they come back to get some more wood for her, a big pile of wood they got for her. Then they went and left her again. They're not quite ready to come back, I guess. So they left her again.

They stayed away a few more days. Finally they come back. When they come back, here that old lady's disappeared. The back of the brush house was open and somebody had dragged her out. All her clothes, even the ones that button around the neck, were not even unbuttoned. And yet her body is gone. The only thing they miss with her was a little bucket. She had a little bucket this big (indicating) with all kinds of beads, for necklace. That's the only thing was missing. And the back of the brush house was just like they drag something out. They followed it for quite a ways, where they drag her out — don't know how far they followed — and finally it disappeared; never show no more.

They go there all the time.



Four years after this, they saw that Otter went by there. There was two on each side and one in the middle — they make big tracks, you know. Here on the left of the body of that middle Otter they see something just like the bottom of a bucket, a little bucket, every here and there.

So they think that she must have been saved by Otter people too. They didn't find a body; her whole body was gone.

That's the only one like that that happen here in this country that they know of — they say it happens lots around the coast.

If you get swamped, you should have tobacco in your mouth; then the Otter people won't fool you. They try hard, alright, but they don't fool you.

Witch Story

This story was told by my cousin, Jake Jackson. He was an Indian doctor, but he didn't sing or anything. He was able to tell the future.

White people always say of someone who has Indian doctor, they say he's got witch doctor. But no, witch doctor is different stuff altogether. Indian doctors show it off. They sing. But witch doctors don't show it off. They just do something to people who they want to kill. They kill people, that's all they do. They get hold of your hair, or your clothing, or even your leftover scraps of food. They wind it up like a doll with your hair. When people die, they put those dolls with dead people and they rot away. That's why people have a hard time when witch doctor fix them. They have cancer or T.B. or something. Slow dying, all the time. And the person a witch doctor does that to dreams bad dreams about himself. Sometimes if he is lucky, he'll dream who is doing that to him. If you tell a witch doctor you dreamed he did it, sometimes it helps; sometimes it backs out. But sometimes it doesn't.

This is Jake Jackson's story. This is another one my father saw. That's his cousin, Skookum Jim's older brother. *Tlákwwshaan* is his Indian name. Also *Hunyís*. He was married to coast Indians.

He was dying. He went to an Indian doctor and that Indian doctor said, "That's witchcraft doing that to you. Whoever is doing that to you, if you tell him face to face you're going to get better."



So they got hold of that man who is witching him. They called my father and Patsy (Henderson). They just called them for witness, but they had nothing to do with it. They just called them because it's their brother-in-law's people.

Here they got hold of that man. They tied him up, tied his hands back and his feet and they threw him down in a cellar. They took all his clothes off. Down in the cellar they had Devil's club and those round leaves with thorns on it. That basement was all full of those things. It's called *ts'aaxt'* in Tlingit, *kháshcho* in Tagish language.

I don't know how many days they came down to see him. They wanted him to tell. That's why they did that. I don't know how many days he was there. They asked him questions, asked him questions. Finally, he said,

"No, my inside is just like a pot with a cover on. It hasn't opened yet. Cut on top of my head and at the end of my tail. Cut holes." They cut holes just like he said. Funny how he didn't get blood poisoning.

"Now, tie me backwards". They tied him up so his head is touching his tail, and they spanked him besides.

"Aha — one opened" he told them. One, two, three finally opened. "Yes. Okay. That's me. I did it. I'm going to tell now," he said. So he tells all. "His stuff is not here (the clothing he used to witch him). His stuff is on that island at the mouth of the Chilkat River". Did you see that little island there? They say there's an Indian doctor's grave there. It's got a house over it. "That's where I've got his stuff. I could go and get it."

They untied him. He's just like that with no clothes. He's going to get it. Northwind blowing in February, they said. In February it's cold too. He went outside, here he just dived down in the snow. They've got a big string around him. My father and Patsy Henderson were there, just for witness.

Here he dived down and came out way along under the snow. He made noise just like an otter makes when it comes out of the water "puh, puh." Looks around. Acts just like otter. He went down again, kept doing that, kept doing that. All across the portage to where that Chilkat River comes out. He went in the water. North wind is coming. He dove in, went across to that grave. Here that string is too short. They can't let it go. He never got to that grave.

So they pulled him back with that string. Then, as wet as he is, he started diving back again after they got him back on shore. They told him

the string is too short. They've got to go back home. So they tried again with a longer string. He started doing that again until he got to that island.

When he got to that island, and he came out of the ground, he made a sound just like a groundhog. Then . . . he went down again. He went down in the grave; finally, he came back with that stuff. They untied him and threw it in salt water.

"Okay", he said. "That man is going to get better".

So he came back. When he came back, they untied him.

They said, "Don't do that any more".

I guess the witch part lost its power when people found out. I guess that's how much it is strong, witch power.

My father told us that story. Later, all those people who were tending him died, they say. And the man he was witching, he got better, just like he came out of the water. He got better all of a sudden.

The difference between Indian doctors and witches is that Indian doctors heal people and predict the future.

Witch Story

This is a story Jake Jackson told us.

Old Joe Squan *Kaachgaawáa* was going home the Taku River one time, going down to Juneau. All of a sudden he heard a groundhog whistle. Gee, he thought to himself, “Where could that groundhog come from?” Groundhog is supposed to be way up in the mountains, way up in the rocks — timberline. They go in the rocks for den. He’s going to sneak up to it, he thinks, so he starts to sneak up to it.



He walked, walked, pretty soon he came to a little meadow. And he heard this whistle. So he stopped and he looked around. Here in the middle of the meadow, he saw someone standing there, a person. And that person was looking towards him already. And it went, “*Kwa, Kwa*” just like groundhog makes before he runs into den. That person has no clothes on. Long hair though.

He thinks to himself he’s going to grab its clothes. He starts sneaking up. Every time that person comes up (out of the ground), Joe Squan hides

down. He kept doing that. Finally, just about when he's going to reach those clothes, he (the witch) dives into the earth, just like he dives in the water or something. That much power he's got. Just when Joe Squan is going to grab the clothes, the witch comes out again. His face starts to stretch long, then sideways, and he makes a blowing sound, "*whe, whe*". By gosh, Joe Squan tried two or three times, then he got scared, ran back, ran around it. "The heck with it" he thinks to himself.

After a while, he came to the camp. There's people there. When he comes in, they ask him, "Did you see *so and so*?" (a woman out picking berries).

No. He denied it. But he thinks that was it. It was her. In the evening he watched, watched for who is going to come back. Just before dark, she's coming, coming, she's packing berries in a basket.

And that place where she dived in is where long time ago they used to burn dead people. They didn't have graveyard like they do now. When they burned the bodies they brought the ashes back, and the bones. That's the one they made little house over it, spirit house they call it. That's the place where she went in. It wasn't a hole — she just sank in.

That's how strong is that witchcraft. Nobody else can see that that was a place where bones were burned.

Here that lady came in the evening. She just came right up to where he was sitting down. She just plopped herself against him and started laughing just like somebody was tickling her. And he thought to himself, "She beat me; that's why she's laughing at me." But he never said anything. He just kept it to himself, what he saw.

Indian doctor is different. They sing and rub you and make you better and tell you what you did wrong. If it's witchcraft, doctors can tell somebody is doing that to you.



Witch Story

This happened in Juneau. Jack Jackson told us this story too. It's another story about witchcraft.

They say one man wanted to marry a girl and her people didn't want it. Later on she got married to a whiteman — American soldier, I guess. They used to be in the country all the time, American soldiers.

Here, every day a big red dog came by, digging around in the scraps all the time. Finally she got sick of it and she told her husband she's going to shoot it. Her husband saw it too — sometimes he was home when that dog came around. He fixed a gun for her and put a shotgun shell in it.

"That gun is loaded. Don't touch it unless you have to. Then you just pull the trigger."

So she did. Here that dog came around four o'clock — always at four o'clock — so she went out her back door. Before it was too far away, she shot it.

"Go on, go on" she said. He ran behind the house. After he ran behind the house, she went out there to look at where he dropped. Dead man lying there. She thought "My goodness sake, I didn't shoot him. He's not what I shot." Here blood is coming out of his chest. He changed after he got to the other side of the house. He died with his own body. He's not a dog any more. That's how strong witches are. That's why I'm telling you this story.

Well, the police got hold of her and she said in court, "He was a dog when I shot him. I shot at a dog, not a man. I don't know how he happened to become a man."

It didn't change right away. It had to go out of sight to change, behind the house. As soon as it was out of her sight, he switched.

Maybe they believed her in that court case. Her husband saw that dog too. He wasn't there when she shot him, but that dog came around every day.

I don't know if there are still witches around. I guess that faded away too. Indian doctor faded too. But maybe they're still around. Nobody knows.

The Man Who Died and Took His Brother

This story was told to me by my cousin-in-law, Sam Smith, Daisy's husband. It is supposed to be true story. This happened at Klukshu, near Dezadeash.

There were two brothers. One man, the older man, was sick, dying. Everyone knew he was dying.

The younger brother thought to himself:

"What am I going to do when my brother dies? I've got nothing for the potlatch or for his clothes or anything."

So he got thinking maybe he should go to coast, to Haines. Indian way, they call it *Dei Shóo* — means 'end of trail' in Tlingit language. He told his brother he was going to go to Haines, Alaska, to get some stuff; "I've got nothing at all to put away with you."

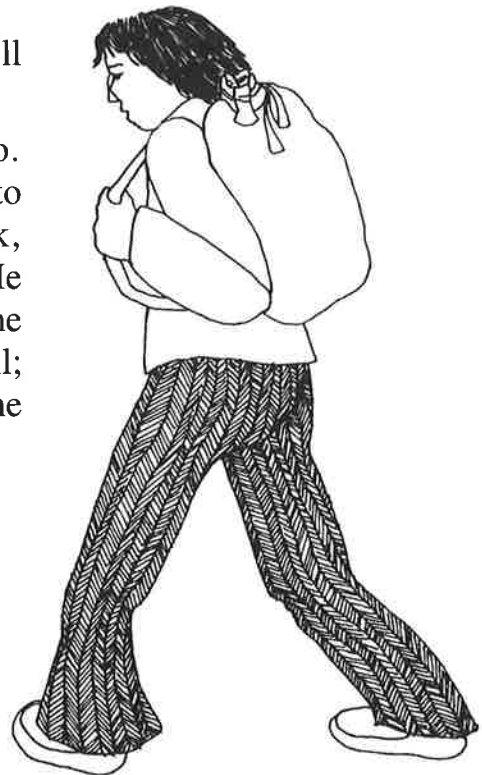
That older brother didn't want his brother to go.

"No, you'll never make it. I might go before you come back."

Just the same, he wanted to go.

"There's lots of people here. They'll look after you."

So he told the people he's going to go. So he went. He went from Klukshu to Haines, *Dei Shóo*. Finally, he came back, fall time, when the lakes are freezing. He came back to the camp. Here, long time ago, people gone. There's snow on the trail; ice is frozen. At the camp, they put the

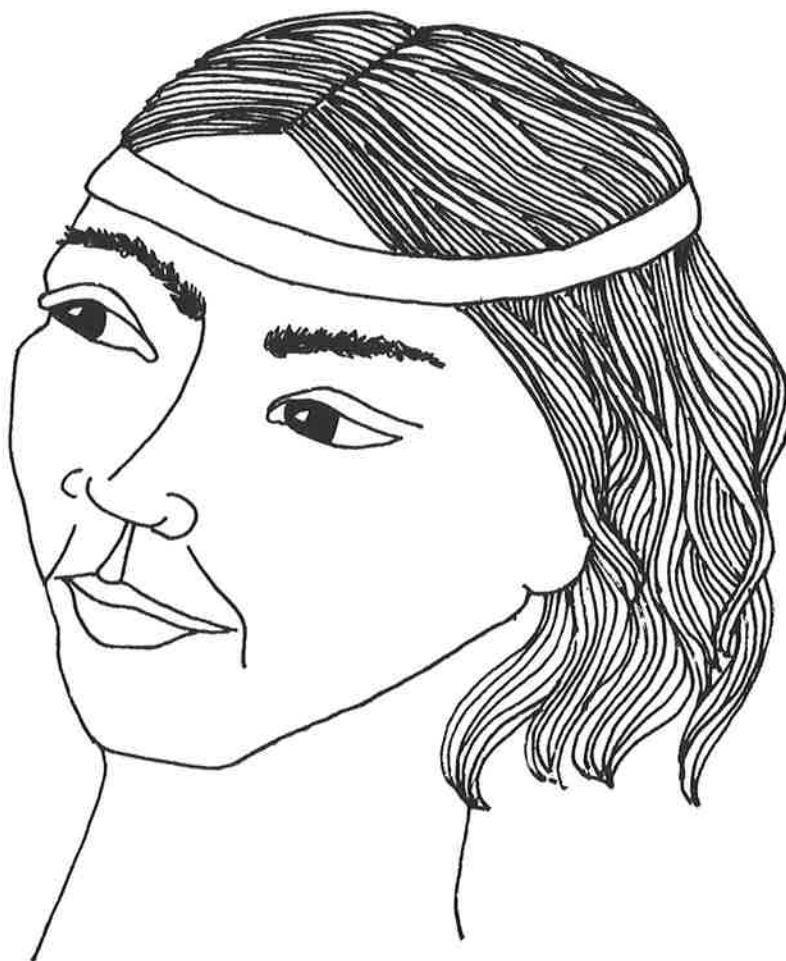


stick up; put black ring around that stick. That means he's dead. That's the way people used to make sign for each other. When somebody dies at the camp, they move, and they do that. The next people who come and see know that somebody died there. That's the way they used to make signs for each other. They had no telephone like nowadays — old people specially.

Anyway, he came back and he saw this stick and it was late in the evening. He made a fire and a brush camp there. There's another camp there, maybe log house, open at both sides, old style.

He made fire and cooked himself lunch. He puts lots of things in the fire. They say that's the way they feed dead people. Some salmon, he bought, and some coast food; he put it in the fire for his brother-in-law.

He was just about finished when he heard something coming — just sound like walking stick in snow. So he listened, listened. He heard it coming closer, closer; here finally he came to the doorway and he heard his brother, the brother that's supposed to be dead.



He said, "I just came to tell you that I told you not to go to *Dei Shóo*, but you went." Here he sat down across the fire.

He got scared. That's his brother that died. He sees his brother's spirit. He got scared.

"I wanted to get something to put you away. If I make tea or anything, I had nothing to give people! That's why I went. I'm sorry, but now I got everything that I want. This is for you. You take it when you go." And he put it in the fire, all the stuff he brought back.

He started packing up, packing up. He got dressed up and ready to go, even night-time. It's going to be on a lake anyway, moonlight. He's gone. He took off. That spirit was still sitting there when he took off. He pretended to go outside, I guess, and here he took off.

He followed the track. At the end of that Dezadeash Lake was where people were staying, camping. They moved because they had a death.

He walked, walked, walked. He's put in a day already. He walked, walked, walked. Don't know how far he walked. People had no miles that time. They used to call a mile *tlex'kay* — means 'one measure' in Tlingit language.

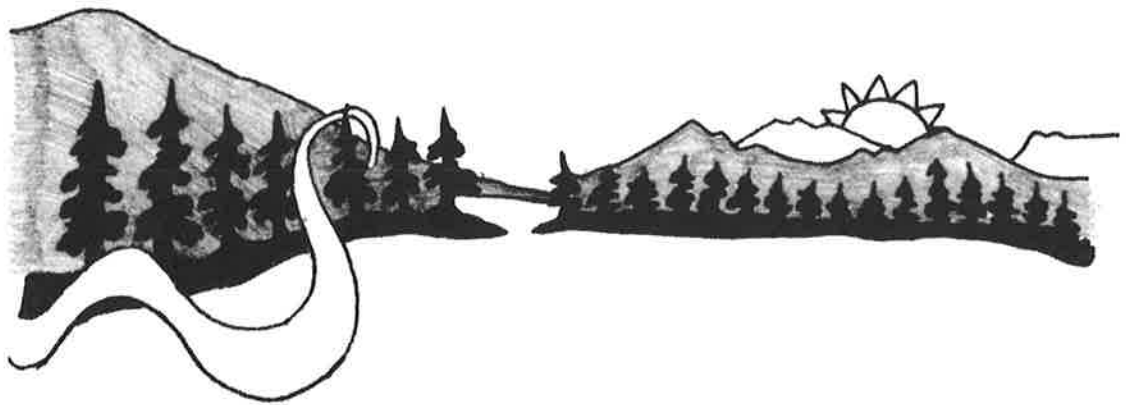
Then he hear somebody holler:

"Ja, deja dán ts'án' kadeshái ja"

He hears it. Boy, his heart starts to move, move, move. Started to walk fast, more and more and more. Every now and then he hears that holler:

"Ja, deja dán ts'án' kadeshái ja"

Means "Where's the person I came to see?" in Tagish language.



Anyway, he finally sees a little smoke towards morning — when fire is going out — early morning, it burns up once in a while. Finally he makes it to shore and comes to people. He tells people, “My brother’s spirit is following me. Hide me!”

So they hid him, put all kinds of blankets on him; they took his shoes off and stuff off and put him to bed. Tell him to rest anyway.

Here the rest of the people went down on the beach and they got white, fresh, tanned, brand new moosehide, big thick skin, fall time. They held it across the road, man standing each side. They hear that noise — other people hear it too, but they could not see that spirit. They just hear noise. They hear it plain, they say. Pretty soon that skin started moving around. They grab it; everybody grabs it. They took it up to the house and they spread it out. There was nothing but charcoal and no more noise.

They let that man sleep. They thought he was still sleeping. Finally, they pull that blanket off him and they’re going to tell him, “You’re saved now. He’s gone.”

But just big blood comes out of his mouth. He’s dead long time.

And that shows that spirit is living. Indians know that. Spirit is living even though he died. They thought they were going to catch whole body; here, they burn his body. How could they burn a dead man’s body that died a long time ago? Nothing but charcoal left. That spirit took his brother with him.

Beaver and Porcupine

Porcupine and Beaver were supposed to be good friends. They both have hump backs, you know.

One time, Beaver packed Porcupine across to the island and left him there. He told Porcupine he wanted to have a hard winter, a long winter. Six months.

Porcupine says, "Why do you want to have that many months' winter? Is that all the food you've got, there? That's your winter food? Look at mine. Look up that mountain there. All my food is up there. You've just got that little bunch in the water?"

They say Beaver used to have six fingers. He broke off that sixth finger, saying, "Okay, let's just have five winter months." That's why Beaver got just a little bit of his sixth finger.

After they finished talking like that, Beaver took off.

How is Porcupine going to get back to the shore now? So he sang good winter songs to make the lake freeze up.

"Freeze up, freeze up." Sure enough, that night it froze up. So he crossed back on that ice to the mainland. And here, winter came. That's how winter is five-and-a-half months.

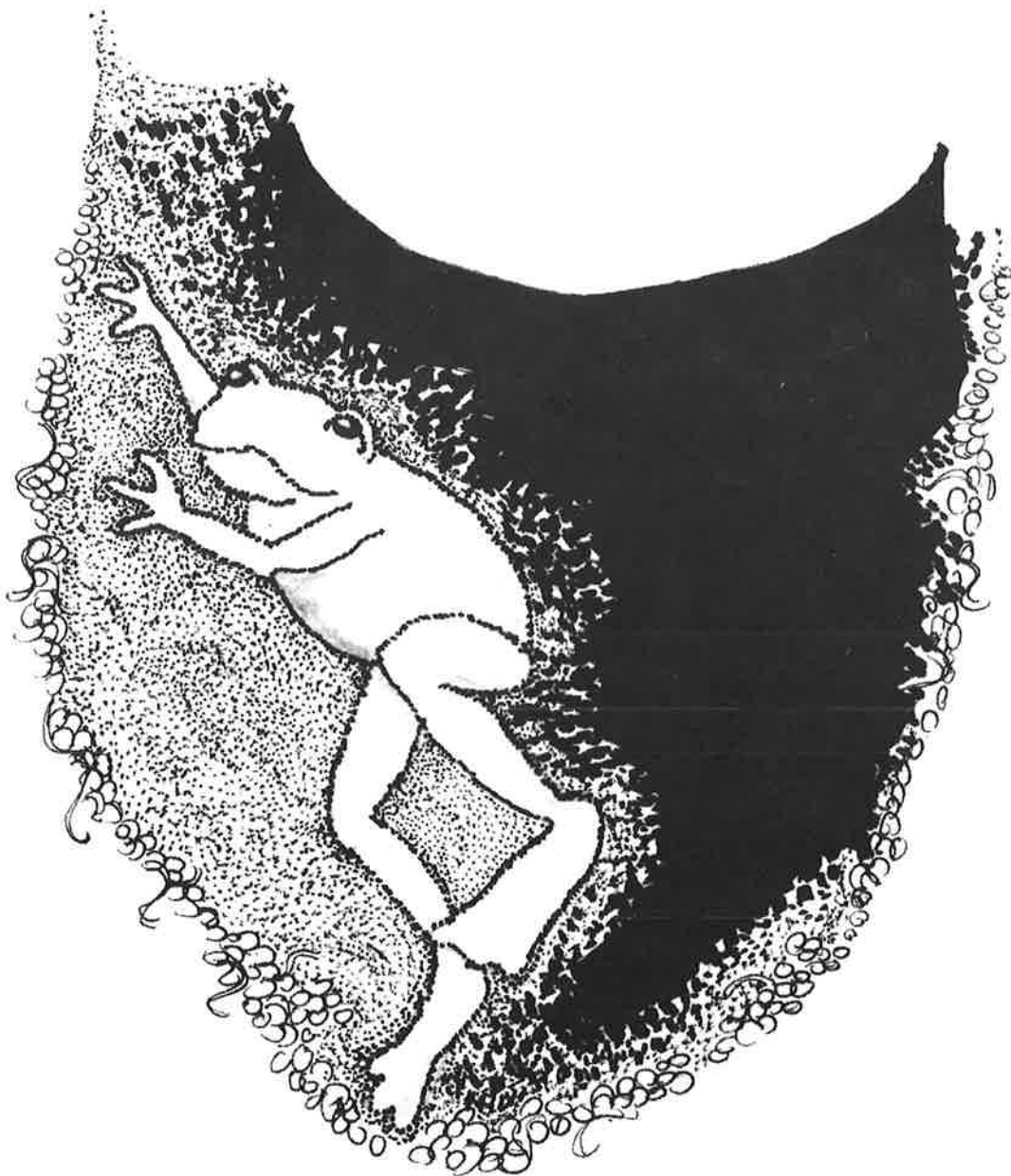
Also, the reason beaver dam never breaks down is because two-tailed Beaver sits behind it, holds it up.

Skookum Jim's Frog Helper



To start with, they (Skookum Jim's family) built a little log house there in Dyea. People used to go there a long time ago before Skagway was a city. They had only one store there. They stayed there all the time, Skookum Jim's family. But in fall time the ground is getting frozen already. But it's coast, you know, that different climate.

Here he went to bathroom outside. When he's coming back, he hears something making noise. "Whoo" just like sand pouring down. So he stopped and listened. Here there was a ditch alongside the house there where they dig up the sand and put it on top of the moss for roofing. That's what they used long time ago.



So he went on the edge and looked down and here sure enough there was a big frog; coast frogs are bigger than this frog you know. Long way from water, too, they said. Here it was trying to jump up and trying to get back. But he fall down, keeping doing that, I don't know how long. Gravel fell down with him. That's what's making the noise.

Anyway, Skookum Jim saw it, so he was looking around for a board. Here he found a board and he shoved it down that hole there and then that frog crawled on that board.



So Uncle Skookum Jim just lifted it up, lifted it up and carry it and took it down to the creek. There must be a creek there. This is Dyea. So anyway, he left it there. He let it go.

And about a year or so after, here he got kicked in the stomach by a drunkard man. And it got festered. Oh, he was sick, they say. It happened somewhere around winter time. He was so sick he couldn't walk no more. And here it broke open toward the outside.

That's when my mother was looking after him. Well, he's my Daddy's cousin. Their mothers were sisters. My mother's got three kids — four altogether with my oldest brother. And she's got one baby and twin girls, four altogether . . . My mother was looking after them.

Skookum Jim's wife and my daddy, they go pack, pack stuff. They're freighting over the summit toward Bennett. They get paid for packing stuff. Flour, soap, everything like that. And that's what my father was doing, and my mother stayed home and looked after the kids and my uncle Skookum Jim.

And here, one morning in June, his stomach broke out. Sun was way out already when my mother heard Skookum Jim calling her:

"Mrs. John. Mrs. John. *La.oos Tláa, La.oos Tláa* wake up. Come on."

Well, she got up. She's young person. She jumped up and went over there.

"Look at this thing here."

Here he was too hot, it was just burning, that sore place. So he had his blanket way up and his shirt way open and he pulled off those bandages because it was too hot. He wants to air it, open place.

And here he feels something tickle there. That's why he looked down. Here it was a frog licking that sore place and that's what it was that wakes him up. My mother sees it. Then she just got a board or something and put that frog on that. It never jumped too, nothing, just stays like that.

Well, my mother used to have silk thread and beads and stuff too. She was good then. She wasn't blind then. They gave him silk thread and some beads. Swan down feathers, put it all around him too, and then she took it down to the creek and left it there. That's payment for Skookum Jim to that frog. They pay him.

And here, two or three days after he's starting to feel better and that started to heal up too. So it healed up good in no time, just in a week or so. He's all better and he's able to walk around good again.

I don't know how long after that he wants to see his mother. His mother lives at Carcross, *Naataase Héén* they call it in Tlingit, "water running through the narrows". Tagish way they call it *Todezáané*, "blowing all the time". He wants to see if his mother is okay. It's getting fall time. The ground is frozen already, but no snow yet.

So he went through the pass here (between Tagish and Carcross). *Shásh Zéitígí* "grizzly bear throat" they call it, because there's always north wind blowing through there. It's open there too, just like down a throat.



So through there he went to see his mother, down in Carcross. And here he camped half way, around the first lake from here (Crag Lake) just right in the middle. There's camp places there all the time, brush camp there all the time, and here he camped there. He slept there.

That's the time he dreamed a nice looking lady came to him. Gee, she's just pure, just like you can see through her, just like shining, gold shining. He said that lady tells him,

"I come for you. I want you to go with me. I come for you now. I want you to marry me," she said.

And my uncle said, "No, I can't marry you. I got wife already, my wife and children is in Tagish." That's what he dreamed he told this lady, he said.

"Well," she said, "if you can't go with me, I'll give you my walking stick". She gives it to him. Well, that walking stick just looks like gold. Well, he knows gold after that! Just shiny as could be, that walking stick. So he took it. He tells her, "Thank you".

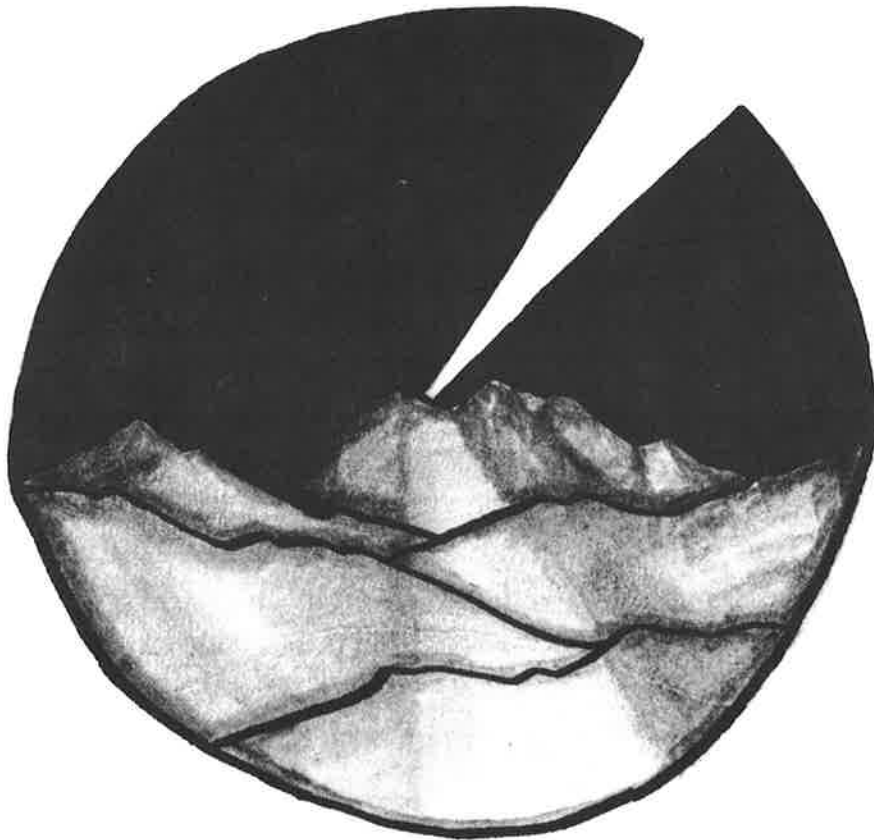
"You saved me one time," she said. "I was almost starving and I was just about going to die, and here you saved me one time. And I'm the one that saved you too when you were sick. When you were sick, I saved you. I helped you. I medicine you, that's why you got better".

That's what that lady supposed to tells him, 'cause he dreamed that.

And that lady tells him when she gave him that walking stick,

"You're going to find the bottom of this walking stick. You're going to find it this way." So he looked at it and gee, everything is shining, looks like gold. "Look this way" she said pointing towards Atlin, "look this way".

He looks and he sees just like search light coming up.



“That’s not for you though; that’s for somebody else. You go down this way and you’re going to have luck, your walking stick” (toward Dawson). That’s what that lady is supposed to tell him.

When he woke up in the morning, here there was snow on top of him, about a foot deep, they say. It snowed that night. I guess he slept open place. He didn’t sleep under anything.

After he ate breakfast, he went down to Carcross. He got to Carcross that night, and his mother and those people they’re fine. It’s okay. That’s after his father died, I guess, because they never mention his father when they tell this story. They just say his mother. Some of her grandchildren are staying with them. There are some other people there too, I guess. But they just mentioned his mother. She was fine, nothing wrong, lots of wood, lots to eat. Everything.

So he just stayed one night and he started to go back and he camped on the way back too. Then he finally got home. He thought he’s gone four days.

When he got there they tell him, “What kept you so long then; you’re gone eleven days.” He can’t believe it.

“No,” they said, “you’re gone eleven days.”

Well, after that he forgets about his dream. About a year later, though, that’s the time he went down the (Yukon) river. He didn’t think any more about it until he went down the river and found gold.

Falling Through a Glacier

You know people used to go down to sell their furs on the coast? One time my father was going to come back and his trading partner, the one who buys furs from him all the time, is going to come with him. Here they started from *tkoot* (Chilkoot) Lake, between Haines and Skagway. At the end of *tkoot*, they started coming back that way. They came out at Robinson or some place like that. And here there's a glacier they have to cross. My daddy got across but there was a crack in the glacier and that man behind him fell in. I don't know how he did it.

My daddy didn't know what to do. If he died there, he thought, they're going to blame him for it, think he killed him or something. So he hollered at him, and here he answered.

"Are you okay?"

"Yes, I'm okay".

"I'm going to try to get you out. I'm going to untie my pack and I'm going to send the string of my pack rope down to you. And you tie it around your waist and climb up. I'm going to keep pulling it too. Put your elbows against the glacier wall and climb up." So he did. He untied his pack, my daddy, and he tied a string around a stick and let it down to him.

"You jerk it when you got it", he said. He felt it jerk. "Put your elbows against the glacier and try to pull yourself up. I'm going to keep pulling you too." He kept doing it, and finally he got himself out of the glacier. Finally he came out.

They came out of the pass around Robinson or someplace around there and they went over the mountains this way to Tagish. That pass is between Robinson and *lkoot*. There is a valley there — I heard them talking about it.

That man's wife said that her husband talked about it all the time; *Kodéinaahaa* is his name. My father was a young man. He never stayed with my mother yet. That man stayed with my father quite a while and then he went to Dyea.



NOTES:

Crow Stories: Ch'eshk'ia Kwändech (p. 1-15)

1

Crow is a kind of figure known as a 'Trickster' who appears throughout North American traditional stories. In Eastern Canada, the Trickster is known as Wee-sa-kay-jac; in the southwestern United States, he is Coyote. On the Pacific Northwest coast he is Raven; in the Yukon he is known as Crow.

Crow is a remarkable figure. He can be creative at one moment and destructive at the next. He is creative when he brings the sun, moon and stars to people. He is greedy when he tries to keep for himself all the food that he and his 'brothers' have prepared together. He can start trouble when, for example, he tricks innocent rocks and animals into fighting with each other. He is lazy when he marries Fish Mother so he can get free food without doing any work. He can be a figure of fun, as he is when he almost loses his good blanket or when he tries to trick his mother-in-law. But it is clear that everyone enjoys Crow and appreciates his adventures. In his own way, he exhibits both the best and worst aspects of all people.

Crow stories are told in a series and different people tell different episodes in different order.

Mrs. Sidney told a number of Crow stories in *My Stories Are My Wealth*; others are told here as they were narrated in spring, 1979.

How People Got Flint (p. 17-18)

2

Every culture has a story of the Firebringer who stole fire for human beings from someone who hoarded it. In Greek mythology, Prometheus stole fire from the gods for man. In the traditions of the southern Yukon, animals stole flint, passing it to Fox who outran Bear who had been keeping it for himself. Fox threw it into rocks, breaking it and making it available for everyone.

But the Firebringer also brings tragedy as well as light. The Greek Prometheus was punished by the gods, chained to a rock for eternity. After Fox threw flint to man in the Yukon, he sat down to rest and began playing with a dry rhubarb stem; he threw it in the water and promised that just as the straw always floated back to the surface, so human beings would live forever. But Bear overtook him and promised that because people had stolen flint, they would not live forever: he threw a rock in the water to show what would happen to people when they died. So the bringing of fire is also associated with mortality, or death.

Stories of the great flood or deluge occur throughout the world. In the Old Testament, the world was flooded because of man's shortcomings, but there is no suggestion of punishment in the Southern Yukon Indian version.

At some point after Crow made the world, there was a tremendous flood. Remains of the rafts on which people escaped are scattered throughout the southern Yukon. Some Indian people say that the remains of the raft are visible on a mountain near Kusawa Lake. Other people mention remains on a mountain near the Alsek River. Still others describe remains on Jubilee Mountain.

The Old Woman Under the World (p. 20)

A number of Tlingit and Athapaskan people have a tradition of the earth resting on a pole tended by the "Old Woman Underneath". Some people say that when she is hungry the earth shakes and then people put grease in the fire and it goes to her.

(See Franz Boas, *Tsimshian Mythology*, 31st Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, 1909-10, Washington, 1916, p. 732, for a summary of this.)

Eclipse (p. 20)

While Mrs. Sidney refers to this as happening at one time in her lifetime, it may have been an old tradition. According to Catharine McClellan, "When there was an eclipse of the sun, the Tagish at least used to bring out all of their furs, button blankets or anything else of great value and hang them on lines. They also tied bunches of gopher snares to their walking sticks, as though they were going to snare the sun. Some women waved the sticks about and others shook the blankets while they all sang a song enticing the sun to 'come back for the pretty things'. The words were in both Tagish and Tlingit."

(in Catharine McClellan, *My Old People Say, An Ethnographic Survey of the Southern Yukon Territory*, National Museums of Canada, Publications in Ethnology No. 6 (1), 1975, p. 77.)

In myth time, the sky came down to saltwater vertically at the horizon. Animals lived on the winter side. One time they had a meeting and decided to poke a hole through the sky to the summer side.

In a number of Yukon stories, there is a separate world beyond the horizon where the sky meets the water. When one reaches this point (usually at a point of land extending into the water) the sky becomes a barrier. Sometimes it lifts and people may pass under. Other times a hole must be pierced or dug. In myth time, one side was summer and the other side was winter.

This story tells how animals transformed the world so that summer and winter could alternate. This happened before the time when the axis of the world shifted from vertical to horizontal. Formerly the two worlds were side by side; now one is sky and the other is earth.

This story is sometimes told as part of another story which Mrs. Sidney told in *My Stories Are My Wealth* (The Woman Who Was Taken Away, p. 97). A version of the longer story was told in 1915 by Mr. Albert Dease at Dease Lake.

(see James Teit, The War With Swan People in "Kaska Tales", *Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 30 (118), 1917, p. 453-5.)

Story of the Great Snake Gog Cho (p. 23-28)

Many stories told by Mrs. Sidney in *My Stories Are My Wealth* describe encounters between men and humans in which humans learn the knowledge they need to co-exist with animals who share their world. Humans return to their world with new knowledge about how to behave to animals and they teach other human beings what they have learned.

But there are also a number of stories of encounters with giant animals or monsters which must be killed or transformed to make the world safe for human beings. The story of the Great Snake is one of these. A number of stories like this one dramatize encounters with unique monsters who must be killed. Monsters are different from ordinary animals in that they do not seem to have anything positive to teach people.

A similar story was recorded at Dease Lake in 1915 about Bladder Head Boy, or the Monster that Ate People.

(see James Teit, "Kaska Tales", *Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 30 (118), 1917: p. 450.)

This is the story of how a young man acquired powers of a shaman or doctor. It begins with conflict between a woman and her husband's nephew. In southern Yukon Indian society, descent is traced through the female line, not the male line, so a man is responsible for teaching and training his sister's son who is of his own kin group. His own son was educated by his wife's brother. It is not surprising that there could sometimes be tensions between women and the young nephews who came to stay.

One time when she mistreated him, the nephew fell into a deep sleep. Such extended sleep is a characteristic of someone who is going to obtain the special powers of a 'doctor' or 'shaman'. This boy obtained first goat power and then fish power. He also obtained other powers but Mrs. Sidney asked that only these two episodes be included in the booklet. Shamans could acquire a number of spirit helpers, ideally eight, and gained additional powers with each additional spirit helper.

The Woman Stolen By Lynx (p. 33-36)

The theme of an animal appearing in human form and 'stealing' and/or marrying a human being is frequent in Yukon mythology and appears in a number of Mrs. Sidney's stories published in *My Stories Are My Wealth*. In this case, the stolen woman fights the man who tried to steal her. She later helps her husband to rescue her.

Animals who appear as humans typically sleep on the opposite side of the fire, and this is the woman's first clue that her captor is not human.

A version of this story was recorded in 1915 at Dease Lake, told by Albert Dease.

(see James Teit, "Kaska Tales", *Journal of American Folklore*, v. 30 (118), 1917, p. 464.)

Southwind Story (p. 37-39)

Mrs. Sidney gave this title to the story, perhaps because of the association of the southwind with rain. While many Yukon stories show the consequences of insulting animals, this story shows that it is also inappropriate to insult the maker of rain.

This is the second story about the origin of tides. In one of the Crow stories, Crow put a woman in charge of the tides when he wanted to pick up fish from the beach.

This version probably originated on the coast. In a similar story recorded in Wrangell, Alaska, in 1904, the husband was not the rain but a kind of speckled fish who caused flooding by damming and then releasing the river, sweeping away all the houses except that of his wife's family.

(see John Swanton, *Tlingit Myths and Texts*, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 39, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1909, Story. #77.)

The theme of the 'stolen woman' or sometimes 'abandoned woman' is popular in Yukon stories. Such a woman is characteristically clever and independent. She usually manages to outwit her captors and escape, living on her own for a time and finally returning home.

A number of 'Stolen Women' stories, like this one, begin with reference to puberty seclusion, one of the major rites of passage in a woman's life. The protagonist in this story escaped a village massacre, "she had her bonnet on . . . was living outside". Mrs. Sidney pointed out the resourcefulness of this woman as she told the story: she denied that she was being secluded; she did not admit to having brothers whom she knew would rescue her; she refused to cross the river; she painted her legs with berry juice. Even though her brothers looked for her, she managed to escape entirely on her own.

This is one of several stories about people taken to a sky world and married there. Two of Mrs. Sidney's stories which were published in *My Stories Are My Wealth*, "Sun Story" p. 67, and "Star Husband", p. 73, also describe marriages which took place in this upper world.

In a Tlingit version of this story told by Frank Italio in 1949, this story is set on the Nass River in British Columbia. In his story, it was the sun who married the woman's daughter, and both the mother and her daughter went to live in the sky. Later the sun's sons came back and took revenge on people who had killed their mother's people.

(see Frederica de Laguna, *Under Mount St. Elias, The History and Culture of the Yakutat Tlingit*, Smithsonian Contributions to Anthropology No. 7, 3 vol. Washington, D.C. 1972, p. 873-875.)

This is a very important story which has been recorded in considerable detail in a number of versions both on the Pacific coast and in the interior. It develops a number of powerful themes which would mean a great deal to the people who told it: the man abandoned by his eight brothers-in-law (a terrible violation of the rule of brother-in-law friendship but an indication of how ambiguous that relationship was); the healing of a dying seal by pulling out a spear invisible to other seals; the hero's return to land in a seal bladder; his wife's loyalty to her husband rather than to her brothers (a most difficult choice), the man's fashioning of Killer Whales from various types of wood.

The Whales (made by a man from the Yukon in one version recorded) were made for revenge but were otherwise instructed to be peaceful.

Since then, Killer Whale has been one of the crests of the Wolf “moiety” or division.

(see John Swanton, *Tlingit Myths and Texts*, Story #20;
James Teit’s version of the Kaska Man Who Made Killer Whales, in
“Kaska Tales”, Story #10;
Claude Levi-Strauss, “The Story of Asdiwal” in *The Structural Study
of Myth and Totemism*, A.S.A. Monograph #5, Tavistock, London.)

The Girl Eaten by Téhcha’ (p. 51-54)

14

Mrs. Sidney explained that this story must have taken place on the coast because there is a reference to salt water. It shows some of the isolation which could be experienced by girls secluded alone. In very early days, this might be the only time in a girl’s life when she would be entirely alone, sometimes for as long as a year.

This girl was not housed separately, but was put in one part of the house. Her parents were away and because she was secluded, she could speak only to her younger brother. When her brothers left to hunt, she was alone.

An unfamiliar being (*Téhcha’*) broke into the house and attacked and ate her, but only after she misled him about how to greet her brothers. When her brothers returned, they recognized the deceit and killed the being, a water beetle (?), cut him open and released their sister. Then they performed rituals which brought her back to life again after eight days.

The story dramatizes the fears which young women must sometimes have experienced in seclusion. Being swallowed by a monster (a common theme in mythology all over the world) and then rescued by her kin indicate the psychological changes required at this time for a maturing woman.

Wolf Helper (p. 55-57)

15

There are a number of stories in the southern Yukon where a Wolf, disguised as a human being, appears as a helper to man. He is credited at different times with giving both snowshoes and bow and arrow to man. A man with Wolf helper continues to be a good hunter throughout his life (as long as he doesn’t tell the source of his help). As in many stories about animals and humans when Wolf visits in human disguise, he sleeps on the opposite side of the fire.

“More than any animal except perhaps the grizzly, they (wolves) seemed to be accepted and treated on a par with humans, and as important superhumans as well.”

(see Catharine McClellan, *My Old People Say*, p. 135).

In this story, Fox helps a family much as Wolf did in the previous story. He appears disguised as a human being, helps the family, gives place names to geographical points near Tagish Narrows, stays there for the night (characteristically sleeping across the fire) and vanishes in the morning.

In a version of a similar story recorded in this area, Fox was identified as a transformer who once saved a family at Little Atlin Lake (see Catharine McClellan, *My Old People Say*, p. 140).

This is one of several stories Mrs. Sidney told which has a definite geographical setting and discusses the origin of specific place names.

Land Otter Story (Kóoshdaa Káa) (p. 60-64)

17

Land Otters (*Kóoshdaa*) are much feared by Tlingit people. While stories of people going to live with animals are common, fear is seldom expressed when they are told. But otters are an exception because of their association with the powers of a shaman or doctor. According to tradition, otters hide, waiting to “save” people whose canoes tip or people who are lost in the woods.

However, people who became land otters in the past often continued to help their own relatives, as in this story when an Otter woman appeared to her brother and offered to send him her son. This is expected, because normally a boy would spend time learning from and working for his mother’s brother.

As in an earlier story the aunt becomes impatient with her husband’s nephew and is eventually responsible for his leaving. There is tension between the two worlds — the land otter’s world of ‘nature’ and the human’s world of ‘culture’. Although the otter woman warns that her son should not go to town, should not eat cooked food, should not sleep with a blanket, the aunt insists that he should act ‘human’. When she tries to socialize him or impose her culture on him, he disappears.

Versions of this story were recorded in Sitka, Alaska in 1904.

(Swanton, *Tlingit Myths and Texts*, Story numbers 6 and 7;
see also Frederica de Laguna, *Under Mount St. Elias*, p. 774.)

Land Otter Story (p. 65-66)

18

A number of beliefs about Land Otter appear in this story — that otters follow canoes in distress and ‘save’ people whose canoes capsize; that a man who eats otter food will become otter; that otters can’t stand the smell of human excrement; that one protection from otter is to carry something metal or to chew tobacco. (see Frederica de

Laguna, *Under Mount St. Elias*, 774-6). Otters are believed to 'save' people by slapping them or whistling at them or doing something else to disorient them.

This story is interesting to contrast with the previous one, and Mrs. Sidney says they should be told together. In the previous story Otter escapes when people try to impose their customs on him. In this story, the man escapes when otters try to impose their customs on him.

Land Otter Story (p. 67-69)

19

Otter stories are usually set on the coast, rarely in the interior, and Mrs. Sidney says this is the only otter story she knows which happened in the Yukon. An old lady, left alone for a few days near Marsh Lake, vanished without a trace. Later people found evidence which led them to believe she had been taken by otters.

Land otters who appear in the woods sometimes assume the disguise of a close relative of the person and lure him or her away.

Witch Story (p. 70-72)

20

The following three stories describe the activities of witches as distinct from Indian doctors. Most stories involving witches have a coastal setting even when they are told inland.

The chief characteristics of a witch occur in this story:

"The witch's whole aim in life was to work evil by causing the death of others, but as much as possible, he kept his activities secret . . . In order to harm others, witches collected 'witch dirt' which consisted of bits of clothing, food remains, hair, or some other object intimately associated with the victim . . . The dirt itself was usually put in with a decaying corpse, so that as the decay proceeded, the victim also wasted away and finally died." (see Catharine McClellan, *My Old People Say*, p. 564).

Shamans or doctors could usually force a confession by 'punishing' the witch, as in this story, but it was a dangerous task and those who assisted often died themselves, as Mrs. Sidney explains in this story.

Witch Story (p. 73-74)

21

A characteristic of witches shown in this story is their ability to vanish into the ground at a spot where human bones have been cremated. These spots are invisible to the average person.

While the chief aim of an Indian doctor or shaman was to help or heal a person, the chief aim of a witch was to cause harm.

In this story, a witch assumed the form of a dog and rummaged through the garbage of his victim, apparently looking for something of hers through which he could do harm. McClellan notes that dogs were particularly useful to witches in collecting 'witch dirt' with which to harm the victim. This woman shot the dog, and as he died he took his human form again, much as animals disguised as humans assume their natural form when they die.

The Man Who Died and Took His Brother (p. 76-79) 23

This story concerns death and the relations between the living and dying. It is important that the central drama takes place around a fire. An important part of the funeral potlatch is the feeding of the departed person by burning food. Fire is an important medium of communication between human beings and those in other worlds. It bridges the gap between the human and supernatural worlds. The fire is said to make a dull pop when the spirit of a dead person wants to take a living person to the land of the dead as happens in this story.

(see de Laguna, *Mt. St. Elias*, p. 746, and McClellan, *Old People*, p. 76)

Beaver and Porcupine (p. 80)

24

This is a shortened version of a longer story familiar in the southern Yukon and the southeast of Alaska on the coast. The story centres on the fact that Beaver, a good swimmer, cannot climb and Porcupine, a good climber, cannot swim.

Porcupine and Beaver were once good friends but they had a series of disagreements about the length of winter, who had the best food supply and so on. These arguments resulted in various anatomical differences. Porcupine lost his thumbs when arguing about the length of winter, but he controls frost. Beaver got his double front toe in one version by climbing down a spruce tree.

As a result of their argument, beaver hunters cannot speak directly of porcupine nor can porcupine hunter speak directly of beaver; if they do they will be unsuccessful. Neither can Porcupine and Beaver be cooked in the same pot.

(see Franz Boas, *Tsimshian Mythology*, 31st Annual Report, Bureau of American Ethnology, 1909-10, Washington, 1916, p. 724.
Catharine McClellan, *My Old People Say*, p. 149-50.)

Frogs have a mixed reputation in Tagish stories: they are seen sometimes as good and sometimes as evil. One belief about their goodness to human beings is that if you pay a frog as you would an Indian doctor, Frog will cure a sick person. This is a central theme of the story of Skookum Jim's Frog Helper who cured him, then predicted he would find gold. Because Skookum Jim found the gold which led to the Klondike goldrush, Frog is sometimes associated with riches and gold.

Mrs. Sidney's stories conclude with an episode about her father whose partner fell through a crack in a glacier on a direct line between Chilkoot Lake and Robinson, the pass from Haines to Tagish. In the trade in furs which took place in the last century, firm and lasting partnerships were established between coastal and interior men.



