

# LIFE PRESS



*Spring*  
*1989*

WRITE FEELINGS ENCOURAGED BY THE CARNEGIE LEARNING CENTRE



### **INTRODUCTION**

Projects come together in the Learning Centre in their own way and in their own time. This does not mean that they happen without hard work and dedication. This issue of *Life Press* is the result of the energy and enthusiasm of many learners, volunteers and tutors.

The writing in this issue reflects the joy and pain of self-expression at various levels of intensity, but most of all it reflects life. It is a pleasure to include the stories and poems of learners whose new language is English. Their experience demonstrates that there are forms of expression beyond grammar exercises and patterned conversation practice for second language learners.

Two Carnegie artists, Blake Hiebert and Maureen Rivington, have opened a new dimension to our enjoyment of the stories through their illustrations.

The work of -gently- editing, typing, organizing and laying out the work in this issue was done by Pat Lanchert, Henry Hebert, Keith Gilbert and Larry Loyie. Kathie Leroux-Frazer encouraged many of her Adult Basic Education students to submit their writing and worked through the editing process with them in a way that leaves the wrinkles and the spirit in each piece.

It is difficult not to acknowledge the person who has done the most to keep us on track with her sharp wit, common sense and love of writing. Her wish to remain unnamed will be respected, but the people working on this issue know who she is. Thank you.

Thank you also to the writers, to the workers and to those who read and share *Life Press*. The words of these writers will open the way for other writers to express themselves.

給長孫騁行

===== \* \*

黃 皮 中 國 漢\*  
圓 顱 世 界 人\*  
大 地 任 馳 騁\*  
高 歌 少 年 行\*

(For my first grandson)

Though the Chinese people  
they have yellow skin.  
But white, red, yellow  
we're all next kin.  
Gallop around with songs  
March full my heart,  
Across the earth everywhere  
I would do my part.

給次孫子翔

===== \* \*

中\* 華 乃 巨 龍  
山\* 河 麗 且 雄  
子\* 孫 多 俊 傑  
翔\* 泳 允 無 窮

(For my 2nd grandson)

China's like a dragon  
on the world so big.  
with mountains, rivers,  
beautiful and great.  
Her heroic daughters & sons  
of outstanding talent,  
their remarkable skills  
often shaking earth & heaven.

好事近 (寄友)

=====

楓 葉 遍 山 紅，  
更 艷 趁 斜 陽 落！  
任 道 是 秋 風 勁，  
海 鷗 飛 南 國。  
殘 冬 過 後 又 新 裝，  
美 景 一 如 昨。  
笑 意 興 依 然 在，  
定 踐 花 前 諾。

Maples dye the mountain red  
most splendid in the setting sun--

though the wind of autumn will arise  
and seagulls run to southern skies.

A new life comes when winter is dead  
the other trees to please our eyes.

My heart of summer beats  
under this head that's old--

Oh! don't forget our meeting,  
under peach leaves laden with gold.

BACK TO EARTH

Chickens uncaged  
laying eggs  
in chosen nests.  
Roosters strutting.

Cows roaming,  
freely around  
Enjoying a  
nose scratch.

Sheep birthing lambs  
in warm comfort.  
Wild turkeys  
peeking at people.  
Cows milked  
by human hand.  
Memories of a  
visit:  
To CEEDS on HORSE LAKE.

Sheila Baxter





## LISA LO

Congratulation Lisa, you have really passed your driver's licence test. That is how the tutors of Carnegie greeted me when I met them last week. Maybe you will think there are very common greeting, but it had a very special meaning for me. Do you know why?

I can help thinking about the first time when I went to the licence office to take my examination. "Next," a weak voice came from the corner of the counter. I went straight to the counter and stood in front of a man. "Class 5 learner licence please," I said. "How is your health?" "Is it in good condition?" "What is your eyes colour?" and "....." what? "I was a little puzzled." Pardon me."....." the examiner repeated the same sentence faster and weakly. His face looked angry. "Par..." I only said half a word. He reponded, "You don't understand English. do you?"

My English is not very good but I can understand what is the meaning of all the driver sign, and rules." "What will you do if a policeman ask you something, You must go home improve your English." "But anyway I want to try." "Next!", he yelled. I felt something was stabbing my heart. I had to leave the counter. I sat down on a chair for a long time to change my sad mind. All the scenery was not interesting while I went back to the Carnegie. You look unhappy, don't you Lisa." Tom look at me with his sharp eyes." Something happend? " he asked, continuing in kindly way. So I had to describe the grim situation about what had happened. I hardly know whether I would cry while I was speaking. And I don't know what time it was that Larry had appeared in front of me. They comforted me. After a little while, larry decided to bring me to the licence office again someday.

He gave me advice on how to take the examination. After three days, we went to licence office together, but too bad, I forgot to bring my I.D. certificate. I was terribly sorry to spare a lot of (Larry's time although he insisted he didn't mind. The next day, he introduced me to a friend of his, Lina, a beautiful and attractive woman, and she taught me in a very patient way too. The last time I went there with my friends I met a very kindly examiner. He spoke slowly and clearly when he asked me some questions later, he gave me a piece of test paper. I did it carefully and finally I finished it. I returned it to him. "Ah, very good." Good luck to you, you have passed it." I hardly believed what he said. I still suspected my hearing was OK, until he gave me a piece of yellow paper. I coldn't help but to rush up to my friends. I have passed. I really passed." I yelled. Oh. thank you, Tom. thank you, Larry, thank you, Lila, thanks everybody for helping me!.



That kid of yours

He's a  
talkative, active,  
well liked  
a smallish boy  
one third your height, his dad  
a fraction  
of your weight, a grown man.  
A help-ful, hyper lad  
who runs around  
this community  
explores each,  
cranny and knows  
the secret ghosts of each nook  
and he desires to be...himself.  
And you're his dad,  
can't say much to you,  
you feed and clothe the kid.  
But, remember, you don't own him  
you don't control him  
with an off/on switch  
like some dead metal machine.  
yet you beat him.  
In front of us.  
kick him in the ass,  
grab his hair above his ears  
and pull straight up  
til he screams, (surprised, at his screams?).  
punch him in the stomach  
with that fat fist of yours  
and he drops fast to the floor,  
and curls up into his foetal self  
and cries.  
A lad a third your weight and a fraction of your size.

peter imm

D.E.S.L.

Since 1980 the Downtown Eastside Slow-Pitch League has been providing the people of Hastings and Main a much needed alternative to deal with the amount of spare time they have, as opposed to staying in their rooms or patronizing the local pubs. Those who live in this area are known as street people because most of them live in hotels and rooming houses. If the people were separated into categories, there would be three distinctive types: 1; the local native community, 2; the retired senior citizens, and 3; a mixture of people of other nationalities. All of these people make up the population of this community. For the street people, the lack of recreation and programs geared for them contributes to the amount of crime, violence and substance abuse in this community.

The Slow-Pitch League provides more than recreation for them; it is a place to socialize and get that much needed exercise they fail to get during the winter months.

Every season the league has functioned on a non-organized structural level but has some how managed to find people interested in helping to organize another season. Then the league struggles through another season. Already this season is showing signs of previous years. The game, slow-pitch, is played with ten players instead of nine, the tenth being a fourth fielder who can play anywhere in the outfield. Our league plays seven men and three women on the field. Most seasons have started with up to eighteen teams, with a couple dropping out before the league gets into a regular schedule.

Since the start of the league the people participating in it have been at least seventy-five percent Natives from various groups from across the country, and this is still true. The organizing body at the beginning were social works types who worked in the community. They got involved due to frustration and the lack of support from local organizations, whose mandate it was to deal with recreation in this area. Maybe it is about time for Native people and our local Native leaders to start thinking about a Native league to help the many Native people living in this urban setting, while at the same time not excluding those of other nationalities who are wanting to play in the Slow-Pitch League. In order to be known as a Native league, the league would have to consist of at least seventy-five percent Native Indians. One problem would be bridging the gap between so called middle-class Indians, who sometimes dislike participating in the skid row area, and people who live in the area. Remember, we are all Indians and as a people we are as strong as the weakest link in our chain.

Fred Arrance





IMMIGRANT MR. LEE

## JANUARY

On January 28, 1932--in the morning--my family and I heard the voice of gun fire. I seemed to come from far away. Little by little, the sound grew louder; it sounded just like it was outside of our home. We were all very quiet but the continuous machine-gun and the air-raid alarm noises were horrible. We were very scared so we took cardboard and tack paper to black out all glass windows. It was right fearful to see those Japanese soldiers rushing through the street. At that time the Chinese armies were falling behind, because the Japanese army was equipped with modern weapons. So the aggressors of Japan therefore attacked Shanghai and in a couple of days occupied the Chinese area. Meanwhile, the Japanese didn't bother the Country Settlements that were at peace in the city. We were lucky to get to safety in the French Settlement. I will never forget this dreadful day which the people of China celebrate every year. This day called "28 January Remembrance Day."

-Yee Mon Lam

## IMMIGRANT MR. LEE

I was immigrated to Canada in 1971. After landing in Vancouver a few months. I got a job as a waiter in China Town at the Ho Inn Restaurant. I have been at this occupation for ten years (until I retired).

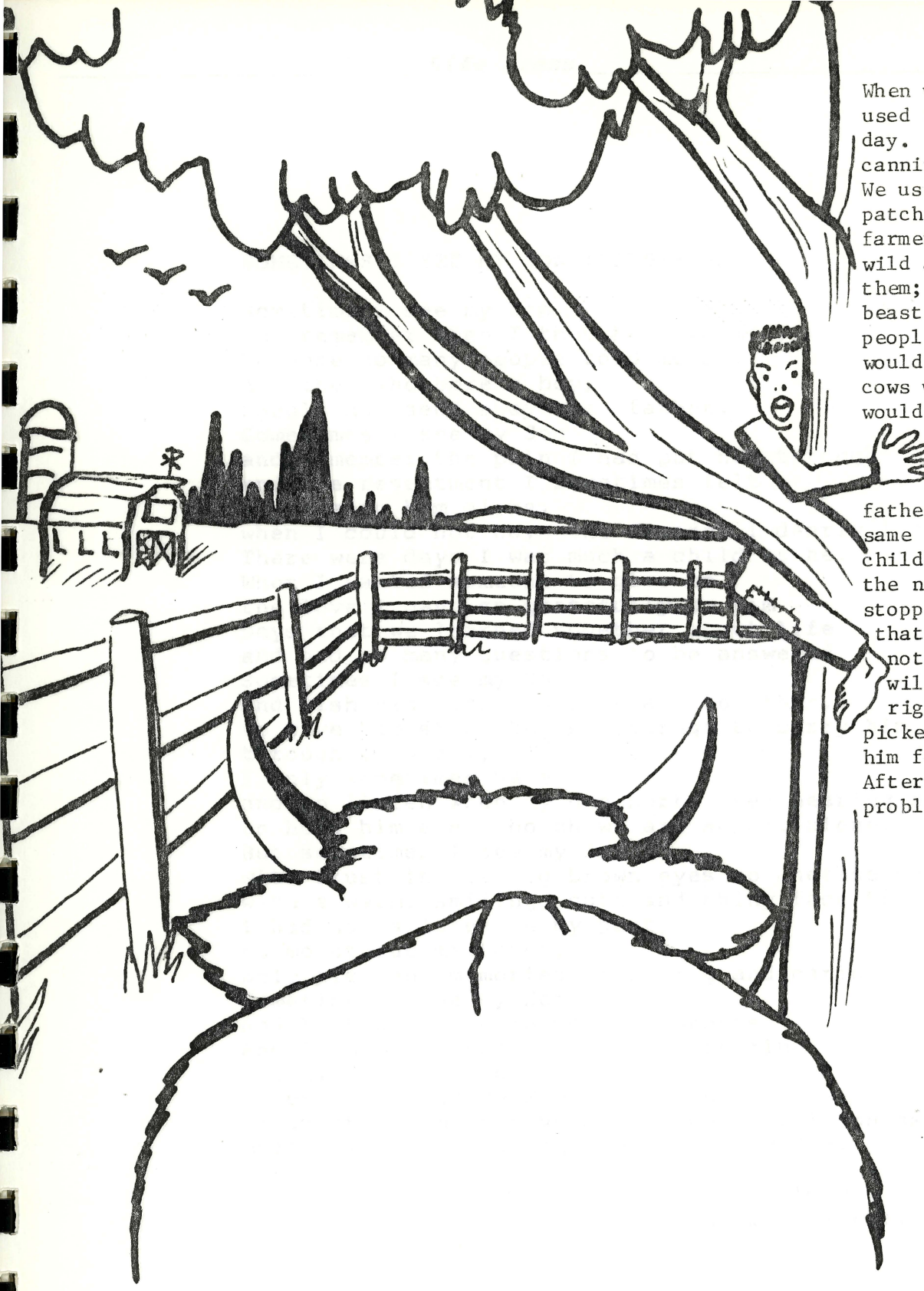
One day I met an old friend, Mr. Lee, he is an immigrant from Hong Kong only a half a year ago. We were drinking coffee in a cafe shop and talking about this city.

I think this is not suitable for a new immigrant, but not for any longer after I told Mr. Lee, you will feel this beautiful city and the people are friendly, the weather wonderful and a good welfare for every citizen.

-Yee Mon Lam



## BERRY PICKING



When we were children, we used to go berrypicking every day. The berries were for canning or for our daily use. We used to go to a raspberry patch which belonged to a farmer who let his cows run wild and who never milked them; consequently, these beasts were not used to people. When we children would go picking alone, the cows would chase us. We would run and climb up into trees and stay there until they went away.

One time, however, my father came with us and the same thing happened, so we children, of course, ran for the nearest trees. My father stopped us and then explained that--if we show cows we are not afraid of them, the cows will not bother us. He was right, but we made sure we picked berries very close to him for the rest of that day. After that, we never had any problems with those cows.

Larry Loyie

I'M LOOKING INSIDE

MY tears are my own.  
No one can see them or  
what's in my heart.  
What is going on inside,  
I can't see there yet.  
I'm in pain  
Not alone though,  
I have a special friend in my heart.  
He's there when I cry out  
to him  
or even whisper.  
Should I keep crying inside,  
or whisper.

-Frances Bethune



SOMETIMES I SEE MY SON (HERBIE JR)

Sometime I see my Son  
and remember when I thought I failed,  
because so many people told me so.  
A mother who bore a boy,  
should not send away his father.  
Sometimes I see my Son  
and remember the pain I had put him through  
and the resentment I sometimes felt  
at raising him alone;  
when I could not have the freedom I dearly loved to have.  
There were days I was much a child as he.  
When I wanted someone to give me  
the love I gave so gratefully to him.  
Days that we learned together about life  
and had so many questions to be answered  
Sometimes I see my Son  
and wish his mother had it all together,  
to give him strength and courage to carry him  
through each day;  
I only sometimes have  
and to listen when my own hurts need hearing also  
to hold him even though we are so all alone.  
But sometimes I see my Son  
with trust in his big brown eyes no one else could ever give,  
with a warm, smiling, cute and shiny face that tell me  
I had no failures on my part,  
no monstrous mistakes;  
only pleasant memories of loving and caring.  
Sometimes I see my Son  
and he touches me in secret corners  
and I know now that everything is fine  
and always will be.  
Sometimes I see my Son; and think of how  
fortunate I am to have such a wonderful Son as he,  
most times that is how I perceive my Son.

-Love Always,  
Mommy(Dolores)

DESERT MAGIC

-- WILLIAM CARDINAL

The one thing that I remember most about Nevada is the desert. When I think of the desert, the first thing that comes to mind is the smell of sage-brush after a rain. When I first arrived in Nevada, the desert didn't seem like much of a place, but my feelings were to change as the first year quickly went by.

Most of my time was spent working on ranches around Elks Nevada. Someone told me that if I spent enough time in the desert, it would grow on me. I didn't know what he meant by his comment, but I was soon to find out.

The desert is a very hot and dry place, and it has a magic all its own. It seemed whenever I went to town, that I couldn't wait to get back. The desert had a fascination for me that I couldn't explain.

Although it had rattlesnakes, and other creatures such as cayotes, jackrabbits..., it always seemed peaceful. Maybe it was that peacefulness or the howl of a cayote in the night that kept calling me back.

I finally understand what the man meant by saying "The desert grows on you". It's been four years since I left Nevada, but the desert is still calling me. I hope to go back some-day and maybe I can write about the desert magic.





## OUR FORMULA

by Stan Cheung

Formula, formula. These were the repeated words echoed during the last general meeting. The basic of a Co-op meeting is to benefit all people. However, during this meeting, only one person's needs were discussed over & over.

This resulted in people becoming angry, frustrated, and a waste of time & money. The majority of us decided to vote on this issue which resulted in 96% against his "Formula".

#### YESTERDAY I HAD A DREAM, A HORRIBLE DREAM

Yesterday I had a dream, a horrible dream. In my dream I was lying on the bed, then I saw man that man made me very scared, he destroyed all my furniture. Then a woman came in, I was glad because I had a good feeling she would help me and I wasn't scared anymore. At last came another man with a black coat, when I saw him, I remembered I knew him from a long time ago. P.S. my opinion the lady in my dream could have been Santa Maria, and the gentleman with the black coat was one of the Holy Spirits, they help me survive.

-Boen Tjong

#### DREAMS

When I was young, I didn't get what I wanted. At that time I had more disappointments. I was always daydreaming. I dreamed of wars. Some of my dreams came true, but many did not. Therefore I became a serious person because of my feelings I believed in God more and more everyday. Every day I hope and ask myself, when I can speak good English? Even I don't almost always I try to learn but I make not much progress.

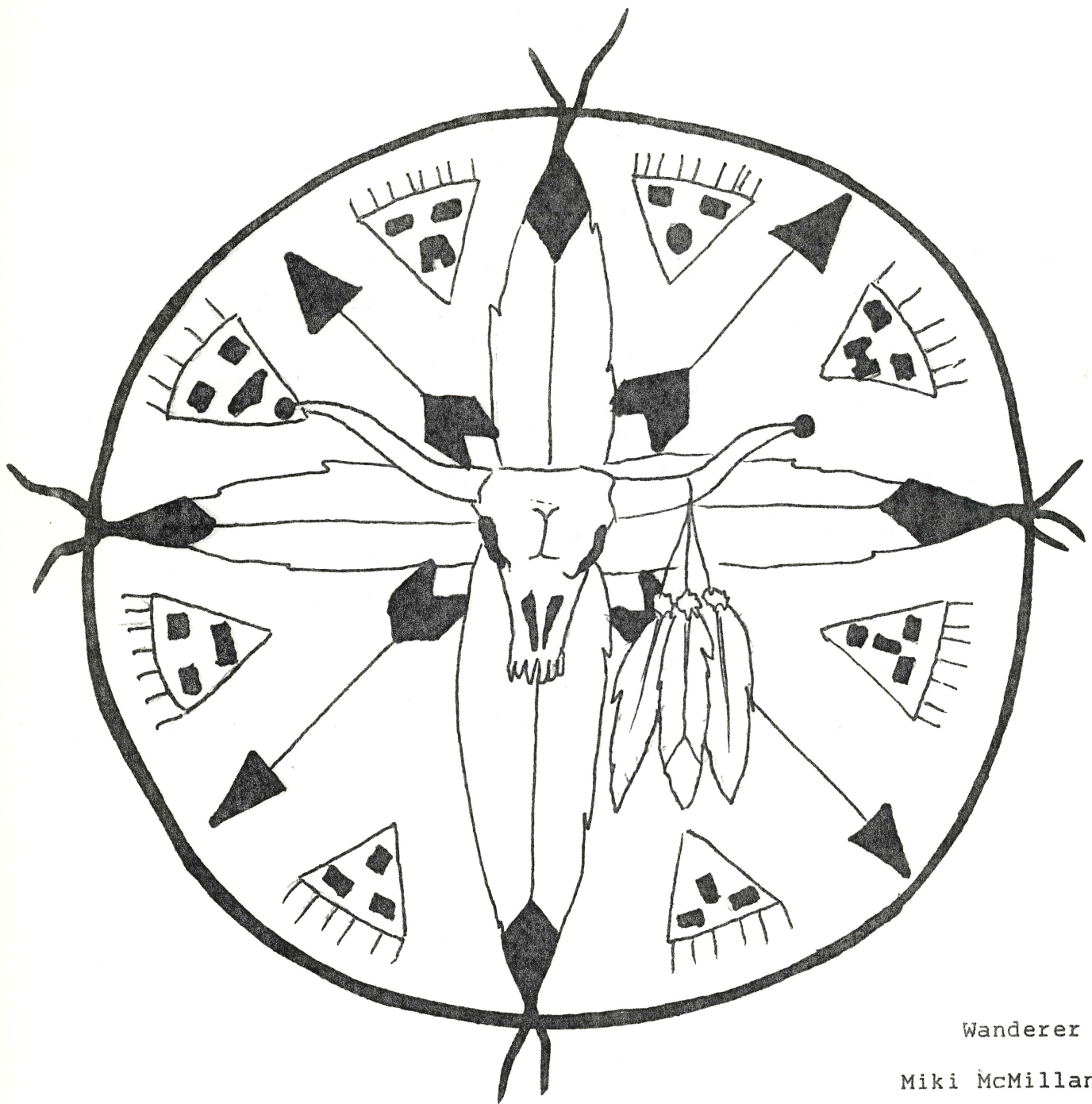
-Sui Lah

#### VISITING A FRIEND

Last Sunday after church, I was with Molly, a good friend and my sponsor in A.A.. We went to the " 44 " for lunch. Afterwards we went to the Veteran's Memorial Manor to see if we could talk Jim MacIntyre into coming back to our A.A. Group. Molly knew Danny, the desk clerk. He called Jim's room, getting no answer. We all went up to his room, but we were too late. Jim was lying dead on the floor. We all felt bad as he was a good man.

-James Roadknight





Wanderer

Miki McMillan.

she walks the valley every dawn  
through pastures and fields of happiness  
and sometimes loneliness.  
with silver braids  
and a buckskin medicine bag she blesses Mother Earth and  
prays for her people.  
she smokes the peace pipe,  
she smudges and purifies  
the air and her heart.  
the cool crisp air of the mountaintop  
is part of the awakening of the  
Eight Elders whose dawn harmonizes  
with the drumbeat and her singing  
as she wanders about in the wilderness.

MULIN'S BROTHER

-- BUD OSBORN

mulin was another 50 year old loser living in a halfway house. but he had something that made him feel good anyway. he wrote perfectly metrical sonnets --hundreds of them --along the lines of elizabeth barret browning & considered himself a poet without peer. One day mulin was with his brother in the angry sea inn, talking about his sonnets & his brother said, "what's so hard about writing poems nobody wants to read? " " you can't do it, "mulin said. "oh yeah!?" replied his brother. "never." his brother said & peeled the label off his beer bottle, borrowed a pen from mulin, scribbled something, passed it over & said, "here. a poem!" mulin looked at it, read it aloud, & said, "that's not a poem. nobody'd buy that." "I'll buy that poem." he said, & handed a dollar bill to mulin's brother, who'd written:

bottles full

bottles empty

*dreams*





#### RUN AWAY

I ran away from Grouard Mission School during the summer of 1956. It was pouring rain when I left the school late one afternoon. The faster I walked, the wetter I got. Finally, tired and hungry, I sat down under a spruce tree to think about what I was doing. Being just a fifteen year old kid, I went back. When I got back, Sister Louise Alma sent me to go and see Father Guimont. He told me to get my act together and get a good education....

WILLIAM J. CARDINAL

## MY STORY

My name is David Leung. I was born on August 21, 1945 to a poor family. We lived in a small Southern Chinese town in the province of Guangdong. Guangdong means "broad east". According to my parents, when I lost my sight to an illness caused by unclean water. Therefore, my family and I moved to Hong Kong for my eye treatments. They used all of their savings but still my eyes weren't cured. My family decided to stay in Hong Kong and I grew up there. A few years later, the communists overtook China: however, as Hong Kong was ruled by Britain, we escaped the suffering endured in our homeland.

I have two sisters and no brothers, so I am the only male in my family. My parents took good care of me, perhaps too well. Sometimes they wouldn't let me go out at all, partly due to the lack of orientation and mobility instructions and also do to the crowded streets. So, I became very dependant until I came to Canada in 1974.

My sister Karen, who sponsored me, encouraged me to become independant because it would make me more comfortable and self-sufficient. Karen introduced me to the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB), and from then on my life was changed radically. As I didn't know any English when I came to Canada, the CNIB found a volunteer to help me with some basic English. They also gave me O and M lessons such as getting to the bus stop from my home; how to take a bus, where to get off, and how to get to the CNIB. Whenever I need to go to a new place, the CNIB will send an O and M instructor to teach me how to get there. After awhile, I gain more confidence to travel alone in the city.

I also went to the Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House for a year to study English. I felt that was not enough. Thanks to a friend's recommendation, I went to the VCC campus on Oak St. to study English as a Second Language. I have been working very hard to learn English because there is a lack of equipment for visually impaired people, especially those from other countries (languages). In the meantime, I still keep in touch with CNIB.

Through the CNIB 'S Career Counselling Department, I found a job as an X-ray technician where I worked for ten years until 1987. During this time I saved some money and I wanted to get married. I couldn't find a Canadian girl to marry. Then, a brother-in-law's niece introduced me to Violet who lived in Yeudsun in southern China. We courted through the mail and later I applied for her to come to Canada. In the spring of 1982 she came to Canada and we finally met face-to-face. A few months later we were married. In the spring of 1983 our first child Jeffrey was born. Then we had two more children, Victor (1984) and Lorraine (1986). During this time I banked my savings and along with Karen's help, Violet and I bought our small house. Unfortunately, I lost my job in 1987 due to lack of business. I went back to school to further my studies. My goal is to get grade 12. After that I hope to find another job or to set up my own business.

-David Leung





JUDY'S BOOKSTORE  
-by James Roadknight.

While browsing in Judy's second hand book store on MainStreet in Vancouver. She and I were sharing about our lovebooks and I mentioned that I sailed in different shipsaround the world. She said that she had worked in Swedish Merchant Marine, so with that we both have two things in common. Still Judy charged me five dollars for Farley Mowat's book Where No Birds Sang, a novel about the second world war. After all is said and done business is business.



### My School Days in Grade One

When I went to school in New Brunswick, I went to Centennial School. In grade one my teacher's name was Mrs. Chism. She hit us with a big stick - for nothing. I didn't like it.

Janice Patchell

THE BIG BOOK

Tonight while sitting with friends a man walked up to me and he began talking to me about two jobs he had been offered, he continued to tell me both paid the same but that one of them had wanted him to take a course in air brakes. He didn't specify air brakes he just said, "they wanted him to take his license in air." I didn't think he was referring to a pilots training course. Although both are equally important working on a ranch. My guess is air brakes, because to me he doesn't have the qualities of being a pilot. Then a while later he returns to where I was talking to a friend about thinks in general, but mostly about writing. "He asks me for a phone book." I got him one from the book shelf, which he took. But he was reminded by my friend to return it when he was finished, he must have brought it back without either of us noticing him, when he came back the third time, and asked me where he could get the big book. "I almost flipped" I said, "A WHAT!" He replied "The Big Book." Again I asked "The What?" he repeated the big book. Dumbfounded and baffled, I was stuck for an answer. I had never heard of the thing they called "The Big Book". Or did I have the faintest idea of what it was.

Then my friends told me about the big book, they went on to tell me about the twelve steps, to combat addictions and such. It sure made me feel small, me of all people who had taken courses in drug and alcohol addictions. It just goes to show no matter how much you know. There is always things that come up that you don't have any knowledge of. So it was with me and "The Big Book."

-Larry Loyie



untitled:

PAT LANDRECHT

Touch the heart of me  
I am longing for your love  
But you do not see

VIETNAM

THE FIELDS

napalm j e l l y ;  
bombs e x p l o d i n g  
"r.a.t.a.t.a.t.", machine guns say

people screaming; claymors bl a s t i n g  
lives that sh . a . t . t . e . r --  
every day

VIET NAM

THE VILLAGE

peasants filling wicker baskets --  
babies crying on their backs

peasants filling wooden caskets--  
bodies from those gunny sacks.

RED PULSE

The road stretches out before us.  
We trudge along the road.  
Carrying our burdens--  
All that we could scrounge before we fled:  
Before the latest storm.  
Things we once ignored  
Now break our backs --  
like an ox  
being ritualistically hacked to his death.  
And finally...,  
He falls

### IT WILL SHOW ON YOUR FACE

The false, the deceit that you hear in your heart  
Will not stay inside where it first got its start  
For sinew and blood are a thin veil of lace  
What you wear in your heart  
You wear in your face  
If your life is unselfish  
And for others your live  
For not what you get, but how much you can give  
If you live close to the Creator in his infinite goodness  
You don't have to tell, it'll show in your face. (...)  
(this is an excerpt from a poem and story)

### I CAN FEEL THE TRUTH IN THEM

These so called myths and legends, I know they can't be understood when they are translated out of our tongue (language). But when I hear them my own native language, (Cree) I can feel the truth in them. They take me into the spirit world. The forests is where our grandfathers got their source of power. The listened to all these creatures sing. (Our feathered brothers, sisters) Some are unseen spirits that guide us or give us a vision, some are the spirits that helped us into this world...

I've heard an eagle-sound this morning and I am going to keep trying it. I will try to get it right. If I could imitate the eagles whistle and make a dance of it, I would be proud of myself.

You know, that's the way the old people once got their songs. The song maker of old went through the wild forests. Whatever sound or beat they heard, they made their songs out of them. Sometimes I hum or chant while I am walking or just being ones self. Pretty soon it sounds like one of the old songs. Then, it makes me feel right at home contented with the earth.

Then and there, a lot of things that I never noticed before did come alive and beautiful, my eyes seem to open right up to them. The eagles, the wolf, deer and plant life itself. These things. They never changed over the centuries; only we did. They're still there.

-Bobby Little Chief

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**Joseph Sparovec**

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