

“HOT SHOES” – A NOVEL (SELECTIONS AND SUMMARIES)

AND A CRITICAL PAPER

CANADIAN TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION: SETTLER-INVADER,  
DAMAGE, AND TRUST

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**Format Note:** I am following the guidelines of the *MLA Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*, third edition, Modern Language Association of America, 2008 but without giving the form of publication, which the most recent MLA no longer requires. I am including URLs when they seem helpful, which the latest guidelines also suggest.

## ABSTRACT

“Canadian Truth and Reconciliation: Settler-invader, Damage, and Trust”

My story of Murphy and *The Blue Gold* ocean liner transporting non-Aboriginal people of the former Canada back to their nations of ancestry responds to contemporary Canada entering a new era of truth and reconciliation, recognizing acts of cultural genocide and persisting racism. Non-Aboriginal fiction on the damaged relationship to date has gone only so far in using accountability as catalyst and guide for a newly imagined vision of distinct peoples in a shared land.

Historically, the relationship shifted from separate worlds to trade and military alliances to a colonial push toward both apartheid and assimilation. World views differed greatly. Although the Aboriginal view promised more for future harmony and environmental health, the encroaching non-Aboriginal view with its stress on colonialism, “progress” and consumption took command. Two segregated streams of literature developed, the non-Aboriginal one dominant. The myth of the “vanishing Indian” presided.

Seven categories of non-Aboriginal fiction that skirts or deals in some partial way with the damaged relationship can be defined; the vanishing or vanished Indian myth generally pervades seven of these and troubles the eighth.

Murphy’s story, on the other hand, asserts that Indigenous people and cultures are absolutely still here and will be long into the future. The rest of us just haven’t really seen them. If we do, we may begin to work more effectively toward the welfare of an endangered planet. As an artist who travels to an “exotic” new world (2172) where he encounters Aboriginal people, Murphy evokes the figure of the frontier artist Paul Kane, and the question arises: will he apply his art in the old colonial way or will he vie for something new that recognizes our second chance at a relationship.

## SYNOPSIS OF THE NOVEL “HOT SHOES”

“Hot Shoes” focuses on a young boy growing up amid troubled history in a fictionalized Province of Quebec (Gaulôre), Canada. The main action begins in the fall of 1962, in the island port of Métropole on the great St. Léonard River leading to the Atlantic Ocean, at the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis. Almost ten-year-old Murphy Beckridge comes into a strange pair of running shoes. These transport him aboard a “green technology” ocean liner serving a special program. The year is 2172, and all former North Americans of non-Aboriginal heritage are being “re-rooted”: returned to the lands and cultures of their ancestors. Uncertain how to operate the shoes, Murphy seeks understanding but then becomes separated from them.

Sprinkled through the novel’s twelve body sections are vignettes and episodes set at a privileged boys’ summer camp. The Beckridges’ millionaire landlord has sponsored Murphy and another youngster from the same building, French boy George Deschamps. Dealing with homesickness and various anxieties, including a sense of responsibility for the disappearance of his father’s captured German Luger, Murphy befriends a number of other outsiders and misfits. Through two camp visitors, an Algonquin father and son, he is informed of genocidal policies within Gaulôre and Canada, the very sorts of atrocities his father was fighting during the war. History texts from both English and French schools have told him nothing about this.

The novel’s perspective is that of an older unnamed narrator (possibly an older Murphy) focusing on how Murphy at summer camp deals with events – real or imagined—that led to and then followed coming into his hot shoes. Murphy’s initial controlling emotion at camp is homesickness complicated by fear that his various misfit and rebellious friends will cause him to shame his family through charges of misconduct and then expulsion.

On board *The Blue Gold* in 2172, Murphy meets two sisters willing to adopt him, but to remain on board, he must pass a DNA test confirming that he does not have Aboriginal ancestry. Since his mother's stock is British and French and she married a British soldier, Murphy has no concerns about the test. But to his surprise, his sample shows above the acceptable portion of Aboriginal ancestry. For his protection, the sisters smuggle the boy off ship, into a very altered City of Gaulôre, where he must fend for himself, "marooned barefoot." His hot shoes remain on board, bound for the northern mouth of the St. Léonard and then the open ocean.

Murphy at summer camp thinks of the fantastic voyage experience as a tale he tells himself to fall asleep at night. Both stories turn on Murphy's loving relationship with his family and especially his father Nestor and with the anxieties and mysteries surrounding this relationship. Murphy's personal response to life's difficulties is to explore his artistic gift, seeking healing and spiritual atonement, striving to uphold his belief in some greater meaning and purpose.

The novel ends with completion of a significant phase in the 1963 Murphy's life and completion of the missing Luger plot. The 1962 fantastic adventure story, however, ends with the protagonist still stranded in 2172, although he experiences a vision of paddling through blinding sun to his hot shoes.

DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being currently submitted in candidature for any degree.



Signed.....(candidate)

30 June 2016

Date.....

STATEMENT 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated.

Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references.



Signed.....(candidate)

30 February 2016

Date.....

STATEMENT 2

I hereby give consent for my thesis, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for inter-library loan, and for the summary to be made available to outside organisations.



Signed.....(candidate)

30 June 2016

Date.....

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My wife Joyce has been amazingly understanding on what felt like an endless journey.

“HOT SHOES”

A Novel

Selections and Summaries

Rise free from care before the dawn and seek adventure. Let the noon  
find thee by other lakes... and night o'er take thee everywhere at  
home.

Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*, Book IX  
(Motto of Camp Kisisokôe)

## INTRODUCTION: HOW THE PORTFOLIO REPRESENTS THE NOVEL

“Hot Shoes” runs to 150,000 words, twice the length permitted for the PhD creative submission. While I think there is room for judicious trimming and conversion of certain scenes to narrative summary, I don’t believe it is within the nature of this particular text to be reduced to 75,000 words. I have therefore formed this portfolio of the work by selecting particularly key sections exactly as written while summarizing other portions to provide an understanding of how the selected portions link together in the whole.

The novel has a Prologue (Long Before), twelve sections based around the story of the hot shoes, which begins in September 1962, and a denouement (Section 13) in which Murphy returns home from camp in August 1963. The prologue introduces Murphy in the city in 1958, covers older brother William’s birthday gathering, then concludes with a scene presenting a main part of Murphy’s dramatic conflict at Camp Kisisokôe, summer 1963.

Before explaining my method of representation from there on, I believe it is helpful to describe the novel’s main components and structural dynamics. “Hot Shoes” takes its shape through counterpointing one arch plot (Murphy and the hot shoes) and a multi-plot sequence set at the boys’ summer camp, 1963. The manuscript has 13 sections following the prologue. Sections 1 to 12 each contain segments of the main adventure plot with a number of interpolating vignettes at the summer camp. Up to Section 12, the various subsections in each section have titles. I have included the Prologue, Section 1 and Section 9 in their entirety, exactly as

formatted in the complete novel. I do so partly because these sections deal with key parts of the narrative but also to illustrate how the adventure segments and camp vignettes interweave and how the proportioning between the two plot components shifts as the novel develops. Since the novel ending is another key component, I include it in its entirety as well (the last half of Section 13).

Given the need to summarize parts of the whole, I have not tried to retain the precise interweaving (placement) of vignettes in the other sections. Rather, I have presented these at the opening of each new section in the portfolio. In most cases, I proceed thus: in one or two sentences or a brief paragraph, I introduce all the prongs of the camp multi-plot for that section. I then go prong by prong offering somewhat extended summaries of each. In some cases I provide a vignette or a portion of a vignette verbatim. I use the heading “Excerpt” to indicate a verbatim passage. I also inset excerpted passages except when they are particularly long.

After summarizing the camp vignettes, I summarize the hot shoes adventure plot. In some cases, I include verbatim passages from the adventure plot. In those cases I again use the heading “Excerpt” and inset the verbatim passage. I aim in this way to provide the most interesting or dramatically crucial points of the story in their full wording from the novel while maintaining a coherent sense of how the main plot and counterpoint vignettes are unfolding.

It may be useful to note that my tone in the portfolio narrative summaries is somewhat more distant from the voice of Murphy than is the case in the full novel. With Murphy’s penchant for dawdling and extended study of subjects, I felt this somewhat greater distance served the purpose of compression. It might also

contribute increased variety of perspective—as Michael Ondaajte has commented on creation of his 2011 novel *The Cat's Table*, there is always a concern that readers can get a little too much of a ten- or eleven-year-old. However, an undeniable detraction of so much summary to bridge excerpts from the complete novel is risk of the dreaded “telling rather than showing” of matters essential to underlying concerns. I have done my best within the constraints not to tell meanings, not to provide access to Murphy’s thoughts or emotions if that access is not provided in the full novel. I avoid explaining or interpreting meanings-- that activity is reserved for my discussion in the critical paper. The summaries deal entirely with relating dramatic events. I have tried to make them brisk while including sufficient telling detail to keep the story concrete.

My aim has been to capture the complete story and maintain clarity and coherence. Through this process I think I have sharpened the work, assisting a final-draft edit. Some readers might feel the portfolio moves along more satisfyingly than an extended version could do. I welcome thoughts and suggestions on this and all other aspects of the work.

*[This Section appears in its entirety.]*

Long before riding out to sea in a tin canoe under a beating sun, with nothing to last except his sketchbook in its plastic sheath, Murphy Beckridge joins the neighbourhood kids outside Klein's Foods. They all wear billy-boots. Squinty rubber heels, musky-smelling calves up to the knee, orange trim, spattered different tones of black. Boots make them walk stiff-legged, as if in space suits. Spring holds out new scents, earth and shoots. He can smell the river.

They go on playing behind Klein's. By and by Murphy finds a stick with just the right point. He leaves them for a private place behind the west wall where snow still spreads inches thick. He draws a long liner. It boasts great tall sails like a Viking ship. Off port bow, a pair of running shoes churn like a tug boat. Helena would call the shoes jaunty. She showed him a pair in one of her magazines. Murphy scratches letters under his picture. *I maid this.*

Late morning slants brilliant past Klein's roof, shines white from metal fences along the alley. See the colours clear as apple skins. Red scooter. Blue wagon. Tangerine curtains from half-opened window sway. Dusty lime-green paint flakes cling and curl like bits of scotch tape. Jimmy Straw's blue corduroy jacket gathers and releases white. His wrist slices down, delivers last-year's prize chestnut. It sounds

almost like a baseball leaving a bat. The game's called Conkers. The smaller chestnut splashes in pieces on the blotchy cement. Hello blotchy cement. Nice to see you again.

Jimmy's mouth's half opened showing a pup-tent hole where top front teeth cracked in NDC Park. Those kids from below the tracks. He knows his friend's going home.

"You don't even have a conker," Jimmy says.

Murphy has a magic wand, though. It's not his fault Jimmy and the rest are too dumb to see it. Murphy puts magic pictures on the cramped half-bare front lawn of Duchênes Apartments. *Don't dawdle*, Viola said. *William's birthday*. *Be back by noon*. Murphy won't forget.

Mr. Sun bathes his neck from behind as he-clips north up Cambridge. Still shy of high noon. Murphy's seen cowboy movies on Jimmy Straw's 16-inch TV.

He passes the two wood staircases of their duplex.<sup>1</sup> He passes yesterday's snowman and turns the northeast corner of the building into the shade. Jimmy says the old uneven dung-brown bricks look like cakes of you-know-what. Helena says Jimmy's crude but correct. She was thinking by comparison of the rich red bricks of the doctor's house above Côte St. Antoine.

When spring really sets in, all that grows in the tired strip between narrow sidewalks along their building and the duplex one door north are some straggly blades of grass and three or four spindly dandelions. There isn't room to run a lawn

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<sup>1</sup> A two-storey structure containing two separate rental flats, an upper and lower, often attached to another duplex next door. The upper and lower flats have separate front doors side by side.

mower. Viola's attempt at planting wild raspberries from Humphrey Straw's brother in the woods near Main will probably fail again. Murphy looks up at the second storey window of his father's study. Through the sooty glass he sees Nestor's silhouette holding the *Métropole Mercury*.

Before long Mr. Sun's fingers will snake between the buildings. Bricks and cement will gather warmth, like a sponge sucks water. Murphy pats the cement along the lower wall as he would the dog he cannot have because of William's asthma. Imagine living in a flat rented out by the owner of the Patriotes. Jimmy Straw and Sol Blobinsky can't hide their envy or stop asking Murphy for more about the latest visit by Mr. Saville. Everyone peeks out the rare time the big black Cadillac whispers into their street.

Down under ground level, where Mr. Sun never enters, a row of narrow basement windows blindly stares, broken glass buoyed by plywood. *A millionaire, but hell will freeze over*, Viola says. The mildewy side door into the basement looks unlocked. How does Murphy know? He can't say, but he steps down the three crumbly stairs, turns the rusty knob, the latch drops back like a turtle head into its shell. Inside the bare, dank vestibule Murphy peers at two inner doors, left into the Deschamps' side of the basement, right into theirs. Murphy turns back and notices on the outside stairs the line of little circles his father's shoes make in dust, earth, or snow. Viola would never leave their basement door unlocked, but Nestor might.

Murphy turns the knob of the right door and opens it a crack, letting the darkness through. Murphy doesn't know why today, but he's going to show that

darkness. He sees his red, white and blue Patriotes toque in the inky glass of the door. Better take that off, gotta hear things that could sneak up in the dark. He pushes the outer door shut and dank darkness fills the vestibule. His chest tightens, but he feels his way to the right door.

Hatless, ears pricked, Murphy steps into nothingness onto the top of three stand-alone wooden stairs. Like tables in the Oxford Street dinette, they wobble back and forth. Murphy smells the dust rise. He holds his place, like an able seaman. He's good at see-saw. He'll see-saw Mr. Dark clear back to the far wall. Steady step. One foot. Next foot. No running. Clear across and touch the wall.

Along the way touch the cold dusty tin trunk. Viola bought it from the previous tenant, a war vet. She thought it might serve for extra storage, but hasn't got around to cleaning it. The rusty key sticks out from the lock. Careful not to scrape your knee on the big nail sticking out of the wood pillar on your way past. The far wall comes closer. Smell Nestor's pipe tobacco. He must have been working again late last night.

Coming back, steady-step all the way, Murphy puts his right foot down on a bump. He pictures a limp rolled-up rag. Viola doesn't leave stuff lying around but maybe Nestor did. That old towel bunched up, the one he uses to wipe things down. Murphy steps on toward a pin-prick line of gray light leaking through the side door into the vestibule. Something like the wing tips of a baby robin brushes his cheek. Murphy puts his hand up and catches a string. He pulls it down and a dull light coughs out feeble waves.

On the workbench across the room, Nestor has added another mast and more detail along the hull of the model ship he's carving from blocks of discarded wood he and Murphy locate about town. Crooked and dog-eared over the bench, a picture of the clipper Nestor's making shows how much more's to do. Murphy hopes it's ready by Christmas. What's it for? Nestor won't say. Maybe a gift. Maybe the bureau top in the parlour where Murphy sleeps.

At first Murphy thinks the thing he stepped on's a stuffed toy. Its long thin tail streaks the green-stained cement. That could be the tread of Murphy's billy boot across its haunches. From its mouth a still trickle, dark green. *That Florentine Deschamps*, Viola said. *I don't agree with poison*, Nestor said. *Use a good old-fashioned neck-break trap if you have to kill things.*

Murphy tears out of the basement. Outside he stalks up and down the narrow strip between buildings, blinded by sun when he steps out front. He trembles beside yesterday's melting snowman. He kicks it and kicks the litter of snow falling around the base. Then he remembers the light.

### *Camp Kisisokôe*

Rocky spruce-lined Laurentian Mountains sprawl across vast regions of northeastern Canada. This is not country for farming—though some have tried in the valleys--but canoe tripping. You can drink water from deep crystal lakes directly from your paddle. One hundred and twenty miles northwest of Métropole you find a rich mix of conifers and hardwood including white birch.

There in 1913, a year before the Great War, on Little Lake Kisisokôe, at the apex of a big triangle with Métropole southeast and the nation's capital, Wanaki, southwest, Vermont naturalist Herbert Castle, founded a camp for wealthy English boys. By early 1960s, it tucked hundreds of campers into its sweep of white birch above sandy shores. Nestled beneath trees so discretely you'd mistake them for parts of the natural landscape, seventy-two canvas tents look deep in thought. Stout wood platforms proclaim the Brossard brothers from Kisisokôe Village up the northwest shore. One lake southeast of here and northwards as well, human habitation thins, sometimes to zero.

*William's 16<sup>th</sup>*

William's radio plays "All I Have to Do Is Dream." He shuts it off and comes out. He's had a shower.

"I don't want to wear my boots anymore," Murphy tells Viola.

"That's fine dear," she says on her way into the parlour with William's chocolate birthday cake. "You can just wear them tomorrow, then."

Everyone's gathered in the parlour: Aunt Hilary on a straight back chair, wet absent eyes pointed at Mr. Saville's coloured glass window design of Freddy Framboise streaking toward goal. She seems to be seeing it for the first time, though Mr. Saville's workers put it there last year. She doesn't seem to see the others in the room. Why is this happening?

Helena sits next to Aunt Hilary on the hassock with the pink roses. Helena's grade seven homework sprawls on the low table beside her. She's reading a book called *Eagle of the Ninth*.

"Hey squirt," Helena says. "Have you got your present?"

"No tickee, no washee," says William.

He sits next to Helena in the circle with his ginger ale on the small round wooden table. William drinks only Canada Dry. For his stomach. Murphy can tell from Helena's smile that she's just teasing: they didn't really expect him to be out getting a present. But he's made a drawing of piano keys for William, and Nestor said that should make a fine gift.

### *Tradition*

Like mighty oak trees, firm traditions grew in Camp Kisisokôe, grew with the totem poles, Indian Head shields, nature cabin, nature trails, tennis courts, boxing ring, archery ranges, shooting ranges, canoes, rowboats, waterfront docks, water wheel, water slide, swimming enclosures, morning instruction, dining hall, dinner gong, ship's bell, breakwaters, outdoor chapel, athletic fields, un-manicured golf course, gravel greens, craft shop, laundry contract, tuck shop, generators, infirmary, administration building, lodges, hill-side council ring, new theatre, Parliament Buildings, and Friday afternoon clean-up. Kisisokôe went on serving wealthy English boys from Métropole and Ontario, though with a siren call to certain others across the continent. By 1963, boxing was to give way to Indian Lore.

### *The Party*

Murphy's Murphy bed lies along the west wall that separates the parlour and Aunt Hilary's bedroom. Curtains surrounding the bed at night, making his own secret room, are pulled back for more space. Nestor sits there, sinking the bed close to the faded hard wood. He's too big for it, like an older kid on Benoît Lecoup's small two-wheeler. Bouncing four-month-old John Fitzsimmons in his arms, Nestor smiles.

He must have saved hard, because he was able to buy William two tickets to Glenn Gould at the Plâces-des-Spectacles, including one for his grade-ten friend. For today's birthday celebration, Nestor gave up his usual Saturday morning trip down town for eggs and coffee with Humphrey Straw and other cronies in Gilbert Glace Café and Tavern beside the mighty Colisée Métropole, home of the Patriotes glorieux, winners of 12 Stanley Cups, more championships than any other professional sports franchise, including the New York Yankees.

Helena helps Viola set up one of the TV tables. That's what Jimmy Straw calls them, though Murphy's family hasn't got a TV yet—saving, as they are, for the doctor's house. Sol Blobinsky has two (TVs, not doctor's houses). The chocolate cake has 16 candles. Imagine that old.

Above the cake on the long south wall of the parlour, is the rotating picture. Nestor started the rotating picture, even though Aunt Hilary and Viola disapproved. He did so after Helena and William squabbled about what to put there. Helena wanted her poster of the Queen Mary 2. She said they should all sail on the famous luxury liner to celebrate buying the doctor's house. Wondering how they were going to afford a luxury cruise after paying down on the doctor's house, William wanted to

put up his poster of Bird, which was what he called the saxophone player Charlie Parker. Viola thought they should put up a soft landscape of the gently rolling Eastern Townships (so much more civilized than the Laurentians, almost like the Lake District) by neighbour Gladys Nesbitt.

Nestor said all the pictures had merit. He said they would each have their choice in that spot for two months. With six older people in the flat, that would take them through a year. They could shorten the term somewhat when John Fitzgerald was old enough to want a picture. “Hmph,” said Aunt Hilary. “No one but Murphy and I will have the faintest idea how to match the décor.”

The picture now looking back at the birthday cake is the Queen Mary 2. You can almost see Helena leaning over the railing at the bow, like a movie star from one of her Hollywood magazines

#### *After Cake and Ice Cream*

After cake and ice cream and singing happy birthday, which William suffers with a bitter face because he calls it “that execrable school-marm effort,” his friend arrives and they leave for the Place des Spectacles. Murphy wishes he didn’t have to go so soon. He remembers when he was four years old and William was 14 how he’d hide William’s wallet when he was in a terrible hurry to go out, and flush his socks down the toilet.

Nestor answers the old black telephone in the long hallway near the kitchen. Humphrey Straw and the gang are meeting at Gilbert Glace for afternoon poker. Nestor puts on his shoes with the lines of circles and trudges down Cambridge to the

103 stop. He gets to ride free, and the rest of the family is half-price. When everyone has forgotten Murphy, which happens sooner than later, he puts on his billy-boots, and goes back to the basement. To close the light.

*Administration Office (Summer, 1963)*

“Now, boys, I just want the facts.”

Mr. Merritte stands behind his desk, and Murphy and George sit in front of it on two straight back chairs. If you're a camper, there's only one reason to be inside the Administration Office. It isn't a good one. Murphy recalls a cartoon on one of Sol Blobinsky's TVs. It featured dancing coffins. Mr. Merritte's outline is exactly that of a six and a half foot tall coffin with shoulders even broader than Tarzan's, which isn't to say the camp director has anything like the abilities of Tarzan, although on Entertainment night in the new theatre, he can be really funny, playing silly versions of Shakespeare characters, like a witch from Macbeth. But now he isn't in a funny mood.

George spells his name without an “s” even though he's French. Facing Mr. Merritte, he has more trouble than usual with his English. He tries to say that he never went into Intermediate Camp.

“That's not according to some reports, I heard, Master Deschamps.”

Looking what Helena would call a “tad” bored, Mr. Merritte reaches down to scratch

a boulder-sized knee, and the floor creaks. “Parties whose characters I judge unimpeachable. What do *you* say, Master Beckridge?”

He survived his first canoe trip. Murphy tells himself he can survive this. He has to. He breathes deep but can’t make his tongue or vocal chords work. This will seem like impudence.

On the first day of camp, right after lunch in the dining hall, Junior Camp Director gave a little speech of welcome in his enthusiastic voice but then clicked into his stern-sounding voice and listed the rules. There was to be no throwing balls in the tent-line, no booing or other bad sportsmanship, no name-calling or picking on others, no throwing sand, no diving in shallow water, and no graffiti or demarking of trees. That included no removing birch bark. These pure white trees were precious gifts-- no other camp anywhere in the country had anything like them. They were to be respected as deeply as the rules and procedures for Council Ring, which included never crossing the line between Big Chief’s chair and the sacred council fire. For boys in Junior Camp, there would be absolutely no going into Intermediate or Senior Camps, except for Sunday morning Chapel in Intermediate Bay.

Murphy forces an answer. He tries to sound as sincere as he can. He says he was with George right from the end of quiet hour, and they never crossed the line. Nor did they start calling insults. It was the older boys from Intermediate Camp. You shouldn’t try sounding sincere, because it makes you sound the opposite. You shouldn’t have to, when it’s the truth. George didn’t enter Intermediate Camp... not *this* time.

“Boys, I’m a busy man. Running this camp isn’t pick-up sticks.”

Murphy's sure he will now ask how the initials "MB" got carved into Grandfather Birch. They were there when Murphy returned from canoe trip. But to his amazement, Mr. Merritte says something quite different.

"This interview is history," he says. "But like history, it remains on file. You get one chance here. If I have to speak to you again in this office, you'll be on the next train to Métropole."

Murphy's legs are still trembling as he and George scuff past rows of white birches back to Tent 18. There are 24 days left to tick off, and even though Murphy would love to go home tomorrow, he doesn't want to even imagine how Viola, Helena, William, and Aunt Hilary would react. Expelled! After the wonderful opportunity Mr. Saville gave you. How else could you ever get into a camp like that? Aunt Hilary-- in one of her "good" spells-- said it was his one chance to build future connections in society. People worth more—a lot more- and able to do more—a lot more-- than Dr. Tremblay, Colonel Grisbois, Gustave Lecoup, Andrew McGoo, Nathan Klein or anyone else in NDC. Nestor wouldn't show any blame or disappointment, yet he was the one Murphy especially didn't want to shame.

"We better be careful," he said to George. "Try not to let them get you mad—just another 24 days."

He needed time to finish his story, too. It wouldn't be the same without the breeze through the tent flaps, homesick and lonely.

Section 1      Leaving NDC

*[This Section appears in its entirety.]*

*It All Began One Day*

When you try stuff like this, anything might happen. Murphy has done nothing like it since the dark basement. That was four-and-a-half years ago, spring of kindergarten. But Helena and Viola gave him fine gifts for *his* birthday last January. Yes, William forgot it. But as Viola points out, he warms them with his sonatas, even if warbling too slow on the reel-to-reel recorder that Professor Bloomgardle lets his prize student borrow. Pre-schooler John Fitzsimmons warms them equally with his good-natured babbling. And Murphy's father Nestor has taught his middle son all the city routes. So the boy really has no choice: he ties his worn runners. He taps his toes. He must go through Marie Reine-de-la-Paix.

*The Old Black Desk Phone*

But then the old black desk-phone rang.

It was Saturday. He'd been up since dawn, reading *Jungle Tales of Tarzan*, and planning to set out before noon. But it was Sol Blobinsky suggesting a game of ball hockey in the asphalt schoolyard of Harry Floggins Elementary. On Empire Avenue, the school was right beside Sol's, so he didn't have to walk far. Sol would

be Émile Clouche, *the Crusher*, and Murphy would be Francis Piquet, the *Mini-Torpedo*. Five blocks to Harry Floggins was nothing to Murphy.

After hockey he circled home, stopping at Hamsun's Art Supplies on Sherwood. You could spend all day there just thumbing through books and prints never mind all the neat displays. With savings from the paper route Viola still considered him too young to handle, he bought two new charcoals and a replacement sketchbook. His current one was down to the last page.

Then he stopped under the marquee of Crosslands Theatre. Wishing there were posters for a new Tarzan movie, even though the films weren't half as good as the books, he gazed at the promotional art for the day's matinee. Water pounded into the cracked hull of a sinking ship as the hero wrapped his sinewy arm around a nervous brunette's shoulder. Finally the boy noticed a clock inside the lobby giving the time as already eleven thirty. *Dawdling again*, Aunt Hilary would scold, Viola in full agreement.

He would have to face his commitment. Too much longer and the dark would catch him before he could complete his journey. He headed home for lunch, cutting through NDC Park and stopping only for 20 minutes to make his first drawing in the new book, a sketch of St. Augustine Church on Côte St. Antoine.

It couldn't be too much past noon. Helena in housecoat still puffy-eyed sipped black coffee talking about celebrities with Viola who was swallowing her lunch of cottage cheese in soup. Helena always left her homework till late in the evenings and, so by Friday was bleary-eyed.

Viola said it didn't help that she worked all summer as junior secretary for Canada Steamships. Working toward the down payment was a good goal, said Viola, but not worth hurting your health. Helena replied that Viola worked even longer hours and slept even less, what with her shifts at the hospital. It was easier after your teen years, Viola said.

Helena and William would argue over sleep. William said you couldn't make up for lost sleep with what he called "bingeing," but Helena said you could. She would sleep right up to eleven or later on Saturday and most Sundays, though on occasional Sundays, especially if she felt rested from her Saturday catch-up, she still accompanied Viola to NDC Non-denominational Church.

William wasn't on hand to argue any of this. He was already downtown in McDuff Academy piano studio. If he was happy with his day's practice, he'd bring them home something newly recorded, a Schubert sonata perhaps. Aunt Hilary was having tea at Murray's with ladies of the Royal Tree Club. Nestor was at Gilbert Glace Taverne discussing tonight's game against the Blackhawks.

### *Snugly Rolled*

On this clear warm late July evening, tent walls have disappeared, snugly rolled and pinned by crook-headed branches wound in guy ropes. A lake breeze rustles strings of Murphy's sleeping bag, softens the twilight song coming from Intermediate Bay campfire: four strong winds that blow lonely... He's snug inside.

Backed into a rise, nestled in a thicket under the big cedar, a Freddy Framboise card toss from Grandfather Birch, Tent 24 is the best-placed tent in all of

Section Four, if not the whole camp. To Murphy, the tent is a cat or, as counsellor Kris Brown from Brownsville Texas would say, a “cay-at.” It’s found the ideal place to see and not be seen—even if it’s one of the few light orange tents in a sea of white ones. The orange light sure cheers you up in the morning. And Murphy has the best-placed cot, at the front southeast corner. His head points south, a view down the hill, Little Lake Kisisokôe, white birch and peaked roofs of Section One. See the rich water winking through leaves. With someone else almost always in the tent-- four other campers and Kris—claim what you can.

*Don't Be Late for Supper*

After a peanut butter sandwich, Murphy removed his old sketchbook from the clear plastic sheath—a waterproof envelope of Viola’s ingenious construction—and pushed in the new sketchbook. He put a final drawing onto the last page of the old book—Tarzan at the alert, hunting knife in hand. Then he found his blue corduroy jacket, slipped it on in secret, and tucked the new book into the front pocket under his left shoulder. *Kanga*, Helena sometimes called him because of this pouch. Viola had sewed it on so Murphy could have somewhere to carry his art materials. She put it on the left so he would keep using his right hand. Naturally left-handed, he had to be changed over to the right, because that’s what everyone did. Viola was very disciplined about these matters.

*Don't ask and they can't say 'no', Sol once said concerning permissions.*

Murphy zipped up the jacket and crept to the door.

“Hey squirt, where ya going?” Still looking bleary from sleep, Helena gazed at him from the kitchen. The radio began playing “The Monster Mash.”

“Ball hockey with Sol,” he called back, feeling a twinge of guilt even though Nestor said lying wasn’t always wrong.

“Don’t be late for supper,” Viola said.

### *Kris*

It’s comforting to know Kris will be there at his cot in the morning, ready to start them on their day. He’s fair and doesn’t let kids pick on each other because of differences. Just hearing his Texas accent—so unexpected in les Laurentides, Provence de Gaulôre—is a delight.

There’s rumours Kris is sweet on Mr. Merritte’s younger daughter who spends summers at the camp, quarantined so to speak in the restricted Staff Beach section. It’s been whispered for weeks that she declared Kris to be “cute as a possum,” one of many Texas expressions she’s been heard using. It’s believed she has even been using his south Texas rural accent. But when you ask him about Mr. Meritte’s younger daughter, he turns a little red and changes the subject.

### *The Four Directions outside and in (or Dropping off the Horizon)*

He looked north up Cambridge Avenue, houses rising bigger and brighter past Côte St Antoine, the line where making do becomes making pretty. Next to the Lecoups’ with its new wrought iron trim stood the doctor’s house, as dowdy as the Lecoups’ was chic. Style versus style-blind Helena used to say. Still, she and Viola so loved

the bay windows and interior beams of the doctor's home, its rustic red brick sure to last forever, that they were saving toward a down payment. Gladys Nesbitt at the corner of Côte St. Antoine passed news from above: the doctor, having been here four years, would be selling in another three.

Even though it was gray—more like end of October than mid-September, hardly good weather for venturing into the unknown-- Murphy turned and walked down Cambridge half a block south to Sherwood Street West. He waited at the 103 stop across from Klein's Grocery, in front of Blobinsky Cigars. He was careful to keep his back to the store window. Mr. Blobinsky, a thundery sort, might see him. If no one else was in the store, he'd storm outside. Just what did Murphy think he was doing. Leaving NDC. On his own no less.

But he'd return. East, then south, then east, then north, then west. Murphy stared at his runners, at the split seams between faded black canvas and scuffed white rubber toes.

Most of Métropole's English speakers live in NDC, out-numbering those of every other city in the country save for Toronto and a couple of others Murphy has forgotten. NDC is generally calm and reliable. But tales at Harry Floggins describe Marie Reine-de-la-Paix as out of control and deadly. Too deadly to visit even in daytime in your family car with windows rolled and doors locked. Marie Reine-de-la-Paix runs wild with grubby, loud unpredictable types.

The hospital staff had stuck him with a needle, popped him on a trundle bed, and left it in a corridor. Sooner or later the doctor was to arrive and examine his wrist.

Murphy knew after reviewing its sunken lines the doctor would give his wrist a sudden tug. Unexpectedly expected. Minutes slowed to evening, night, and morning. He wanted the doctor and didn't want him.

After what seems an impossibly long-short time, the 103 arrives. Murphy floats down Sherwood. As they pass Clairvoyance, he feels waves of panic. After Murphy had boasted to Jimmy Straw about staring down Mr. Dark, his friend had replied, "So what. You're so scared of heights you won't even go up the front steps of Floggies without someone holding your hand." They 103 has no intention of turning back. It floats down Sherwood, leaving the streets of NDC behind.

### *Returning Home*

His mind returns home.

Looking across at Aunt Hilary's room, Nestor's study on the north side of their flat sits between William's bedroom and Viola's cleaning supplies. On the study walls hang pictures from the war, Viola in her Bluebirds uniform, and Nestor's big transit authority map. Pins with blue, green, and yellow heads poke out of the map, reminding Murphy of strategies the generals contemplate in war movies, though all the TV colours are grey and black. An insert on Nestor's map shows La Métropole-sur-Fleuve nestled on a boomerang-shaped island in the St. Léonard River, 500 miles upstream from the mouth of the Atlantic Ocean. Some call the island's aerial profile a flying dove. The world's second-largest French-speaking

city. Paris look out, Murphy and Nestor like to say, mainly to see Viola frown at their silliness. Like a canyon two miles north of the island's south shore, Sherwood cuts through the city, 20 miles from west to east.

*Read the Map*

In the big sprawl called Nôtre Dame de Croyance (NDC), find Blobinsky Cigars at the intersection of Cambridge Avenue. Put your finger on Sherwood and run it east through Chelsey Green Heights to Graveswater, the western border of downtown. Then run two blocks south to Westchester, where the mighty Colisée Métropole shadows Gilbert Glace Tavern. Facing the Colisée on Dorchester's north side Graveswater Terminus connects you to anywhere. Run your finger straight south until you're near the river.

Stop at Pine Narrows Market with the terminus to its east. Marie Reine-de-la-Paix stretches east from there along Pine Narrows Canal. It runs right into the Port, the great mouth that swallows shiploads of goods bound for industrial heartland in those vast English-speaking worlds to the south and west.

Marie Reine-de-la-Paix is largely French speaking, though Murphy's heard tell of Italian and Greek mingling with the gruff English of the Irish Catholics. He pretends Nestor is sitting beside him. His breathing relaxes. He studies the black smudge on the toe of his left runner.

*Nestor*

Nestor docked in Métropole Port one overcast afternoon of late August 1945 with wonky back and new bride resplendent in blue Canadian Army Medical Corps uniform. Murphy's parents like to joke that he was a *war-husband*, since *he* was the British one when usually it was the other way around, Canadian soldiers bringing back British wives, not Canadian wives bringing back British soldiers. Four weeks later the ex-soldier had his job as driver trainee, one of few Anglos in the authority's working ranks, even then.

The employment officials liked that he'd polished his French after the horrendous campaign into Norway. During the following two years, when the 49<sup>th</sup> (West Riding) Infantry Division were garrisoned in Iceland and became known as the Polar Bears, he worked with books and the tutelage of a bilingual squad mate. Others thought he seemed a little cracked, but he said he'd always loved French culture and, besides, he was practicing to be able to greet people properly when they liberated France. He practised "*Je t'aime.*"

The transit officials said he might work his way into the office. After only four years he did. He suspected someone had taken pity on his back, which suffered from the long shifts of driving. The pay changed little, but much as he enjoyed people, driving the same route every day had become boring. Office routine could be a little dull, too, but generally better than all-day driving. Nestor didn't complain. He said a good soldier bitches, but still you should mostly try to see the good side.

Murphy loved to go into his father's study to look at the photo of his mother in her Bluebird uniform beside the sprawling transit map. He'd study the lines for hours. More than old pictures and transit lore drew the boy. He also hoped for the chance to look at Nestor's captured German Luger. Slide the eerie weapon from its squeaky leather holster, squeeze it in his small hand, cool steel and old wood smelling of oil, remarkable balance pointing his hand rather than the other way around.

Nestor left the Luger in the back of the wooden drawer under the middle of the desk, which Viola kept smelling of Pride. When Nestor did unlock and open the drawer—only on certain rare days—Pride mingled with the smell of peppermints and Amphora pipe tobacco. Then came the unmistakable smell of old steel that somehow seemed younger each time Murphy touched it.

#### *At Graveswater Terminus*

At Graveswater Terminus, across from the hallowed Colisée Métropole, home of the Patriotes glorieux winners of 16 Stanley Cups, more championships than any other pro sports team including the New York Yankees, Murphy awaited the 33. He'd never got on the 33 before, just watched it drop off the horizon under the bridge. This time he got on, and it took him south under the railway bridge toward Fleuve St. Léonard, to Pine Narrows bus terminal.

### *At Pine Narrows Terminus*

Things in real life were different than he'd imagined on maps. At Pine Narrows bus terminal Murphy listened to the clicking of leaves over uneven cement yellowed, like bad teeth. Pigeons fluttered on back-to-back benches. Time hit the pause button, like the one on Professor Bloomgardle's tape recorder. He no longer heard the leaves. He knew something was coming, but felt like he did after he broke his wrist and the hospital people pushed that needle in his arm and left him on a trolley bed in the hallway. The pause button surrounded him as he looked across the northeast corner of the terminus. Darkened shop fronts, *à loué*, dented lamp poles, blank brick walls, zigzag scurries of telephone cable, a gray squirrel, a walnut, an elm branch, balconies polka dotting the alley, flapping wash, frayed cords, pulleys like black yo-yos.

It was deserted at this end of the terminus. People crowded into lines at the northeast. A woman with two children stood there. The boy looked a year or two younger than Murphy, the girl a year older. All three had long sad faces, staring off at the platform, at nothing. Like everything, they were frozen.

### *George*

To Murphy's feet, George Deschamps snores. After rest hour, on the way to afternoon programming, on the border of Intermediate Camp, a bunch of older kids yelled "Frog" at George. They yelled at Murphy, too, for speaking French with him. Just a few French kids get into camp each summer, their chance to learn English.

George has what Viola calls a calm, easy-going nature, but she's never seen the hot temper that can flash over something wrong.

### *The Luger*

Of course Nestor kept the gun unloaded. Inside the steep-angled wood grip the magazine was empty. No rounds. "Rounds" meant bullets: the magazine held up to eight, because the pistol was semi-automatic. Behind the bullet chamber, the breechlock mechanism yawned open. It was locked that way, the magazine being empty. To release it, Nestor would have to load rounds or push the safety to 'off'. Nestor always kept the empty pistol on safety, the desk drawer locked.

But Viola would be horrified to think of a gun in the house. Not even toy weapons were permitted, though absolutely everyone else on the street had one: the dirty kids in torn t-shirts south of the railway tracks waving wooden knock-offs, those below Sherwood pointing Woolworth's basement fakes, those on their block snapping small silver cap pistols, and those above Côte St. Antoine brandishing lever-action Winchesters or dead-ringer Tommy Guns.

Nestor kept bullets somewhere in the locked metal cabinet, Murphy wasn't sure where. At least, not until three days ago. They were on the bottom shelf, inside the toe of a mangled black army boot that Nestor called "out of commission." Two old-fashioned looking beige boxes bore black words in German, print faded and swallowed by creases. Nestor stored the key to the desk drawer in the toe of the other boot. He locked the file cabinet, of course, and kept the key in his pocket, on his key-ring.

Why did he keep the Luger if he didn't like it, Murphy was once rude enough to ask. Mr. Luger who designed this model from an older gun called the pistol Parabellum, from an ancient Latin saying: *Si vis Pacem, para Bellum*. Nestor knew Latin well, having grown up in England. Murphy wouldn't take Latin until Grade 8, far in the future. And even then, there were rumours he might be able to take something else instead, like North American Literature. Nestor didn't tell Murphy to go look it up, like Esther said her father always did. *If you want Peace, he translated, prepare for War.*

### *The Story*

The snoring gets suddenly louder, then changes pace. Murphy thinks about his snug pull-out bed in the parlour, the familiar sounds of Viola and the others, even Aunt Hilary talking to her imaginary visitors next door. In his sketchbook, Murphy checked off another day of the 24 that were left as of that morning. Settled into a new rhythm, the snoring clatters against chirping of crickets and distant hollow rubbery gallumps of frogs. *Syncopated*, William would say.

Murphy will have to continue the story in his head. He can make time disappear picturing scenes so vivid they're more real than dreams. Once the story rolls, he fights sleep. He doesn't want the tale to end.

### *It's Rolling*

The tape rolled again. A volley of voices, cracking like William's. Disheveled figures spilled from the dirt-orange doorway of a pool hall, along with girlish plaints

of the Shirelles : "soulja boy o my little soulja boy you were my first love and you'll be my last love ...."

The mother and children turned their sad faces away. Maybe the crowded northeast end of the platform was where he needed to look for the 15 to Marie Reine-de-la-Paix.

He smelled the river. He could see its silver line to the south. He made out Bienfaisance Cathedral, and the angel on its spire, opening her arms wide to comfort sailors from around the world.

*A Mother, a Son, a Daughter*

Under a green shingled roof, peaked, like that of a wishing well, a tablet. *Pour que nous ne perdions le souvenir.* Those who died in the first great war. *Gerald Fournier, Hughes Deschamps, Robert Kempf, Louis St. Sauveur, John Charles Patch, Danny Hershel, Jacques Pictot, Mervyn Longboat...*

"*Viens-ci(t)!*"

Holding her daughter's hand, the mother at the crowded end of the terminus called after her runaway boy.

"Robert!" she cried as if to say "I don't believe you!"

Robert headed for a bright squat figure at the busy north end of the platform. Was that a grown man? Even allowing for distance, he looked hardly much taller than Murphy. The boy recalled a grade-two field trip to Château de Ratoigne, near Artist's Alley in the Old City, which Nestor and he would visit every few weekends. Declared Gaulôre's first historic monument, the long grey-stone building with its

fluted green roof sloping below gabled upper storey windows was built in 1705 and once housed the first governor of Métropole. In 1775, the Continental Army of the Sixteen Colonies seized it for a while, and Benjamin Franklin used it as headquarters to scheme plans for the Revolutionary War. The short man on the platform made Murphy think of the Château, because in the gardens out back you could pass through an arched gate so low it brushed Murphy's hair when he stood on tiptoes. Monsieur the Governor, Benjamin Franklin and those others back then would be considered midgets today. Imagine how teeny Jacques Cartier must have been, sailing up to the the Island of Métropole in 1535.

The short squat man made Murphy think of something else as well: a picture of Humpty-Dumpty, one that kept him awake certain nights four years ago when he was in grade one. The distant figure stood against a gray sky, behind a flimsy looking set-up—what would Helena call it... a kiosk.

Robert scurried to the kiosk with the bus travellers crisscrossing. The squat figure leaned forward from the waist, lowering his moon-shaped face near the boy. Round lenses over the eyes reminded Murphy of headlights. He thought of the bunny racing in front of their rented Rambler on a country road after dark. *Head light, dead light.* Caught between the beams, bouncing from one to the other. Pressing against Murphy, Viola said the bunny was hypnotized.

*Cookies and a Yellow Ring*

The squat man's yellow sleeve rippled. He wore loose orange clothing that reminded Murphy of pictures of China, of pyjamas. Slow, deliberate, pyjama man passed a cellophane packet to Robert. The packet, too, was large, round, and somehow deliberate. Cookies, perhaps. Purple ones. The man pressed a stout-looking hand on Robert's shoulder and spoke into his ear. The man's upturned nose seemed to point for an instant at Murphy.

The mother approached, still clutching her daughter's hand. The girl stood straight in her beige raincoat, the line of her shoulders and neck reminding Murphy of a religious statue. Robert bit a cookie. The mother scowled at pyjama man. She slapped down coins. He nodded, quaintly polite, Helena would say. Murphy found himself heading toward the kiosk, curious. He didn't like the idea of purple cookies.

Gray sky behind the kiosk reminded him of a picture in William's art history text from McDuff Academy where the older boy studied in the conservatory of music. *Chiaroscuro*. Rembrandt's "Night Watch." Faded into gloom. Gray sky muted the green roofs rising to the north. The man raised his hands, a grand gesture like one of the actors in the show Viola took Murphy to see at *Plâce des Spectacles*. The gesture was sad and helpless. "What can *I* do," it said. He hooked a sign over the frame above his head as a cool piece of rain grazed Murphy's cheek. The man's face seemed to shed all features.

*"Fermé,"* read the sign.

Murphy turned and took a few steps when he heard a grunt that reminded him of the pig at Centre Island that time he and Viola had visited Toronto. The boy threw up his hands and caught a purple object headed for his nose. It was an egg, a plastic egg. The man stared in a way that made Murphy examine and then open the egg. The man pointed to a sign on his counter. *Novelty*. He gave an impatient gesture and Murphy removed the contents. A yellow ring on a fine long chain. The ring was shaped like a V.

“Soo-vin-eer,” said the man.

Nestor and Murphy liked to listen to the way different immigrants or children of immigrants in the city pronounced English. Not to laugh at them but to hear the different places sounds could go. Then they played a game, trying to guess the speaker’s first language.

“Luck-key,” said the man.

Murphy had no idea about him. He wished Nestor were here.

“Here, here,” the man said sharply, gesturing with his hands like someone trying to convey a necklace in charades. Murphy decided it would be polite to put the ring around his neck. He tucked it under his shirt.

“You get trouble, you hold.” The man formed a fist holding the imaginary ring. The raised fist reminded Murphy of Sonny Liston gesturing in triumph over Floyd Patterson. That awful fight should never have happened, Helena said. JFK didn’t approve. Jimmy Straw’s dad called Sonny Liston a “jungle beast.” Murphy didn’t think the man at the kiosk came from a jungle, but somewhere hot perhaps.

“Le Quinze?” Murphy said in a small voice. “Marie Reine-de-la-Paix?”

Without turning his face, the man pointed east. He'd lost all expression.

*Gone from the River*

At Quiet Hour and bedtime, Kris liked to tell stories. Sometimes he even read things, after the same introductory remark: "Boys, don't you fergit--the pin is mightier than the sword." Sometimes he had Murphy show one of his drawings from TAHRz'n, as he called it, and then give a further instalment in the long saga of how the young British Lord came to grow up in the African jungle with great apes. The boys thought they'd hate Tarzan as what one called kitsch, but they had to admit, it was pretty good. After sneering at the idea of Murphy's Tarzan illustrations and lord of the jungle digests, they'd even begun to ask for them. But Murphy wasn't recounting Tarzan this Quiet Hour. Kris was reading from Mark Twain.

"The ro-mance and beauty were all gow-en from the ri-vur."

Twain called the Mississippi a book that the pilot had to learn to read. Passengers who could not read this book saw only pretty pictures but to the trained eye, "these were not pic-turs at all, but the grimmest and most dead-earnest of reading mattur." You might be charmed by a faint dimple on the surface, but to the pilot it was "an italicized passage."

"It meant that a wreck or a raw-awck was burried there."

*Maman, Robert, et la Soeur*

Murphy waited behind the mother, Robert, and his sister as the accordion doors of the 15 sighed open. When it came his turn to scale the tall stairs with their thick

fluted rubber mats, the bus driver, Canadien-Français, scowled as if catching him on his way to the cookie can. Murphy thrust out his half-price staff family pass.

“*Vites!*” It was the sort of sharp manner impatient adults use for children.

The boy fled to one of the few remaining vacant seats, halfway down the aisle, behind Robert and his mother. The sister sat behind Robert in an aisle seat, the vacant chair beside her. To let Murphy by, she shifted her long thin legs into the aisle. The boy slipped past trying not to touch. Then she swung around into the seat again and smoothed her beige coat over her knees. She held one of the purple cookies. She broke its cellophane wrapper, dropped her chin and gave the cookie a sniff. Murphy hunched forward over his knees, reluctant to look outside but recoiling from her.

Fluted green copper roof and wrought iron winding staircases flashed by. Graffiti, joul, overturned trash cans, broken and boarded doors, a motionless cat reflected in a window as the bus image glided past it on the pane. Murphy’s head in its red, white, and blue Patriotes toque came up to the girl’s ear. He looked down again at his scuffed worn runners and studied the split seams between faded black canvas and once-white rubber toes. Soon they will be in Marie Reine-de-la-Paix.

The bus has hardly crossed the line when Murphy spots bikers roaring past three abreast. He thinks of Moidra, his sister's friend who lives on their street, Cambridge Avenue, but near the railway tracks, the line where making do collapses into waiting for the end of the month. She goes around sometimes with a biker. According to the school yard, this guy headquarters near a gas station in Marie Reine-de-la-Paix.

Murphy sees ragged gas stations every few blocks along the run-down industrial streets. Odd little family affairs. The attendants don't wear pressed new uniforms like in the TV ads for Shell, Esso, or Texaco. Scary-looking teenagers slouch on street corners, no doubt waiting for things to rob.

A lurch of the east-bound 15 on the south side of Halbiments paralleling the river, slipping between the Port and McDuff Academy a mile to the north, and he's less than a mile from his destination.

### *Snakes in the Grah-ass*

Kris went on to recall the time seven summers ago when he was junior counsellor on a seven-day canoe trip in Radisson Park. The senior counsellor—who was also head of canoe instruction—decided they could forge through a section of rapids on a river running between two lakes. It just went to show you that even well trained experts can miss the subtle signs and feelings Mark Twain says you need to recognize. The counsellor missed the fact that even though the rapids didn't seem violent or rocky, they were seething with buried cross currents, "like snakes in the grah-ass."

### *Out the Window*

The back of the mother's head projects over the seat-top. Robert's foot thumps regularly against the baseboard cover.

"*Arrête!*" snaps the mother.

The dingy window drains and mingles colours of the streets. As if in a sepia film, bikers roar by three abreast, their handlebars like giant grasshopper legs

kicking at passersby. Correcting for the sepia, Murphy pictures loud colorful costumes that remind him of actors in the play they saw that time Viola won tickets for Plâche des Spectacles. Like buccaneers, the riders sport head scarves, fluttering from Nazi helmets. Chrome trim glints everywhere, even from their skull-and-crossbones-emblazoned black leather jackets. They call their Harleys hogs. Perhaps they think of them as English?

### *Nancies*

When he was small adults spoke often about Nazis. Murphy thought they were saying Nancies, and wondered what they were. They sounded like something you whispered about with some sort of agitation and kept at a distance. Maybe that's why certain people seemed so anxious to hear about Nazi equipment and get it if they could.

Murphy had made the mistake of mentioning Nestor's Luger to Jimmy Straw, who pressured for a chance to see it. It's probably a P-08 Parabellum Mauser, Jimmy couldn't get over that Murphy didn't know. He probably doesn't even have one, Jimmy said.

Was the barrel 95 mm or upper end, like 200 mm? Murphy said it was short. Snubbed, said Jimmy. Sheesh. It's about five pounds, eh, Jimmy said. Murphy thought about that. More like two, he said. Hmph, said Jimmy. What calibre ammunition? Huh, said Murphy. The cartridge. The bullet, duh. How big was it? 7.65 x 21, 9 x 19, or the really rare .45 ACP? He must know that.

### *Mon Dieu*

The girl beside Murphy hasn't looked his way, typical with strangers on buses. But she turns to him with the rest of her cookie, perhaps intending to offer. When her rich blue eyes meet his face she exclaims "*Mon Dieu!*"

"*Mathilde!*" snaps the mother's voice from in front. "*Attention a ce que tu dis.*"

Mathilde lowers her voice. "*C'est jusque comme tu a dis. Tu voici. Et ne me reconnais pas.*"

The mother tugs on the cord running up beside the window, and a metallic clunk signals next stop.

### *Iron Sights*

Nestor knows how much Murphy loves to fit the little bar on the nose of the barrel inside the sighting notch on the breechlock at the top back of the pistol. It's called iron sights—getting a bead on a target by tilting and scanning so that the upright bar at the end of the instrument stands precisely inside the V of the viewfinder, with the target perfectly behind. Murphy doesn't think of it as trying to kill or hurt something. He thinks of it as getting a pattern dead right. Nestor knows that, and twice a year or so he volunteers to let his son sight the Luger.

Even though the gun is unloaded—and Nestor always ensures the chamber is empty as well as the magazine—Nestor sets out a big block of wood for the occasion. He leans it on a side table against the metal cabinet which is against a wall with two big studs there. On the other side is the broom closet.

Murphy's sure grateful to his dad, because he knows he just wants to get this over with. Still, he doesn't rush. He trusts Murphy with this secret, even though Viola would be pretty upset if she knew. Sometimes he refers to it as a scar, and that makes sense to Murphy, because his dad seems drawn to the Luger even though it bothers him. Murphy feels the same way about an ugly cut. He wants to pretend it's not there, forget all about it, yet something makes him look at it. Helena said you could feel the same way about heights—you can't stand them because something in you wants to jump off.

### *Malade*

Robert is already on his feet, clutching the seat in front of him. Purple crumbs cling to his lip and chin. The mother dashes them off with a sigh of disapproval.

"Maman," he says. "*Les tumbles. J'ai malade.*"

"Allez," she says, with a tap toward the front door.

Mathilde stands to leave.

"*Je t'attendrais,*" she says. "*A lieu décidé,*" she adds. "*Comme nous avons convenus de faire.*" She lowers the cookie, then looks at Murphy and hands it to him.

"*Merci.*"

Of course she can tell he's English, and not from here. He expects her to exclaim, *Eh, tu parle Français!* Concierge of the building where Moidra lives on Cambridge, south of Sherwood near the railway tracks, says Murphy speaks French *comme un p'tite singe de Paris*. But the girl doesn't say that.

*How to Draw a Thing like That*

Nestor always locks the Luger away after Murphy has sighted it. What Murphy really wants is to draw it, but he needs to study it closely. He tries to take it all in, but with Nestor watching, he doesn't want to be too obvious. If only he had what people call a photographic memory. Is that something you can develop?

Each time with the pistol he tries to memorize a different section, along with a basic sketch of proportions and angles. Whew. Try doing that without someone who knows you well catching on.

Murphy doesn't understand all the reasons he has to draw the Luger, but he's sure about one: he's going to free Nestor from its shadow. He knows roughly what he's going to draw. The Luger, just as it really looks, with the white "Y" painted on the metal seam between the chamber and the barrel. The "Y" denotes an ally capture. He'll include the last two numbers of the serial number, 40. As Nestor points out, these guns were hand crafted. Each one was a little different. Each had to have its own parts to work properly. It's hard to keep calm and let his hand work naturally. He's angry and scared as well as excited.

In his drawing, the Luger hangs in a strip of white bed sheet. The ends of the sheet reach up to a beak. A pelican beats upwards to the top right corner, which is all the human eye can take in. Soon the bird and its cargo will be gone.

*Manges—it's only Polite*

*"Faire du shopping?"*

Murphy nods. "*Chaussurie SheShe.*"

"*Manges,*" says the girl with a smile somehow tinged with frustration.

Murphy resists smelling the cookie in case she's offended. He takes a nibble.

"*Manges- toi.*"

Murphy swallows a bite.

"*Mon père est plus mal.*"

She looks at him as if she half expects he'll understand, as she did with her other remarks. Seeing his puzzlement, she shakes her head. That sad long look again.

"Afterwards, you can come see us. You know where we are."

Her English is musical, finds hidden notes.

Then she is gone.

The cookie has a strange almost minty aftertaste. He drops the rest. His head begins to spin. The falling elevator yanks his stomach again. As the bus rolls along, he feels nauseous and numb-headed all at once. Two teenagers scratch something into the paint of a parked car. Murphy closes his eyes and tries to take a deep breath. Against his ribcage he feels the yellow ring.

### *Dripping Wet Is One Thing*

Those two canoes shot up and over the second they entered the rough water. All the packs with bedding, clothes, and gear got soaked. It took over an hour to haul everyone and everything out of the cold water. Dripping wet they portaged the rest of the way to the next lake. Their intended campsite was at the far end of that long

wet body, 12 miles down. As soon as they left shore, the rain started. It didn't let up till darkness had all but settled in. There they were forging around in the soaking bush for tent poles, rain hammering down. Try starting a fire in the rain, said Kris. He finally did, but "it warn't easy."

A good thing no one hit his head on one of them rocks in the rapids. A good thing no damage was done to the canoes that couldn't be mended with heated spruce gum. Some things are fine to learn by experience, Kris said, but others don't give you a second chance.

### *Chaussurie SheShe*

As the eastbound 15 pulls into its next stop along Halbiments, Murphy feels heavy, weightless, floating. Somewhere outside the dingy bus windows, Chaussurie SheShe shimmers in rose psychedelia. Murphy makes his groggy way down the packed aisle and leaves by the rear doors. He's not going to ask for help. He's going to soldier on as football coach would expect. The thought seems to help.

The dizziness lifts a little. Breathing deep, he looks up and beyond the rose boutique. The city slopes upwards in what Helena would call a panorama past McDuff Academy-- twinkling with more and more lights-- to Mount Bonpelier where the last of the sun drops beneath the mapled crescent, and the dark cross on Pointe Marie, highest spot in the city, suddenly lights up like a street lamp at dusk. His eyes leave the glowing cross, he flinches in the rose light flooding out from the window.

*Psychedelia*. Helena had read him that word from a news magazine. “People swallow this chemical,” she said. “It gives them hallucinations. Everything's in Technicolor, Cinemascope.” Murphy thought she meant Cinerama. Four months ago when she and Sol’s cousin Esther sneaked him into *Blue Hawaii* through the fire exit, they saw previews for *How the West Was Won*. That would be in Cinerama, but only if you went to Cinéma Métropolitain with its brand new big curved screen. *Blue Hawaii*, at dowdy local Crosslands Theatre, was in Panavision. But it didn't really pay to correct Helena.

Taking a deep breath, Murphy slips through the rose light into the store. From behind the counter, a heavy-set woman glowers at him with eyes of coal beneath a heavy brow. Her stare suggests he has no place here, suggests she’s seen his kind if not him before and knows he’s a thief in waiting. He looks down at his feet and cringes at the sight of his grubby worn runners stepping on the surprisingly rich crimson carpet. Although the store appears as run-down as the rest of Marie Reine-de-la-Paix on its outside, inside feels so modern and lavish the place could be in a stylish future. He knows he must not wear his runners or any foot wear for that matter in Helena’s room, the only one in their flat with a rug. He’d always considered it the rug of royalty, and perhaps it still is—but nowhere equal to the plush pile of this scary shop-keeper. As Murphy meekly lifts his runner, he’s sure he sees a stain on the crimson where it trod.

### *Purple Lines*

As Kris told his stories, Murphy couldn't take his eyes off the purple lines on the left side of his cheek just above the chin. They were from bullets exchanged in gunfire four summers ago at a US military training compound outside Saigon, South Vietnam. A surprise attack quietly caused the first two American deaths of what would become known as the Vietnam War. The officers had been in their mess watching a movie, *The Tattered Dress*. It was made in 1957, two years before the attack, a year before *The Vikings*. Murphy watched *The Vikings* last summer on Entertainment Night, balanced, legs dangling from one of the trestle benches in a long row of scrubbed, unmarked, soft, round faces. Thank goodness it had arrived instead of *South Pacific*, which sounded boring with musical numbers, like *The Tattered Dress* would probably be, too, with its courtroom scenes.

### *Birthdays*

Helena and Viola had birthdays two days apart and celebrated them together on the day in between. Murphy got the idea to look here for gifts the night before from Helena's friend, Sol's older cousin, Esther Blobinsky. Her famous artist father owned the house one north of the doctor's home on Cambridge. Until Viola could get them into those spacious two-storeys where they belonged, she endured the occasional need for visitors to their flat with the rickety back balcony and bangy pipes. Murphy, his mother judged, was too young for babysitting four-year-old John

Fitzsimmons. According to her, he still needed babysitting himself after dark. So they called Esther.

Before the older ones went out, she showed off her glamorous new purse. After they left, she asked Murphy what he was going to get Viola and Helena for their birthdays. She was “the only real McCoy in town,” she said. It was “off the beaten track,” but so according to *Five-Star Cuisine* was the best Chinese restaurant in North America, in the heart of Métropole’s shabby Chinatown. “If you want fine heels, visit the down-at-heels.”

Murphy must have shown some sign of unease, because Esther quickly dismissed the schoolyard tales about Marie Reine-de-la-Paix as “stereotyping” and “fear mongering.”

Esther went to Spinoza West High, home to the highest academic scores in the city. “You don’t go to school with the biggest brains on the planet, let’s be honest.”

Esther drew Murphy a few sketches of bags she thought would suit Helena.

“ ‘Ripeness is all.’ A Shakespeare character says that in *King Lear*. So you better believe it.”

If Murphy thought about it, a peach was ripe for only a short time.

Opportunities were like fruit: here one day, then gone the next. Esther made hard things good and clear.

Despite her father's renowned artistic talent, however, she wasn't so handy at art. Her drawings were jumpy and confusing, but Murphy didn't want to say so. She wrote down several brand names, and he took the paper. The important thing

was the address for the store. Then it was into his father's study, up on the stool, and find the coordinates on the big transit map.

### *Gut Shopping*

Once in Chaussurie SheShe, Murphy didn't reach for Esther's paper. Tip-toeing past a flamboyant woman trying on a broad-brimmed hat, he made his way to a rack of bags by the window. Immediately he saw the very one for Helena. Red. Before long he found some size-seven gloves that should please Viola. But then he noticed the rack of bags again, and this time a black one seemed to be it. An overlay panel of smooth black leather stretched down the middle, creating three side-by-side rectangles standing upright within the larger horizontal rectangle. William's art history book spoke of triptych.

Red or black? He remembered a month ago Friday Jimmy Straw's father sending word through the neighborhood of a special job for boys who didn't fear hard work. Three Sunday afternoons it would be. Meet at Straw's Plumbing right beside Gilbert Glace Tavern across from the sacred Colisée Métropole, home of the glorious *Patriotes*, the Flying Frenchmen who just happened to own more championships than any other professional sports franchise including the New York Yankees. Deliver fliers for a new Chinese restaurant to homes in Côte St. James. A thousand fliers, nine hours over three Sundays, \$15 base pay, plus commissions.

Even lazy Marvin Hands, brother of the friend who went to hear Glenn Gould with William--whose piano William sometimes played for musical get-togethers at the Hands flat near NDC Avenue-- signed on. The boy who not only

delivered the most fliers but also sold the most coupons for the opening month discount would get to join Jimmy and his dad as exclusive spectators at a Chicago Black Hawks practice, thanks to Humphrey Straw's thick-as-thieves friendship with the Colisée's custodian. Humphrey would personally introduce the lucky boy—the achiever—to the Golden Jet Bobby Hull.

But on the middle Sunday, Nôtre Dame de Croyance Non-denominational Church was showing *Tarzan and the Lost Safari*. Murphy could not miss a Tarzan movie for anything. Besides, Gordon Scott was much closer to the real Tarzan than Johnny Weismuller. He spoke normal English, for one thing. So Murphy passed up the special job. His eyes lingered on the black bag. With the extra \$15, never mind commissions, he could buy it *and* the red one. Then Helena would really owe him. Or Viola would tell him to save it for Christmas. But thinking was largely day dream.

#### *Always just out of Reach*

At the counter, the shopkeeper—an even broader figure up close —looked past Murphy and exercised her whiskey tenor in service of the flamboyant woman behind him. He returned to the items by the window.

A passing bus outside mirrored the luminescent storefront. When Helena had discussed psychedelia, the only way Murphy could think to explain it was neon light. Neon light made him see fireworks forever bursting into being: solid, deep, beckoning, yet retreating, like the perfect still surface always just up ahead of the crosshatching thrown by the bow of a canoe.

### *Stars*

The last sunlight had long faded and stars twinkled brightly over Little Lake Kisisokôe. Murphy was on the first night of his first canoe trip. Tomorrow they would cross the lake, leave their canoes at the launch below the dirt road, then walk the three miles to Lac des Isles. There they would find new canoes and paddle the long lake all the way to Blueberry Island for their second night before returning to camp the next day, reborn.

Murphy slipped out of the tent into the heavy darkness. Shading his flashlight so the counsellors under the canoes wouldn't see, he stole noiselessly behind the tent. In the absolute black he made out a tiny red ember the size of a dime. He stole over to the fire pit. He sat on his haunches and gazed up at the canopy of incredible dazzling blue light.

Helena's friend Esther Blobinsky, Sol's brainy cousin, said by the time star light reaches us, the actual star is long gone. What if Counsellor Marks and all of Camp Kisisokôe were really long gone. What if they were really dead and just didn't know it. The same could be true of William or the Oxford Street gang, or all the teachers, at Harry Floggins, the minister at NDC Non-denominational Church... They were just here because we kept seeing them.

### *You Again, Me Again*

He held the red bag and gloves under his arm the way boys carry school books. The flamboyant woman had flounced out, leaving only an elderly lady customer who

seemed intent simply on eye shopping.

“You again,” said the shopkeeper. “*Toujours la même chose.*”

What did she mean, thought Murphy. He hadn't been here before. Then he decided she must have a sense of humour like his father's. She was teasing him for having shied away the first time he tried to get her to help him. The way she'd looked past him, he'd thought she hadn't seen him. As Viola often said, adults don't see children. He placed his items on the counter.

“*Fermé.* Closing time. Come back next week.”

“*L'anniversaire de my mère et ma soeure. Demain. 'Sera trop tard.*”

The shopkeeper looked at him like a police investigator.

“*C'est fermé.* The cash register.”

Murphy placed a ten and twenty on the counter. The shopkeeper hesitated. Then she muttered “*b'ainh*” and scribbled, first on a note pad then on a sales slip. She shoved him the undercopy.

“D'ere's tax. Turty turty-eight.”

Murphy placed two quarters on the counter, the last of his savings from the paper route Viola had insisted he was too young to work. The woman reached under the counter for a metal box, dropped it on the counter with a clank, and eyed Murphy, no doubt warning him from thoughts of theft, certainly as Helena would say, with a look long suffering. She counted out twelve cents change and pushed it across.

“Do you have a bag?”

“Ehn!”

Sighing through her teeth she removed the box, limped to a cupboard for a double handled brown bag, and rattled it his way.

*“Merci,”* said Murphy, squeaking the once-white toe of his torn runner against the base of the counter.

Stuffing his purchases inside the deep, thick paper, he pictures how surprised and impressed the others will be at the extraordinary gifts he’s brought back—alone, with his very own money-- from Marie Reine-de-la-Paix. He imagines adding the last part "non-chalantly," as Helena would say. He exits as a middle-aged couple enter.

*“Bonjour,”* chirps the shopkeeper.

## Section 2 What Would Tarzan Do?

### **This Section's Camp Vignettes**

Murphy's first full week of camp brought his first canoe trip. Despite his homesickness, he had anticipated it with excitement. The experience, however, was quite different from what he had imagined.

Counsellor Marks gave all five boys a number. Murphy was Number 5, and that's what the counsellor called him. The counsellor rode Number 5 for his soft paddling and charred pancakes. The others wouldn't talk with him because he went to Harry Floggins Elementary. The campsite was all rocks, roots, and mosquitoes. Counsellor Marks had no idea where to pitch a tent. Boys slept with their heads down hill. Murphy hoped their heads would overflow and burst. The tent leaked badly. Even so, Counsellor Marks and his junior bulled into it because under their canoes was even worse. Counsellor Marks used Number 5's head for a pillow.

Trying to numb his misery, Number 5 remembered Esther bringing her TV along for an evening of babysitting. They watched *The Andy Griffith Show*. Opie killed a mother bird by accident and Andy lit into him at bedtime. Even though Opie's own mother had died, in the morning he was light spirited as he set about arrangements to foster the orphaned chicks. Murphy said there was something wrong in the story, and Esther said he knew how it felt to be a little boy.

### **Summary of Murphy's Further Adventure in Marie Reine-de-la-Paix**

It's nearly dusk when Murphy leaves the store with his gifts. He's still dizzy and numb, but also feeling bold. He sees a Number 8 bus approaching from the river, heading toward the setting sun. Tarzan would know that means heading west. Tarzan wouldn't go home the same old way. He'd explore the route of this west-bound bus for further information. Murphy boards the Number 8. But before long, as the streets become more menacing, he realizes they are pushing into the core of Ste. Marie Reine-de-la-Paix, the worst part, which everyone says is in the north.

Some threatening boys get on and Murphy decides to exit in a few more stops. Recalling sequences on his father's transit map, he anticipates the next stop should be La Vérendrye. He recalls Nestor tracing that long avenue on the Transit Authority map and specifically saying it ran east to west. Regardless of the mischievous sun, the street sequences say Murphy should take a bus heading to his left along La Vérendrye.

The older boys get off when Murphy does. They follow behind him. He realizes he miscalculated and will have to go another long block to his stop. He relaxes for a few moments, however, when the boys disappear into an alley. He has a strange feeling of having been here before, though he knows he hasn't. Turning to see if he's being followed again, he admires Bienfaisance Cathedral overseeing the harbour below, upon its roof the gentle whimsical angel holding out her arms for a hug.

Trying to think calming thoughts, he remembers the day last summer when the whole family picnicked at the Harbour as the city celebrated opening the harbour to year-round shipping. Then, leaving John Fitzsimmons with Helena, Viola, and Aunt Hilary, Nestor and Murphy took a stroll along Pine Narrows Canal, just those two.

*Excerpt—Note in a Bottle*

They passed what the school readers called “desultory” boys lounged along the banks, draping their fishing lines into the still silver surface. Nestor fished an old squat grapefruit juice bottle out of some long grass. Did Murphy sense a bottle top nearby? Murphy found the old rusty screw-on lid. Nestor took out his neat notebook with its tidy writing and winked. He sat on a low stone wall, Murphy beside him, bouncing the heels of his old runner against a plump stone. Nestor pulled out a sheet.

“Now what should we say?”

He doesn’t know why, but Murphy repeats something he’s heard Nestor say: “Even though I don’t see you, I know you’re there.”

*We meet at last*, writes Nestor. *Salut.*

He hands Murphy his ball point and Murphy signs his name. Nestor adds their address and phone number. Then he and Murphy go back to the harbour. On the edge of the water, Nestor reaches back and whips his hand around. The somersaulting bottle flashes in a high arc, like a leaping salmon. Murphy wonders if that’s the action Nestor used

to toss grenades, and if he ever tossed one in battle. But he doesn't want to ask.

The bottle plunks into the St. Léonard. For a proper note-in-a-bottle story, it should reach someone in Europe. The UK, perhaps. Or Ireland, where one of Viola's grandparents came from. But that will mean travelling almost 500 miles upstream, just to set out into the vast Atlantic.

Across the street on the second-storey veranadah of a run-down building Murphy thinks he sees the girl from the bus, and his feeling of *déjà vu* returns. A moment later, spilling from the mouth of another alley, the boys are on him. Murphy is left stunned and bleeding and shorn of his gifts. A dapper French man in a green Valiant pulls over and helps Murphy into the passenger seat. It annoys Murphy that he immediately knows the boy is English. Murphy then hears someone approach and words of strangely accented English in a most unusual voice. As the Valiant pulls out into La Vérendrye, Murphy looks out the back window and sees an old man limping toward the river tapping his cane.

The dapper man takes Murphy to Hôpital Barthelemy, gives him some change to call his parents, and apologizes for having to leave—it's his wife's birthday. He hands Murphy the paper bag from Chaussurie SheShe, but says not to look inside until he gets home, and do so alone. The old man has returned his things, says the man.

A few minutes after he's left, Murphy goes out to Sherwood Street and gets on the Number 14 to NDC. Murphy still feels strange but not sick. In a store window his face double-poses with that of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy gazing out divinely as Helena would say from the same poster she has up in her room. Murphy recalls Helena and Esther arguing over whether the president and his country are really good or bad, and he recalls a recent dream. Murphy was on a plane (he'd never actually been on one) beside President Kennedy. The president wore a peaked military cap and looked grim. Murphy asked what kind of plane they were on and the president said "M-A-D." He told Murphy he didn't have an infection, he had terrible news."

At McDuff Academy droves of young men and women push aboard, apparently fresh from some sort of special event. Murphy recalls William having said something about a political rally that would inconvenience his practising. Two young men stand out for Murphy with their American accents and air of knowing some important secret. The Elfin one with tousled hair and a guitar reminds Murphy of Peter Pan. He attracts autograph seekers. "Denny Blake!" a female exclaims. Murphy remembers Helena and William both agreeing on the dubious nature of Denny Blake. William said he was going through a phase called "being of the people," but that true art required more than going through public phases.

Blake's companion wears a beret and pointy beard and a Gauloise cigarette pack pokes out of his safari jacket. He stares at Murphy for a moment challengingly, with hard brown eyes.

Murphy remembers his bag. He can't see why he shouldn't look inside it to make sure of his gifts. He's so amazed by what he finds that he removes the contents for a closer look. The man with hard eyes cries, "Unreal! Denny, those shoes." He snatches one and holds it high. It's perfect for an album cover, he says. He tells Murphy the shoes are "definitely not you" and tells Denny that they are a perfect 8 ½ .

Addressing his companion as Hooter, Denny tells him to relax. But Hooter thrusts \$5 at Murphy. It looks to the boy like monopoly money. "It's American," says Hooter. "You'll get the rest later." But Denny makes Hooter return the shoe.

As the bus rolls along, he asks Murphy if he has an older sister and what sort of music she likes. Murphy says Sinatra and imagines Denny watching her rest her face on her hands in some sort of blissful ecstasy while "Old Blue Eyes" sings "High Hopes."

As the bus approaches his stop, Murphy notices schoolmate Tommy McGoo pressed up against Hooter. Hooter tells Murphy he'll regret shunning them. He says Denny is going to be huge. Hooter's eyes pop wide and he whips out a puffer. He gasps on it as if his life is in the balance. As he sucks on the puffer, he reminds Murphy of a fish.

### Section 3 Hot Shoes

#### **Summary: This section's 1963 Camp Vignettes**

- Recalling the night of his recent first canoe trip with Counsellor Marks using his stomach for a pillow, Murphy remembers how he tried to blot out the mosquitoes and tree roots by thinking about past conversations. Esther had observed that you don't see any black people on *The Andy Griffith Show*. Remarking on the show, her father Malachi, the world famous artist, had said, "So, the South has no Jews?"
  
- Dramatic Counsellor and his tent patrol partner investigate Tent 24 after lights out. Dramatic Counsellor has recently confiscated a *Jet Dream* comic book from George. Murphy fears the counsellors will discover George's cigarettes and the *Playboy* magazines he uses for trade bait.
  
- George and Murphy are at camp thanks to funding from their landlord, Patriotes owner Warren Saville. Having George in his tent means Murphy isn't the only "interloper" in the rich boys' camp. No one knows Mr. Saville covers their costs.
  
- This is George's first year at camp, so he'll be initiated at weekly Council Ring.
  
- After investigating Tent 24, the tent patrol counsellors stand some distance away under Grandfather Birch. Murphy hears Dramatic Counsellor imitating

CabeMcCaffery, the craft shop master and lay preacher at Sunday Outdoor Chapel in Intermediate Bay. In a nasal drone, Cabe mutters, “Son, this knife couldn’t cut the cock off a jelly fish.”

○ Murphy returned from his short virgin canoe trip to find the initials MB carved in Grandfather Birch. Rumour spread that Murphy will be in serious trouble. A few days later Junior Camp Director visits Section 4 during quiet hour and tells everyone to gather around the incinerator. He refers to a defaced birch tree and to information from a senior camper who saw certain boys behaving suspiciously near it. None of them had the initials that were later found carved in the tree. Junior Camp Director issues a stern warning that this sort of thing is no prank. He happens to have a rolled-up *Newsweek* magazine, which reminds Murphy of the monk in Viet Nam who had set himself on fire. Murphy decides to ask Kris why the monk did that.

## **1962: Excerpts and Summaries**

### *Excerpt-- NDC Park*

Heat rippled through the paper bag as he angled up the hillside. Leaving the cement walkway, he slipped under elms and oaks, spreading arms crisscrossed into one great cathedral.

He chose a bench with plenty of vista. Further up, fifty yards to the north-- as Métropole called the west-- the black roof of the red brick clubhouse (boys and girls dressing rooms, office, and storage) stood on the horizon. Three kids loitered

under the grilled side window, passing cigarettes and spitting. Right of the building, the boards of the hockey rink circled against distant oaks. Everything felt brown and undressed like it does in November when snow's overdue. Above the distant treetops, silhouetted against dark twilight sky, the green dome of St. Augustine overlooked the city. It gazed down over the park and past Sherwood Avenue and Marie Reine-de-la-Paix at Fleuve St. Léonard.

Every Sunday Angéline Lecoup and her brothers, René and Benoît, went to St. Augustine's Cathedral for things like mass, confession, and catechism, and every evening at eight its solemn bells sent out the same slow mournful oddly comforting refrain.

A couple of toughs slouched through an opening in the tall hedge that faced St. Augustine. Murphy recognized them as members of the lower Oxford Street gang. They seemed intent on hanging on the bleachers by the ball diamond where the tall one opened a flask. Murphy had given himself lots of space and time to hide what he was doing. If anyone approached, he could make it back to Sherwood Street before them.

The boy reached into the toasty bag and removed both shoes. Side by side in the correct arrangement, just in front of his toes, they stared up at him—mysterious as dreams. He stared back deep in thought. Was he still dizzy and lightheaded? Were other things making sense? He didn't feel sure.

He picked up the right shoe.

Yes, it felt warm, smelled vaguely electric, like the tracks of Benoît Lecoup's train, and shimmered pink. This radiance washed the slate-black squares along the

sides and tops of the shoe the way dawn filled the horizontal slot of window high above his curtained Murphy bed. Each square was the size of a packet of matches. Centred in each square stood a small white diamond shape, now pink with glowing light. The squares didn't seem add-ons, more like windows glassed over with dull black panes of some sort-- not exactly glass or plastic, but some hard material.

And if he'd been asked to describe the texture, the feel, of the other materials, he would have struggled to do so. Maybe he could have drawn the shoe, even conveyed its aura—but it was so much more than the eye could capture. The closest comparison he could find for the feel of materials was vinyl and feathers. On the back of the heel was a strip of some sort, perhaps a label.

Numbers appeared along the instep, beneath a narrow screen: *01092172*. Tiny dots appeared in the screen above and below the 01 and 09 as well as each of the last four digits in the string. Numbers in another small screen on the heel said *1200*. Small dots appeared above and below each of these four digits.

Murphy picked up the left shoe to find the same numbers at the heel and instep. On the back of the heel he found the same strip that he took for a label. Esther and Helena would want to know if it gave the name of some exclusive company—in flowery “elegance,” making it hard to read. Murphy saw no such name. Mind you, Viola would insist that labels don't matter “as long as the darn thing works.”

Stroking the shoe, Murphy's fingers felt the blank label slide right. A bolt of fear shot through him. He must have hurt something! But then it was his fingers that hurt, as if the skin were being seared off. In a moment he recognized that hurt— the

shoe was burning his hands! It fell with a sharp slap, flat on its silver sole. Certainly his fingers would be red. But when the boy examined them, he found no trace of a mark.

When he looked back at the shoe it was strikingly different from the right one beside it. Now it glowed the light green of Peter Pan's costume. But even as that thought crossed the boy's mind, the colour deepened and darkened to the shade of oak leaves bunched and shadowed together, and before long the shade changed once again to deepest blue. Then the boy started as if a mouse had leapt at him out of nowhere.

Along the sides of the glowing shoe, a line of small flaps under the black squares swung outwards and backwards until their front edge pointed on an angle of two o'clock on the right side and ten o'clock on the left. Leaning forward, Murphy saw openings under the small flaps. He thought of suction cups under the wings of the latest jet plane.

The boy wet his fingers, like Viola before testing her iron, and reached down, understanding how those bomb defusers in the cop shows must feel. He jabbed the side of the glowing left shoe just above the sole. No pain. He touched it for two seconds, then five, then gingerly lifted the shoe again. It vibrated like that greyhound dog he'd once patted when a fair came to the race track.

Like Hooter said, the shoe was too large for him. Murphy could tell that simply by looking. It took him another three or four minutes, but at last he kicked off his worn-out left runner and slipped his foot into the pit of the new shoe. His sole had no sooner pressed down on the inside sole than another bolt of fear ran through

him, this one worse than the former. He felt as if a boa constrictor had attacked his ankle.

Murphy shut his eyes. He felt on the verge of tears for the second time that day. But then he realized that although the shoe had closed in on his foot like the walls in the Edgar Allen Poe short story, unlike those walls it had stopped once the pressure all round was snug. The new shoe fit his foot, in fact, like M. Lecoup's tailor-made suits.

*Put me on*, the right shoe said. *Turn me on*. Murphy heard these words whispered, as real as his own voice.

What would it be like to run in these hot shoes?

*Excerpt-- Blobinsky Cigars (or No Papers)*

Ten minutes later, Murphy stood outside Blobinsky Cigars on Sherwood at the corner of Cambridge, half a block down from his flat. Sol's father Abraham sat at the counter, chin on his hand, puffing on an oval brown cigar as he pondered a row of cards.

"Practice," he said as Murphy entered, turning his face from the clouds of pungent smoke. "If you want to succeed with anything in life, practice."

Abraham turned the page of a book called *Poker for Profit*.

"The next *Tarzan* won't be in till next Friday," said the shopkeeper. "But good news—Gold Key has taken over. Twelve cents an issue now—you save three cents."

Murphy wanted to say that not so long ago the cost was ten cents till Dell got greedy and went to fifteen. But instead he took the right shoe from his bag and placed it on the counter.

“Mr. Blobinsky, what do you think this might be worth?”

“Whew—that’s quite the item. Where’d you get something like that?”

“Chaussurie SheShe in Marie Reine-de-la-Paix. I think.”

Mr. Blobinsky made a heavy face as if he found it unusual—perhaps even improper—for Murphy to have been in Marie Reine-de-la-Paix, but he let that go.

“You *think*?” he said.

“The things I bought were stolen...”

“This isn’t *hot*?”

Murphy didn’t know what to say.

“I don’t permit illicit goods on the premises.”

“I didn’t say *it* was stolen. It was like an exchange.”

Mr. Blobinsky’s cigar went out. He examined the tip as if some trick might have been played, then dropped the butt into a piled-up ashtray.

“You need to get paperwork with consumer items,” Mr. Blobinsky said in his gravelly voice. “You need the official poop, excuse the expression, on where the thing was made, who made it, when, why, and how.”

They both stared at the shoes.

“I’ll tell you-- looking at it, I’m impressed. Very impressed. I’ve got a nose for quality like no one’s. You’re looking at a high-end sporting accessory, no doubt high-end dollars. You bring this to the right dealer, you never know.”

He handed the shoe back to Murphy, which the boy took as a sign to return it to the bag with its mate.

“You wanna see Sol? He’s in the back. Help him get *VG* on his essay, and the next *Tarzan* is compliments of the house.”

*Summary-- Sol*

Murphy visits with Sol in the back of Blobinsky Cigars. Sol wants “help” with his history essay. Murphy offers work tips but no “purple prose,” so they switch subjects. Sol notes something bothering Murphy: the smaller boy appears groggy and has a bruise on his cheek. Murphy explains and says that he wants to replace the stolen gifts. Sol reminds Murphy that tomorrow is Sunday; only *dépanneurs* will be open. Has Murphy worn the shoes, Sol wants to know. Murphy says no.

*Scene Completion-- Excerpt:*

Whatever Sol believed behind his skeptical expression, Murphy spoke the truth. After ten minutes of simply staring at his foot in the shoe, the boy had reached down under the humming sole and pushed the label back. The shoe released a sound like water rushing from a tub and roots groaning underground. The deep blue aura fluttered through green to pink. The portals sighed back to their regular settings along the sides. Murphy realized that he could have no rest until he restored the lost gifts. His only possible means of purchase was the shoes—in what Viola would call “mint condition.”

*Summary-- Late to Dinner*

Murphy leaves Sol and heads home for dinner. He hurries up the inside front stairs of their four-plex, troubled by the “ghost-like welcome” he always gets from the stairwell. Sometimes he half sees a shadowy figure falling and once he “imagined” blood on the linoleum. Viola says he reads too many violent stories.

*Summary-- Tabletalk*

Murphy finds it hard to sit still through dinner, lost as he is in worry and frustration. When pressed on what he was up to, he mentions meeting Denny Blake on the bus. Helena implies that he is making things up and William voices his contempt for Denny Blake whom the older son considers nothing but “tuneless cawing, amateur strumming, and pretentious thefts from real poets.” Gunther Lang, William’s schoolmate who dinnets with them once or twice a week, suggest that one shouldn’t be too hasty against Blake. There’s something of the poor man’s Rilke about him.

Talk turns to President Kennedy who has interrupted his election campaigning because of a reported infection. Murphy mentions his recent dream in which the president said in truth he was returning to deal with “MAD.” William says this means Mutual Assured Destruction, Helena twirls her finger at her temple to indicate Murphy is nuts, but Nestor signals her to be more discreet—alluding to Aunt Hilary who continues to eat watercress. Nestor defends Murphy gently, noting he got a little banged up at hockey (when Murphy knows his dad knows that isn’t so) and saying “dreams are okay.”

*Scene Excerpt:*

At least someone tried to point this out on Murphy's behalf.

When William told about his feet being stuck inside Grandfather Carter's old brogues—which were almost too heavy to lift-- with the Toe Mice chasing him (William, that is) , everyone had acted as if this was the most meaningful event of the day. Grandfather Carter was actually *Viola's* grandfather, maternal, and *their* great-grandfather, who had come north to the Eastern Townships from New England to found the only snath<sup>2</sup> factory in the British Commonwealth. If only new plastic handles hadn't come in and the company not gone bankrupt, Viola and Helena wouldn't have to be working their fingers to the bone, as Viola described it.

Talk continues about who is or should or should not be coming to tomorrow's birthday celebration for Viola and Helena. Helena's friend Moidra from below the tracks will be bringing her boyfriend Rocky, a biker—so Helena says not to put out the inherited silver. Helena teases that they should invite Mr. Saville, knowing how much Viola resents Mr. Saville for installing the mock stain-glass parlor window celebrating Patriotes star Freddy Framboise while ignoring their unsafe back gallery as well as the boarded-over broken basement windows along the side of the building.

William hopes they can be spared “the politely bigoted and eminently vulgar Straws, father and son,” but Helena insists they are among the invitees. However,

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<sup>2</sup> Snaths were wooden handles for scythes.

she's planning to seat Murphy next to Angéline Lecoup, in accord with the future she has mapped out for them.

Murphy reflects on how he can't even recall when he met Jimmy Straw; it's as though they have been inseparable for ever, David and Jonathan, Mantle and Marris, Lovejoy and Colt, Framboise et Piquet (except Jimmy wouldn't go along with French heroes). Sounding bored, Willam says Murphy will "outgrow" Jimmy soon enough. At mention of the usually anti-social Malachi Blobinsky having given his grudging acceptance to attend, Viola says perhaps he will look at Murphy's work.

Murphy continues to chaff and fret. Why did the sun have to trick him? Why didn't he sell the shoes to Hooter? Whom does he know with enough loose cash to buy the shoes early tomorrow, and where can he find replacement gifts of the same sort on Sunday? Should he give in and "help" Sol with his essay? Despite his angst, Murphy finds the endless adult droning about the party and where to place people is putting him to sleep. Then, as if from nowhere, Nestor says, "Let's go take a look at that bruise."

*Excerpt (Complete Scene)-- A Bedtime Story*

Nestor held the ice compress to Murphy's cheek. Its comfort swept through him. He sure felt grateful to his dad. He didn't mind Nestor's silly humour this evening, calling the boy's daybed his "Murphy bed," with a wink. Nestor sat on the side of the bed, holding the ice in place while looking up at the faux stained glass picture in the high horizontal window in the parlor's front, north-facing wall, considered east in La Métropole.

Now was perfect to tell Nestor what Murphy happened to discover the other day, thanks to Jimmy Straw. The file cabinet in Nestor's office was unlocked, the one that was supposed to be locked because of bullets being in there, and the key to Nestor's desk drawer. But that would be as good as telling Nestor the rest of what happened. Murphy's head aches. No, this isn't the perfect time. There'd be one soon.

"That sure was swell of Mr. Saville, wasn't it?" said Nestor.

Mr. Saville, their landlord, just happened to own the most valuable team in the NHL, "les Patriotes" glorieux. Last April they had won their 16th Stanley Cup, and fifth in a row. Four-and-a-half years ago, after they won their first of five straight in April 1958, Mr. Saville's work crew installed this picture as stained-glass setting in the parlour window of all his tenants throughout the city. It showed Freddy Framboise streaking toward goal, skate blades flashing.

"It's swell," Murphy said. He didn't want to say that sometimes, after the curtains around his bed were pulled and the parlor light turned off, streetlight threw Freddy's shadow onto the curtains above his feet. The figure appeared hooded and scary, and sometimes the boy felt someone within that phantasm watching him.

"Dad?"

"Yes son?"

"How come the sun sets in the north?"

After a pause, Nestor broke into a chuckle.

"You must be thinking of my Transit maps."

Murphy nodded.

“Those maps are made up by the city, and the city likes to... respect the original ideas of Maurice Bonpelier.”

Murphy thought hard, but didn't understand.

“Private maps of the city may be oriented a little more the way the directions really are.”

“The directions are wrong?”

“M. Bonpelier came over here in 1642 with his brave wife, Marie. You know that picture of your mom in her Bluebird uniform?”

Murphy loved that photo, hanging in Nestor's office. His mother looked so young and yet somehow old, as well, and her blue Canadian Army Medical Corps uniform—showing as deep gray in the black-and-white photo-- set the flowing white veil over her head into remarkable contrast. People often observed how that veil resembled angels' wings. Many soldiers whose lives those nurses saved thought of them as angels. Many told stories of the nurses caring for the wounded while shells exploded around them. Murphy once asked Viola to tell him about shells exploding around her, but she said there hadn't been any and he should tuck in his shirt tail. But the Bluebirds were the first Canadian women granted the vote—in acknowledgement of their depth of dedication-- and his mother was certainly proud of that.

Nestor went on to say that Marie Bonpelier was made of the same stuff as the Bluebirds who came after her. Like many of the Bluebirds she believed deeply in God and wanted to do His work. She even had visions directly from the Creator.

“Is that really true?”

“Someone that brave,” said Nestor, “and good to others, I guess we can take her at her word. This vision came to her when she was still back in France. She saw the opening of a cave high in remote rocky land in the New World. Really hard to get to. The mouth of this thing was nothing out of the ordinary, nothing at all. But inside—simply magnificent. The walls and ceilings shone with minerals, and there were magical paintings on the walls, and a scroll with words in some language Mme. Bonpelier couldn’t read. But then she heard a voice, and it told her this cave was due north of an island village on the Great River in what would be New Gaul. The voice told her God wanted a city of peace, art, and vision to the south of that cave. It was one of these destiny things, you understand.”

The problem, Nestor went on to explain, was that the backers of Bonpelier’s expedition wanted a return on their dollar, and it sure seemed to them that this island they’d discovered would make a lot of them rich: a doorway to all the wealth of the new continent and a centre of trade. Marie’s vision allowed that the new City of God would sustain its good works with bustling commerce—but the place would be known by the cave to its north, a conduit of art and healing.

Nestor went to Murphy’s study desk for a piece of paper. On it he drew the dove or boomerang, with nose pointing toward the bottom right of the page. The right wing of the dove reached almost straight upwards, with a tilt to the right. The left wing extended across the lower part of the page toward the left. The shape of the outlined island suggested a backwards capital “L.”

“Now looking at this geography as it really is, where would you guess Marie’s mystical cave might be?”

Murphy decided that the uppermost west side of the upper wing would come closest to due north. That's where he pointed.

"So I would have guessed," said Nestor. "In fact, when I moved here with your mother after the war, a few of my old platoon mates came for a visit one time. They'd heard the story of the cave, and we all decided it must be around where you say. The Milles Lacs District. We spent a good three days scanning the area—hiking, exploring, really going at it. But no cave openings anywhere. Above the north shore of Lac Haut *was* a tall cliff right where you pointed. Some of us wanted to try scaling it, but we never did. They say the local Indians had used medicine so that anyone trying to go up that cliff would fall to his death. We figured God wouldn't have given Marie a vision of finding a cave somewhere that people couldn't get to."

Nestor asked Murphy to guess where Maurice Bonpelier found the cave that people accepted as the one Marie had foretold. Murphy thought hard. He finally pointed to the far end of the left wing.

"*Exactement*," Nestor said, and he turned the page a quarter turn by rotating the bottom left-hand corner until it was the top left-hand corner. Now the reverse capital "L" was switched into a capital "L" facing the usual direction. The point Murphy had marked at the far west now stood at the top.

"So M. Bonpelier drew his map with his cave at the top, as north?"

"*Exactement encore*."

By doing so, Sherwood Street, destined to become the town's main drag, ran west to east rather than south to north. Murphy fell silent.

"What?"

Murphy had always been told that La Métropole was a *chosen* city. Appointed. Not by man. Marie Bonpelier's vision led people to it, as God wanted, to honour spirit with art and caring. This news suggested that maybe La Métropole wasn't specially chosen at all. Maurice Bonpelier had just declared it the appointed place to satisfy his backers. And to make fools of a lot of people over a lot of years. Murphy didn't bother adding the ultimate offence that playing loose with the actual directions had tricked him into getting mugged.

Nestor seemed amused and sad.

"You know," he said, "Indian nations all over North American have stories taking place somewhere the people of the story know as the centre of the world. Sometimes those from one community will say to those of another, wait a minute, *we* have a story that takes place where *we* live—and *it's* the centre of the world."

Murphy fidgeted his feet, imagining them in his hot shoes again. His father's explanation didn't seem to help.

"M. Bonpelier was probably just trying to do his best," said Nestor. "Like most of us. And look what an idea can come to—now we have Métropole, and we all say that downtown lies east of Sherwood and Graveswater, when really it lies north"

But what about the cave that Bonpelier found. Did it resemble the one of his wife's vision?

"Like a lot of things," Nestor said. "Yes and no. At least, there *was* a Native village here."

No so remarkable back then, Murphy observed.

Nestor shrugged and paused to roll a cigarette, which he would smoke with his shoulders out the back door, not his feet, since Viola didn't trust the balcony. He had to blow the smoke outside, because William was allergic.

"People who knew Madame well," Nestor continued, "didn't seem to think she was ever convinced her husband had found the intended cave. But she seemed to believe the place would become a new community of God anyway. One close friend speculated that she thought the cave was just "playing hard to get." Nestor chuckled at his words. Then he mentioned another occasion when Marie had remarked that a dove flying due north over the city could look down and see the letter "L."

"And we know what that stands for."

Murphy mouthed the word.

Nestor winked.

Murphy squeezed his father's hand. Maybe he *could* tell about the file cabinet being unlocked. Get it over with.

"Ready for sleep?"

The boy nodded.

Nestor rose and began to shut the curtains. Viola had bought them and the ceiling tracks on employee's discount from the hospital supplies store. Nestor found a co-worker—a crony from Gilbert Glace Tavern-- to help him with installation, Murphy being too short and William almost too short but anyway out of the question.

"Dad?" said the boy. "Do you think Aunt Hilary will start talking again tonight?"

It was spooky hearing her voice ring out of the dark silence, talking away to someone even though she was all alone in the room next door to Murphy. For a moment Nestor looked directly into Murphy's eyes and seemed about to ask something. Then he looked away.

"Sometimes she forgets to take her pills," Nestor said. "I'll try getting them down her tonight." The light died, his father's footsteps left the parlour, and within a moment, Murphy fell fast asleep.

*Summary—Dreams*

Murphy dreams he's in the airplane again beside President Kennedy. The president has received a letter in an envelope featuring strange script and the crude drawing of a bird with a small branch in its beak. The president reads the letter with an expression of wonder; He tells Murphy maybe it could help, to come see him.

Murphy is awakened by Aunt Hilary's voice from the bedroom next door.

*Scene Excerpt:*

"Welcome... welcome. Such pleasure seeing each and every one of you. We have a full agenda, so without further ado, the following selection. From his eminence, Major General James Peter Wolfe, referencing none other than Royal Chaplain Edward Young, 'Night Thoughts on Life, Death, and Immortality' ."

Groggy from the shattered dream, Murphy began counting to five. If he made five, there would likely be silence. He made it to four and a half:

*"Gentlemen, I would rather have written that poem than take New Gaul tomorrow."*

Murphy sighed, dropped his head on the pillow, and stared at the ceiling.

The voice rose. "Let us consider the poignancy here, fellow members. This from the simple soldier *who, at the Expence of his Life, purchas'd immortal Honour for his Country.*"

Murphy decided to try an idea.

*"Who planted, with his own Hand, the British Laurel, in the inhospitable Wilds of North America...."*

The idea had occurred to him last week in a particularly boring science class.

"Let us bow our heads for General Wolfe," said Murphy, as if calling to someone two blocks away. "A three minute-silence. One for each bullet."

Silence followed. Murphy knew it to be uneasy silence. Bed springs creaked next door. He pictured Aunt Hilary as he'd seen her one night by accident. She'd begun talking to someone about different types of flowers when he got up to go to the bathroom. Passing her door, he noticed light spilling across the hall. She'd not pushed her door shut, and

he looked in. He shouldn't have looked in, of course, but it was what Viola would call a "reflex." Before he could look away, he kicked John Fitzgerald's slinky toy. It made a sudden strange clattery tinkling echo. Aunt Hilary was sitting on the edge of her bed looking across at her arm chair. She didn't look around at the sound, but seemed suddenly troubled. As if the person in the chair was gone and she had no idea what was happening.

Back in his bed, Murphy worries that Aunt Hilary, in her "notions," as everyone calls them, might wander into the parlor and take his hot shoes. He removes them from his wardrobe and stows them under his daybed.

Murphy dreams next about meeting two women on a strange ship moored in Métropole Harbour. Half of Marie Reine-de-la-Paix appears to be under water. The Angel who stands on top of Bienfaisance Cathedral welcoming ships with her open arms is almost completely submerged. Just the tip of her head protrudes, and her right wrist holding up a small garden spade. The auburn-haired woman with a beauty mark on her left cheek tells him everyone is returning to their ancestral countries, except the Natives. Then the dark-haired woman says *Murphy* looks a little Native. She lifts a big black-and-white cat with astonished eyes and hugs him to her cheek.

*Summary—Next Morning*

Murphy awakes next morning in drenching cold water. Up uncharacteristically early for a weekend, Helen has poured a glassful over the top of the curtain surrounding

his bed. After a squabble, Helena goes to her room to dress up for church, which she attends sporadically according to when she thinks a certain boy will be there.

Murphy sketches the two women and other details from his dreams. Nestor and Aunt Hilary have already gone off on different appointments.

Sol phones with news that his father knows someone in New York who might be interested in Murphy's shoes. In exchange, Sol will be able to replace the stolen gifts with items from a relative's store. If Murphy can meet Sol in NDC Park at 11:30 a.m. with the shoes, Sol can have the gifts by late afternoon. Murphy goes to the kitchen for breakfast in a quandary: 11:30 is right in the middle of Sunday School.

A special bulletin comes over the radio: the Americans have observed Russian missiles on Cuban soil. President Kennedy has declared "quarantine" around Cuba. The world could be on the brink of nuclear war. Métropole will soon test an air raid siren. The news ends, Buddy Holly sings "Oh Boy," and Viola shuts off the radio. Viola and Helena discuss cancelling the party, but Helena insists they should carry on with everything as planned. Brushing it all aside, William leaves to practice at McDuff Academy. Unfortunately for Murphy, carrying on as planned includes going to church. However, he is able to convince Viola that he has a stomach ache and temperature and she lets him stay home.

Murphy can't resist the temptation to try wearing the hot shoes. After he puts them on, he has a mishap in the kitchen: a jar of strawberry jam falls to the floor and leaves a faint stain on the right shoe. He'll just have to hope that Sol won't notice. Now worried about the time, he puts his old shoes into a bag and hurries to the park.

On an impulse he's put on the souvenir from the short squat man at the Pine Narrows bus terminus: the V-shaped ring on a chain.

Murphy waits on a park bench. He worries that Sol may have already come and left. And even though he's as far from lower Oxford Street as he can get in the park, he also worries about the gang members finding him. He realizes that the idea of handing over his hot shoes has created an empty feeling. He removes and poses the shoes, to sketch them

The work goes frustratingly. Adding to the pressure, Murphy sees Sol approaching in the distance. He switches to his left hand. Naturally left-handed, Murphy has been made to use his right hand, and after breaking his left wrist playing football, he was told not to count on it for fine coordination. Nevertheless, he's satisfied that his sketch will at least retain the features, the memory.

Murphy decides to wear the shoes one last time. To have them fit snugly, he turns on the switches. Feeling vaguely sick from too much jam and peanut butter, he's about to turn the shoes off and change to his old ones when the Oxford Street gang emerges from the bushes.

*Scene Excerpt*

*Please God, he prayed. Get me out of this, and I'll tell Dad about the unlocked cabinet and how Jimmy and I took out the Luger. I'll do it before bed, God. Tout de suite. The French was for good measure because he had a suspicion that in Gaulôre God preferred to hear from you in French.*

*A Reply-- Summary*

As the toughs close in on Murphy, the air-raid siren erupts. In a moment of confusion he spurts past his nearest attackers and races down the slope of the large park toward the brick clubhouse and Sherwood Street.

*A Reply—Scene Excerpt*

Speeding up to elude Black Jacket, Murphy's feet roared. Now he was as scared of pitching flat on his face as he was of being grabbed by the gang. He was scared of falling because he had never run so fast in his life. He'd never gone this fast on his bicycle. Even his dad's rented Rambler didn't go this fast till it really opened up on the highway, and even then.... Going this fast made him certain he'd throw up any second.

Murphy panicked at the sight of the clubhouse hurtling toward him. He hardly had time to worry that another wave of hoods darted out from behind it to cut him off. He was more afraid of splattering against the bricks. A glance at his feet and Murphy saw the portholes opened wide and whorls of colour rushing around his soles. Then he realized he was running on the colours. He was running on air.

The clubhouse hoods rushed toward him with tire irons, and without thinking how impossible it was to leap over them, he leapt—not only over their heads but over the black roof of the clubhouse. He landed as gently as he might on a trampoline after a great leap. He landed where the park began its steep slope down to Sherwood Street, hurtling downhill faster than ever like a great snowball in an avalanche, losing instead of gathering weight. His new fear was being hurled into

the relentless traffic of Métropole's largest, longest street. With no clue how to stop, he chose once again to see if he could swoop upwards—and up he flew, just like in those dreams when chased by monsters he would soar above the telephone wires, steeples, and even trees. Once he found himself soaring above straw-thatched roofs as wooden carts passed by, the peasants on their way to market.

For a moment Murphy felt such relief that he considered looking down and laughing at the Oxford Street gang. But then the taste of peanut butter and jam overcame him again. He started to spin and kick his feet as he hurtled completely out of control.

*Oh Boy – Scene Completion*

It feels like a whirlpool has sucked him into the sky with the force of a tornado. The storm tosses him up and he hangs suspended over Sherwood Street.

He sees the lines of cars streaming from Métropole east, which would seem obviously north from up here, except that it's noon so the sun is directly over head. He sees a green rooftop. He's sure it's a Valiant. The gang members are just about to reach the sidewalk where something or someone lies sprawled. The figure is blue, down to the waist, at least. The same blue as Murphy's jacket. For an instant, he feels the same way he did after flying over stone houses from hundreds of years ago, then heading down toward himself in bed.

Black Jacket stands over the small figure in blue when Green Valiant pulls to a stop. Murphy sees no more. He begins to drop. Instinctively, he kicks his feet and

rushes upwards again. Beneath him fly the rooftops of Marie Reine-de-la-Paix, and right behind them comes the widening line of Fleuve St. Léonard.

*Luck-key.* Murphy reaches inside his shirt and holds the curious ring. His sick-to-the-stomach feeling fades. A wave of relief sweeps through him. Then he notices the fiery colours from his feet travelling up his legs. By and by, his legs disappear. In another flash, the colours swarm up his torso, and it disappears, too. In a final flash all of him is gone. Except his mind. *Oh Boy*, he thinks.

## Section 4 Blue Gold

### **Excerpts and Summaries: This section's 1963 Camp Vignettes**

*Excerpt-- Deep Stuff (complete)*

Counsellors on patrol always seem to talk about things like God or no God, whether space comes back on itself, how old earth really is, what's the best brand of beer, whether girls like French kissing, where to buy golf clubs, and how to invest.

He wonders if he'll ever stand under Grandfather Birch, like them, talking deep with a patrol partner. George, perhaps. Tonight's two tent-patrol voices drift away from Grandfather Birch toward the counsellor's cabin where, according to George, they look at Playboy. And maybe Jet Dream, Ju-jitsu Queen.

People say kids just heading into sixth grade don't think of deep stuff, like where do we come from, but Murphy once got the idea we cycle through different creatures over time, like water through different rivers, lakes, oceans, and air. That's what the Indians believe, said Helena, with a suggestion that logically of course this meant Murphy didn't believe it. Not the North American Indians, she said. The Hindu ones. Like in India. You know, Mowgli—*The Jungle Book*. Overhearing Helena, William had said, *Yes, Mowgli's the ticket. Tarzan was cheap knockoff, wasn't he.*

In his next life Murphy would be someone who didn't have an older genius brother or get sent away to Camp Kisisokôe.

The remaining vignettes for this section mainly find Murphy at outdoor chapel on an embankment sloping down to the shore of Intermediate Bay. Junior Camp boys are allowed into Intermediate Camp *only* on Sunday morning as part of chapel. But not *all* Junior Camp boys:

*Excerpt*

Only the Protestant boys and two or three Jewish ones let in by quota and special consideration step stately along the path to outdoor chapel. The French and English Catholics attend Mass in the Village of Kisisokôe, where there is a real Priest, not just a shop-master leading service as simple and understated as British tea on a tight budget with no access to French shops. For the English Catholics, it must be quite a jolt to weather Mass in French—Latin being one thing to English Métropolitans but French quite another. English Catholic children in the city attend their own English schools, French Catholic children their own French ones.

○ Murphy likes outdoor chapel. He likes to listen to Mr. Merritte usher them in with “Pomp and Circumstance” played on a small organ, more or less in time, in a manner more melancholy than triumphal. Sitting with his age group on one of the tiered railway ties looking down at the podium and semicircle of choir, Murphy can watch ducks bob and dive, a heron appear in the mist, then dappled sunlight through

trembling poplar leaves. Frogs croak. He can listen to robins, thrushes, chickadees, and from further down the lake the cry of a loon like a spirit voice riding the still misty water.

Murphy likes watching Cabe.

*Excerpt*

Cabe McCaffery grips the podium with wiry arms, head bowed, as boys take their places on the railway ties layered up the bank. Section Ones fill the first row, Section Twos behind, and so on right up to Section Seven.

It's funny to see Cabe in clean bright clothes. On regular days in Shop he goes about in thread-bare overalls covered in sawdust. Even his wire-rimmed glasses carry spots of sawdust. Today he's lost in a red and white check shirt in some sort of stiff material. It has uneven sharp creases, like it just came out of the box, and it billows in odd places, creating an appearance that parts of him have fallen off and become misplaced. His glasses flash clear as the sky.

Cabe guides them to hymns like "God Sees the Little Sparrow Fall" and reads from Henry David Thoreau. Murphy notices Dramatic Counsellor studying Cabe's mouth and gestures, soaking up detail for his impersonations.

○ George becomes surprisingly eager about attending Sunday Mass in the village.

He has met a local girl named Gisèle, "nicer than any of the ancient-looking females in his older brother's magazines." With her short hair, in baggy boys' clothing, Gisèle could pass for a boy. She's going to visit George secretly in her father's

canoe, arriving in secluded Intermediate Bay, where he will meet her. But Junior Camp boys aren't allowed in Intermediate Camp except... George suggests Murphy should join them for a paddle through the rushes and lily pads.

### **The Hot Shoes Adventure: Excerpts and Summaries**

#### *Excerpt-- Eight Bells (or Lost)*

Imagine you're nine-and-two-thirds-years old, asleep in the back of your parents' car. When you awake, chances are good you won't have any idea how long you've been asleep, not to mention where you are. You'll feel weak, dizzy, numb, and at least a little sick to the stomach. Now multiply that feeling by a hundred. You still won't be close to Murphy's confusion as he sees the hot shoes take form.

They appear on a hazy, off-white surface. They move ever so slightly. This could be what people mean by morning after. The left shoe eases above the right, then down as the right edges upwards. If you look close enough, they seem to be playing gentle see-saw. *Then CLANG-CLANG-CLANG-CLANG-CLANG-CLANG-CLANG.*<sup>3</sup>

Murphy's ears reverberate. The air against his cheeks trembles. Has he somehow landed at Camp Kisisokôe? That sharp hard repeated note sounds an awful lot like the sound of the big old ship's bell posted

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<sup>3</sup> Throughout the following, the bell repeatedly breaks in, tolling different numbers according to the times announced.

over the waterfront and rung by the Officer of the Day. Yet different—louder and a little lower. It's more powerful and deeper, like the dining hall gong that Cook pounds with a hammer. William might say the tone is a few degrees warmer. In any case, Murphy hopes it won't sound again. His eardrums might break.

From somewhere nearby—like balm-- come the relaxed trilling of birds and sounds of people playing tennis. The air feels moist and warm. It smells like the air inside Métropole's big tourist attraction *Les Jardins Botaniques*.

Seconds or minutes later, Murphy isn't sure which-- perhaps even an hour-- his legs appear, his feet inside the shoes. He starts to feel throbbing in his toes. Another interval, long or short, and his torso appears.

Perhaps more time passes when he feels sharp pressure against his palms as if Mr. Merritte, the 250 pound camp director, is stepping on them with his size E boot heels. Murphy discovers he's clutching the wrought-iron arm rest of a wood slat bench like you see in Chelsey Green Heights Park. He's clutching so hard his fingers have gone white. He makes himself let go.

Murphy's in a corner, an "L" formed by a glass wall and a lower long white wall of painted metal that comes up to his nose, like the boards of NDC hockey rink before the snow falls and the ice goes down. The

bench backs against this lower wall on which hangs a large yellow life buoy with blue lettering: *The Blue Gold*, it says.

*Happy noon-hour, dear Passengers. This is Captain Max.*

Murphy looks all around before noticing a big white loudspeaker at the top of a tall pole. That must be where the clanging came from, too. The deep soothing tones continue. *First Cook informs me that lunch is now available in the Galleys. Once again, all the way astern, dear people. Middle Decks 2 and 5. Be first to claim a porthole seat and get yourself a spectacular view. It looks like Lady Poseidan's whipping up quite the show for us this fine Sunday.*

The speaker goes silent.

The bench looks across at a building called The Captain's Lounge and beside it a picture glass window. Behind the glass a tall athletic man in swim trunks lifts one leg, bounces hard off the end of a diving board, arcs upward and drops down.

There's a distant splash from below.

Right near Murphy on the glass wall a framed mirror looks as if it belongs in Mme. Lecoup's boudoir, as Helena would call it. Murphy peers in the glass. He hasn't become a vampire. His regular face looks back. The rest of him is there as well. All present and accounted for, in the words of gym teacher Mrs. Barrel after roll call.

To the left of the mirror hangs a poster showing a domed planet in a sea of black space. Break-out boxes frame scientists using all sorts of strange instruments.

In style and lavish production, the poster is to advertising what the Cadillac is to cars. *Excelsior! Tomorrow Is Today.*

A second poster to the right of the mirror uses processed photographs. They show a man and woman running in front of a wall of spectators including several rich-looking ones inside a glassed-in box. The female has auburn hair and a beauty mark on her left cheek, and she looks more athletic than the male. Even so, he's pulling ahead. You can't tell by his face if he's in control or struggling. That's because he has the same face as a number of figures in William's old story books.

As Viola used to explain in a manner that warned you to be serious and understanding, William was highly sensitive and when younger found certain things disturbing. Mean-looking villains, like Captain Hook, for instance. Or even characters who might strike you as unthreatening, like Uncle Pumblechook or Rabbit. William would wet his thumb and rub it hard across the face. There would be no more face. There would be a smudge.

The male runner in the poster doesn't have a face. He has a smudge. Something indefinable about him fascinates and repels Murphy as Esther would say, before going on to explain approach-avoidance theory. The woman does have a face, with soft brown eyes complementing her auburn hair. Despite the man's lack of a face, Murphy has a feeling he knows both these runners from somewhere.

Then he notices the man's shoes. He stares at them hard and long. They look just like Murphy's shoes, his hot shoes. The shoes are too far away and too stylized for details to come through, but it almost looks like the little windows along the sides of the shoes are open. It almost looks as if they are glowing pink.

*Summary-- Murphy's Arrival (Completion)*

Murphy seems to have arrived in an alcove with glass walls. A promenade runs past it to an atrium to his left, the source of bird and tennis sounds. To his right down the promenade is an arc into a shopping concourse. The arc says "The Upper Deck." People in expensive looking clothes nip in and out of it. Shopping on Sunday! He thinks to himself.

A woman in a neat green and white uniform clatters toward him with a cart full of cleaning supplies and utensils. Nervous, he retreats far back into his alcove. She gives him a sour look but goes past to clean the next alcove. He notices how clean and tidy everything seems.

Murphy unlaces his "diabolical" shoes and steps up on the bench to look out the glass wall for more information. He feels anxious, as he does when contemplating heights. Sure enough, the ground (only it isn't ground) is further down than the schoolyard from the roof of Harry Floggins. Well off in the distance under a dark angry sky are breakwaters, docks, piers, warehouses, and old brick buildings with black wrought iron fences. Between them and Murphy is mostly choppy cold-looking water. Immediately below are lifeboats and then a great ship's deck stretching at least two football fields in either direction into the mist. A man in a blue and gold uniform pedals past on a three-wheeled bike.

Murphy's nose starts to bleed. He hears approaching footsteps and makes out two people through the walls of the alcove. He jumps down from the bench to search in the garbage can beside it. He finds a piece of old canvas with which he dabs at his nose, then realizes he can tie his shoes in it into a hobo's bag. He thinks

it's best not to let others see or know about the shoes. Then he takes out his sketchbook and pencil and sits down to look busy.

*Summary-- Meeting Digana and Racine*

It's a woman and older girl, with boutique-style shopping bags. The woman looks around the age of Viola, the girl looks three or four years younger than Helena.

Murphy makes out a third person with them, an infant in Helena's arms.

The woman regards Murphy with suspicion. She asks if he shouldn't be in middle ship or the hold. But the girl interrupts the woman by fussing over Murphy's nosebleed. She wipes away his blood with water from a designer-style bottle with the label "Blue Gold." He gets his first taste of Blue Gold, likes it, and finds himself looking forward to more. The girl takes a look at Murphy's drawings but doesn't comment. She insists that he accompany them on their tour of the promenades and decks, since someone with nosebleed could faint.

The promenades run inside the walls of a glass shoebox rising upward four levels from main deck. Murphy and the girl take either hand of her two-year-old brother Nexus so he can walk between them. Following the second level walkway, they pass the Atrium, which contains an open well. Murphy must work hard not to show his terror of heights.

From the attitudes of various staff and officials, Murphy gathers his hosts are people of considerable importance. He learns the girl's name—Racine—and gathers the woman is her mother. As they make conversation about Nexus learning to walk aboard the ship during particularly rough weather, Racine refers to *The Blue Gold*

sailing down the Hudson Sea to Lake Superior. A stop student in history, Murphy knows nothing of any Hudson Sea (only Hudson Bay). Furthermore, he can't imagine a ship this size negotiating the St. Léonard Seaway, never mind the canal that leads into it. He believes Racine must want to "have him on."

Reaching the starboard side of the Booth, they turn into the long promenade leading toward stern. It takes them past cafés, restaurants, gift shops, and hobby shops until they stop at the concourse called The Upper Deck. While Racine's mother goes on an errand, the girl and boy sit at a table surrounded by boutiques, kiosks, and various luxury services. He says yes to a bottle of Blue Gold.

Despite a storm moving in, Racine insists they follow their traditional Sunday routine and continue toward stern on the outside deck. In the blustery wind, Nexus loses his toy twirler and Murphy chases after it, over to starboard. At the rail he encounters a woman in a broad-brimmed blue hat. Appearing to recognize Murphy, she refers to him as "Stickman" and laughs.

On his way back he notices a poster advertising an afternoon concert. There is a picture of the featured singer: Racine's mother. Her name is given as Digana Gold. At the moment she takes out a small device the size of William's calculator and speaks into it as if it's a walkie-talkie. She tells Racine that the maid will be able to look after Nexus. The concert having been cancelled due to "weather," Digana agrees to offer her fans an impromptu song a capella. Behind the stage, against the stern railing, Murphy notices a cage with thick iron bars and a large pool of water. They push on to an upscale block of apartments where Digana leaves Nexus. Racine and Murphy press on down port deck toward bow.

They pass wind turbines and, along the top of the hull, solar panels (though Murphy is not yet aware of what these are). Racine teases and tests Murphy by leaning out over the rail to look at a panel and challenges him to do so. He does not.

As they continue, Murphy encounters a promotional poster of the very ship they are on, *The Blue Gold*. It is a vision of wonder and magnificence, with eight blue whales harnessed to the bow, a huge kite catching wind high beyond the bow, great white sails and prodigious masts, the grand glass Booth, the windmill rotator blades, and those odd panels tilted up at the sky. In the bow, a jaunty helicopter sitting on a pad; in the stern, a great polar bear swiping a fish from his pool. As masthead on the stern hull, a carved bear head with eyes that glow red; as masthead at the bow's peak, Liberty Torch upheld by the arm of Lady Liberty.

Racine calls Murphy to hurry. He says he was just remembering a dream, and she says she dreams once a week, on Thursday.

*Summary-- Waiting for Someone, Encountering Others*

They reach a block of labs and office buildings running widthwise, looking off at the landing pad and Lady Liberty's torch. Shore is too far through the mist for Murphy to make things out clearly. But off port bow at 2 o'clock, a football field away, a small island appears. It is about the size of Graveswater Terminus, linked to ship and shore by long girdered gangplanks.

Digana joins them, having made her way inside the Booth. She tells Racine, "There's no sense waiting. Even he's not crazy enough to risk flying in this weather." But Racine perseveres.

Four deafening clangs erupt from a nearby rooftop just as a man steps out from the office building doorway. He is shorter than most of the men Murphy has seen here, with wild bushy hair the colour of a sea lion, flecked gray. Digana addresses him rather wearily as J Robert and says they must be brief. J Robert gives Murphy a suspicious stare but simply says he's in a hurry himself. He asks if they are ready for their parts in tomorrow's procession and reminds them that Thursday is DNA Day.

Some time after J Robert has departed, two women emerge from the same office building doorway. Murphy feels an immediate interest in them. One has such perfect red hair that it could be a wig. She wears dark glasses, and the colour over her left cheek seems a little unnatural. The dark-haired woman reminds Murphy of Miss Blobinsky, Esther's older sister, the Harry Floggins science teacher who all the other teachers say is so smart she shouldn't be wasting time on ten-year-olds.

After the women have departed, Murphy learns that Ruby, the dark-haired one, has a remarkable research record in physics. She is "cracking time like an egg." They can't place the other one. They find her puzzling.

Racine cues Murphy that her mother expects him to be on his way now, below deck. He returns the borrowed coat, shoes, and socks and learns that the family friend who once owned the coat is named Dr. Lepeintre, whom Digana calls "an outstanding public servant." Racine asks for another look at Murphy's art but Digana suggests another time. She then reaches into her purse, which looks like it could be one of those that Chausserie SheShe keeps locked in a glass cabinet.

“Don’t tell anyone about this,” she says as she hands him six cards about the size Abe Blobinsky and the others use for poker. Five of the cards show a polar bear on one side and the raised arm and torch of Lady Liberty on the other. The cards say *Legal Tender of the Global Garden Ours Eternal Fifty Dollars*. The sixth card shows a picture of the woman herself on one side. *Her Grace of the Garden, Padrona di Casa dell’ Orto, Digana Gold*. The other side shows a man with a long face and heavy-looking long gold hair. *Ovide “Woody” Gold, Capo Giardiniere*. This card says *One Hundred Dollars*.

Digana explains that on Wednesday, *The Blue Gold* will harbour at Crique au Pecheurs at the mouth of the St. Léonard. There it will be joined by the floating city of Elusha. “Talk about shopping,” says Racine. They tell Murphy to get himself a good winter coat and warm pair of sturdy shoes.

Their words of parting are interrupted, however, by five prodigious clangs of the bell. It seems to have shocked the gathering storm into a momentary lull. Then, dumbfounded, they see a speck descending from the sky. Dipping, bounding, bucking, and swivelling like a machine gun jerked by a mad puppeteer, the helicopter seems about to blow away when it’s pilot prevails, forcing it down on the landing pad. Racine races to greet him. “Daddy,” she cries. Murphy recognizes the man on side A of the one hundred dollar card.

*Summary-- The Hold*

Murphy descends seven flights, his feet growing colder with each. At Level 2-1, he stops to put on his hot shoes. He ponders sneaking back up to the open deck, Level 1-1, and looking for some way to get back out there, since access seems restricted except for those with a card door-opener. He doesn't dare try running in the shoes under a roof. He would fly up and get squashed into red goop.

Besides, how could he make the shoes understand where he wanted to go? Come to think of it, what had brought him *here* rather than somewhere else? *Random chance*, William had told his unappreciative supper audience one night. He was explaining what he called the existentialists.

So Murphy follows his feet down two more levels and peeks through a door that says 3-2. No one is around so he slips into a dully lit seaweed green corridor that appears to run around the whole deck, just as the fancy promendades up above circle inside the glass Booth. He vibrates with the growling of engines and merges with a heavy odour of grease and steam. He finds a door into the Hold. *Keep Shut*, it says. He peeks in.

Not even Graveswater Square Market on a Saturday with the Patriotes slated to play just across the street in a few hours has this many people, this much babble and hubbub. Murphy can hardly breathe. The odors of stale sweat and urine combined with onions, spices, grease, and steam made him feel a little sick.

Murphy likens it to two thirds of a football field packed with campers. Instead of tents they have dividers blocking out family spaces. Sleeping mats dot the

floor, most of them rolled but some still stretch out full. Wash hangs limp from droopy lines strung between dividers. Sprawling children ply at marbles and card toss. Through the forest of heads, Murphy catches glimpses of the great floor's perimeter, with crude signs saying *Wash Tubs, Showers, and Toilets*. There is a booth for a lottery tickets and another with the sign Global Garden Police. A burly officer in a black baseball style hat glares out sullenly.

Some of the people stare slack-jawed at large wall screens. At first Murphy takes them for windows. One reveals a brightly coloured soccer match. But then, as with a TV, the picture changes to a woman advertising Blue Gold. Murphy realizes these huge windows with glowing colour are TV screens. Huge colour TV! In some respects, he thinks, time certainly brings progress.

The door behind Murphy is about to shut when he realizes it lacks any knob or handle, a sure sign that once it shuts, he will be locked in. Barely in time he keeps it from closing, but in so doing, he accidentally lights up one of the shoes. He turns it off immediately, but not before two tough-looking boys notice his shoes. He can tell what they are thinking. He flees back into the corridor, trusting the door-closer to lock the door behind him. But when he looks back, it has stopped a couple of inches from shutting. He knows the toughs are heading for the door and doesn't dare go back to close it. He could walk right into them.

Further ahead in the corridor is a work cart belonging to a plumber who is working on toilets in the hold. The cart has three levels, the top two brimming with tools. The bottom level holds a bath tub shaped like *The Blue Gold*.

Looking back behind him, Murphy expects to see the two toughs at any moment. He feels like a deer when it smells wolf.

## Section 5 Hunted

### **This section's 1963 Camp Vignettes**

This section's vignettes begin with Murphy in his tent during Quiet Hour. According to custom, everyone is writing a letter to his family, emphasis, on enjoyment, no room for complaints or concerns that would cause parents to worry. Murphy is writing about the beauty of outdoor chapel. He remembers the choir, and thinks about how William would complain that Junior Camp Director is off key. This makes him think about Junior Camp Director, a profile wrong for the letter. For some reason-- a music connection?- thinking about Junior Camp Director reminds Murphy of their family friend, Gunther Lang. Next, a series of vignettes finds Murphy inside the camp theatre for his second Friday movie night. Vignettes also introduce two other campers, Murgatroy and Widmark, and a special visitor, Algonquin canoe-craft master Jack Ponokaminkway and his nine-year-old son.

#### ◦ *Junior Camp Director*

During the school year Junior Camp Director worked as a physical education professor at McDuff Academy. He seemed to the boys more enthusiastic about sports than good at them. When he missed a shot in tennis, he would sometimes yell "Fiddlesticks." He always demanded the boys compete hard, be good sports, and do a "thurah job" during Friday afternoon clean-up. According to rumours from older boys, in sex education class, he said you could hold your head higher if you didn't

masturbate, whatever that was. You should also remember not to push your girlfriend into the water when it is “her time of the month.”

◦ *Gunther Lang*

One day William brought home a new boy from high school. Gunther knew more about Beethoven and all the German composers than any music teacher. He was living with an older female cousin because something had happened to his mother after they came over from Germany. Now that William was in the music conservatory and Gunther working for Canada Steam Ships, those two didn't do much together, but Gunther still came to family dinner at least once a week. Sometimes he'd arrive early and chat with Viola, whom he called “Mrs. B.” When Viola made one of what Helena called her “pithy” remarks, Gunther's eyes crinkled shut, his pink skin glowed in delight, and his head nodded approval as fast as two hands can clap. Then he'd sit on the outside front porch reading German newspapers.

Murphy thought all the long words in Gunther's newspapers seemed funny. Especially amusing was *vergangenheitsbewältigung*. After Murphy's giggling, Gunther didn't show any expression but said the word slowly a couple of times and nodded for Murphy to try it. So Murphy did, feeling increasingly strange and puzzled. What did it mean?

“Bad things happened,” Gunther said. “It's trying to get over them.”

◦ *Movie Mix-up*

*Excerpt-- Mr. Merritte's Great Rolling Belly Laugh*

Mr. Merritte's great rolling belly laugh filled the whole theatre. At first it was just a huge wave coming from everywhere, everywhere and nowhere. You had to look hard through all the bodies perched on plywood boards over saw-horse trestles for a possible glimmer of the massive man in his stuffed armchair up on a private riser.

On Friday night of their first day at camp, they got to see their first movie. The film was called *Monsieur Verdoux*. It wasn't easy to follow or funny as far as Murphy could tell, but Mr. Merritte sure thought it was. Murphy had never heard anything like that laugh.

Twenty-two days are left, but Murphy isn't even thinking about that. He can hardly wait-- Walt Disney's *Treasure Island*. Then Junior Camp Director announces a mix-up. The company has sent the wrong film, so they are going to show it instead.

*Excerpts*

When the robber women attack your caravan, they stand on the backs of their horses twirling some sort of long cloths with weights at the end that wrap around your neck, because the trick riders never miss and have perfect balance. The women and their Queen—Miss Kitty from *Gunsmoke*—have just come from the beauty parlour and have very white skin and lots of make-up on even though it's the Arabian desert.

Miss Kitty challenges the great moustachioed caravan leader to a sword fight, and although he wounds her arm, she tumbles him moustache and all head-first into the dust where one hairy hand lifts off the ground as if to beg in spite of its owner but then drops limp.

Murphy thinks the movie so stupid that he almost leaves, as he later tells his tent-mates. *Why didn't you then*, they say.

Older, taller boys sit further back, Dexter Singleton among them. Even though he's only in Section 4 like Murphy, Dexter is as tall as anyone in Intermediate Camp. Murphy recognizes his loud, husky voice. "I wouldn't mind making *her* miss her period," he says. A heavy French boy looks uncomfortable as others nearby stare at him. When Murphy tells George about this later, and how Dexter said something about punctuation, George says the older boy, known to everyone as Le Gros, has been at Camp since June. George says he got a girl from the village "in trouble."

◦ Next day during Quiet Hour in Tent 24, memories of the Arabian Robber Women remind Murphy of an afternoon after school on René Lecoup's front porch. Danny Goldman, an older boy from their street, was there as well. He and René had come from René's bedroom upstairs where they used a telescope to spy on an older neighbour girl undressing. René gestures toward Murphy and changes the topic to a comparison of history textbooks. He shows them how Danny's school text describes General Wolfe as a hero whereas René's book shows him as a scoundrel and misfit.

Gunther passes by- probably on his way to visit with Viola-- and Murphy reflects that he should never have told Jimmy Straw what had happened to the older boy's mother. A man from Germany, a former Nazi, had shown up wanting her to go back there with him. The man and Gunther's mother were both found shot. Jimmy, Murphy, and Gunther were in the basement of Murphy's fourplex, looking at progress on Nestor's clipper ship model when Jimmy asked Gunther what had happened to his mother. The young boy's manner didn't seem cruel but compelled, like the time he took down his grandfather's forbidden World War One sabre, because he had to touch it.

◦ *Excerpt-- Murgatroy*

Radio Boy—Dexter's new name for him—bunked in Tent 19. His real name was Murgatroy. He had soft curly hair, long lashes, and helpless baleful eyes that Helena would call the envy of females. He had porcelain skin with freckles that seemed painted on underneath by a romantic artist. Murgatroy moved as if any sudden noise or impact would shatter him like crystal

Before first Visitors' Weekend of August, Murphy sat with Murgatroy one afternoon in his tent, admiring his Chelsey Green possessions. The previous visit he'd stroked the suede windbreaker, soft as angel's hair, carrot orange leather and gold piping outside, Persian orange silk liner and mahogany piping inside. "I know it feels and looks nice, but it's not as practical as your windbreaker," Murgatroy said. "It

can't take the rain." Murgatroy kept his jacket stored under his cot in a sanded wooden milk crate, wrapped in a cashmere blanket even nicer than the one on the foot of his sleeping bag. George just shook his head when Murphy told him.

◦ *Excerpt-- Birch Bark Canoe*

"Hello. *Bonjour. Kway. Nidjiniakàz Jack Ponokaminkway.* I am named Jack Ponokaminkway. This is my son Adrian. Our people are Algonquin. We've been here forever—well, the archeologists and anthropologists say 8,000 years."

Dramatic Counsellor's face, squinting in the morning sun, creases into a wide grin and he nods intently. Kris gives the lightest smile and keeps his eyes on the speaker standing in the circle of boys outside the Craft Shop. Cabe looks down, brushes sawdust from his overall, and shuffles his feet.

"Anyways, I guess it's a few years more than your typical family on Turtle Island."

More loud chuckles from Dramatic Counsellor who looks around the circle as if to regret the general inhibitions and lack of humour.

"Our community is north of here in Radisson Park where you go for canoe trips when you get older. Our village is called Little Wanaki. That means little peace or paix. The Creator means for us all to share everything. This week, we're going to build an Algonquin birch bark

canoe together—the old way... plus a heat gun, power drill, and polyurethane. ”

Dramatic Counsellor bursts into an uproarious laugh. It draws plenty of glances. Jack looks down shyly. Then he turns his deep brown eyes directly to Murphy, perhaps because Adrian has chosen to move in beside him.

“It’s going to take seven days, each morning. You boys want to do this?”

They all shout yes, more genuinely enthusiastic than Murphy has ever known them to be. Campers to Kisisokôe tend to be what Helena would describe as snide, sarcastic and know-it-all.

“We can learn about the natural materials we use. We can tell stories and have fun doing it together. When you make a canoe, you put yourself in it, so we’re all going to be part of this canoe. It’s exciting to imagine the journey it will take.”

◦ *Excerpt--* Widmark

After Murphy made his four hundred yards, Swim Director asked him to help with special beginner’s instruction. Swim Director was a gentle version of football coach with the same squat build and crew-cut.

Included among the students were a couple of Section 2s and 3s, still too scared to put their faces under water. Swim Director asked Murphy to

show the Section 3s how to blow bubbles face down. The biggest challenge was Widmark.

Murphy told Widmark he was scared of heights, but that water was okay, even fun, once you got used to it. But Widmark's skin reminded Murphy that colours had weight—at least, for him—and black was heaviest. He wondered if Widmark realized something Swim Director was overlooking. He sure hoped he wasn't doing wrong, showing the younger boy how to blow bubbles face down. Nestor would say don't worry: knowing how to swim might save his life some day. More important than learning to drive a car, which it seemed William might never do.

Starting with this section and weaving through the following ones up to Section 10 are vignettes of Jack guiding various of the seven stages of canoe construction . In the initial session, the group gathers cedar roots. These are then boiled and treated and used to bind everything together.

Murphy becomes so fascinated by the canoe-making that he returns to the building bed later each class day and draws the latest state of construction. Jack and Adrian are provided a guest tent overlooking the lake near the Administration Buidling and the ship's bell used by the Officer of the Day to announce scheduled activities.

Canoe-making classes run in the mornings from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> of August. Jack and his son then leave on a trip to Métropole, returning on Saturday the 17<sup>th</sup>. On

Monday the 18<sup>th</sup> they head off to neighbouring Lac des Poissons for a fishing trip, with plans to return the morning of Saturday the 24<sup>th</sup>, in time for the planned canoe ceremony and launch.

### **2172: Excerpts and Summaries**

Murphy dodges the predatory boys by hiding in a dislodged bathtub destined for storage. It sits on the cart of an ill-tempered plumber who remonstrates in soliloquy to his imagined boss, outraged by his lowly assignments. Despite his tempestuous conductor, Murphy manages to remain hidden as they ascend to deck 2-1 (the first deck of middle ship) in a freight elevator. Before he leaves the hold, however, he sees that military officials along private corridors are watching the hold passengers through the backs of the TV screens. The two older boys in search of Murphy have made their way up from the hold as well, having found a deserted door that someone had wedged open.

Murphy still can't believe that any of this is really happening. But if it is, why have the shoes brought him here and how can he make them take him back? He feels a faint hope remembering the look-alike shoes on the runner in the poster he saw on the upper deck soon after arrival. Perhaps someone here understands these shoes and can tell him how to make them take him home. Or... he could simply be bold, like Jimmy Straw, and "wing it." He should get back onto the outside deck, turn on the shoes, and take his chances. He realizes it would be foolish to try running in the shoes inside because he'd fly up and squish against the ceiling. At the thought of

flying up, he recalls hanging suspended as high as a bird over Sherwood Avenue. He almost faints at the thought. At the time he was too stunned by it all, too scared of the gang, to take in his predicament. A sudden cannon blast isn't nearly as bad if you don't know it's coming.

On deck 2-1, Murphy sneaks out of the bathtub. He tries the door of a stairwell, but it's locked, so he continues down a long hallway. The solid wall across from the hull is broken every so often by hallways running across the middle of the ship. Signs announce rooms and room numbers to be found down these hallways. First there are signs for cabins, then labs, then classrooms, and then the pattern repeats. Framed by a corridor to either side, these rooms stand back-to-back, a matching set of the same kind: cabins, labs, or meeting rooms.

A number of people bustle up and down beside the hull, darting in and out of the side corridors and the rooms off those corridors. Many of the people carry cases and wear lab coats. Murphy finds it strange they are all in such a hurry. Why are they working on a Sunday?

He finds another stairwell, this with an unlocked door. He nips though and climbs to level 2-5. Murphy feels a strange pull to level 5, almost like he's been here before. Helena would refer to *déjà vu*. On level 5, the same sights greet him: people bustling by in lab coats, the same side corridors with cabins, labs, and meeting rooms.

Around what feels like the halfway point of the long stretch, he sees signs for conference rooms: *Moby Dick*, *Mutiny on the Bounty*, *Lord Jim*, and *Treasure*

*Island.* Down the same corridor one will apparently also find a laundromat and games arcade.

Murphy can see the hull curving slightly inwards in the distance, signalling the bow. He reaches a last block of cabins before a shopping plaza and atrium; as he gazes down the walkway past cabin doors the feeling of *déjà vu* intensifies. He feels drawn down the walkway yet discouraged by an open spiral staircase in the shopping plaza across the way. It triggers his fear of falling. Along the hull in an atrium area stands a telescope that seems intended for sight-seeing. Murphy goes over to it, curious to know if details along the shoreline might tell him where he is

He is just lifting the telescope when the two boys from the hold emerge from a corridor and head in his direction down the port promenade. Murphy flees into the walkway past the cabins, face turned from the plaza with its menacing cabins.

Reaching the starboard promenade, he dashes into a stairway and bolts down.

According to what William would call random chance, he exits into the third level and high-tails it toward stern. Presently he is swalled by a crush of people collecting to enter a movie theatre. Here Murphy spends the first of his money from Digana Gold, \$16 for a child's pass, \$4 for popcorn. He records the expense in the back of his sketchbook and subtracts to the sum remaining: \$230. He also records the date that people seem to think it is: 9 January 2172.

Murphy is amazed to be admitted without an adult, since children are forbidden from attending movies alone in Métropole, a number having been crushed in a fire when Murphy was still a baby.

A woman and man with Hollywood actor looks stand defiantly before a pack of trophy hunters. On an arctic rise behind the heroes, Ours Blanc (le Polaire) gazes majestically into the distance. Entitled *Le Retour de Polaire*, the movie concerns a struggle to protect Ours Blanc, who has been created from a retrieved DNA sample. Scientists on the space station Excelsior are scrambling to create a female. Meanwhile, trophy hunters are after the male.

Polar bears have been extinct on earth for more than 100 years. There's a story that one day, the great white bear will return. The newly created male inhabits a corridor of arctic conditions simulating those from before the great melt. This corridor runs across Red America and Gaulôre, shifting into different climates and botanical zones, from west to east, with thousands of kilometers of viewing stations and cameras for people far and wide to enjoy the re-wilded animals. Some people say it's as much fun as a Lover's Lane.

After the movie Murphy finds a food court one level down and spends another \$10 for a bowl of soup, an egg salad sandwich and oatmeal cookies. He sits near port hull. Through a porthole he can see the sky looking dusky now, not just dark from the festering storm. Night is coming. A hollow wind whistles up from Murphy's stomach and he feels something like panic. He remembers the telescope on level 2-5. Surely those boys won't be anywhere near it now. If he hurries he can at least find out where he is before complete darkness.

*Excerpt-- Overseen*

Murphy feels like General Wolfe, General Montcalm, or Long John Silver peering through their spy glasses. Yes, the telescope is fixed on the small rather flat island. There isn't too much to look at there, so the boy swings the big eye to the left. Fortunately it's positioned in front of the widest port-hole in this part of the hull, so there's room to manoeuvre.

He fiddles with the focus dial. Like images on the movie screen in Camp Kisisokôe Theatre when the projectionist finally gets things sharp, images appear in the grey twilight. Waves whack against rough cement breakwater. Wrought iron gates swing and bang, black paint chipped and peeling. Ornate initials, rusted, chaffe inside a circle of iron on the right-hand side: *MA*. Something familiar about these gates.

Abandoned buildings also vaguely familiar, half-boarded windows draping shards of glass. Long sleek shadows, bleeding black dashes twice their length, scurry in wild zigzags over crumbled cement. Telescope eye follows across castings of snow and ice, from rusty gates to desolate pier.

Rottweillers pace on heavy chains behind the rusting gates. Behind the dogs a long brick building, two-storeys, green door. Ghostly circle the size of a side plate, vague piano shape inside. Some emblem's faded or been pried off. Higher on the green door, words: *Port Authority*  
*Métropole Protectorate/Port autonome protectorat Métropole. Proudly*  
*Serving the Global Garden/au service fièr de Jardin Global.*

Murphy recognizes the McDuff piano studio, now a run-down office of the port. The gates and other buildings of McDuff are present, too, also run-down. How can they be at the harbour? Thinking of his father's transit map, Murphy realizes that three miles of city have been submerged.

The two punks reappear. Murphy flees halfway down the ship to the corridor of sea-themed conference rooms before the thugs start to catch up. Desperate, he shakes the handles of the first two rooms. Locked. He scurries past other doors. Before the thugs have quite reached the corridor, he tries another handle: Treasure Island Room. Miraculously, this one gives. Murphy ducks inside, locks the door, and finds a light switch. He notices white black boards with phrases and sentences in colour. All the words are printed, rather crudely, so he thinks the classroom must be used by early grades of elementary school, before script. He also notices an apple barrel, like the one in *Treasure Island*.

Clacking and clattering in the corridor one room over prompts Murphy to shut the light and hide in the barrel. A number of adults enter the room-- stealthily-- annoyed and troubled that the door was locked when apparently they had expected it to be open. From their whispered conversation Murphy gathers they are planning some sort of mutiny against the Global Garden leaders. It sounds like they expect the man from the poster, with shoes just like Murphy's, to carry out some important mission against a certain target, and they argue over whether he can be trusted. They

fear the new publicity created by his races against Morgan McCallister-- Woody Gold's chosen Atalanta-- will interfere with their plans.

Complicating Murphy's desire to remain hidden, he has peed his pants.

*Right*, says Jimmy Straw. *Real Tarzan*.

*Excerpt from Overheard*

"If we have to pull him, I'll take over," says Big Man. "There's no time to find and train someone else."

"You're too big," says Matron. "Draw too much attention."

"Target must go, as planned," says Sharp Woman, and everyone agrees. They all agree they've been lied to. Everyone has.

Big Man says if they have to pull Letourneau, then Fancy Shoes "takes the big swim." Again they all agree.

"Okay," says Big Man. "That's enough for now."

"What happened with the door," said Bull Dog. "You said it would be unlocked."

"It was," says Big Man. "Cleaning staff must have come by."

"Hardly," says Matron. "They wouldn't have left that smell"

"Just awful," says Sharp Woman. "Like a little boy's pee."

"You women are so fussy," says Bulldog.

"We have noses," says Sharp Woman.

"Who cares," says Big Man, surely meaning who cares that cleaning staff wouldn't have left that smell rather than who cares that women have noses.

Sure enough, Matron says, “Because then why was the door locked?”

“You know,” says Big Man, “If you sweat the small stuff, we won’t score the big stuff.”

“Success in details,” says Sharp Woman.

Big Man says, “It’s time to leave.”

One of the conspirators stops for an apple on the way out, and Murphy has to summon all his temerity to hand one up to him without being discovered. When the room is deserted again, he notices a poster on the door. It shows a sleek city surfing on wild ocean waves. Covering towers, rooftops, malls and harbour is a diamond dome. Light dazzles off the dome even brighter than off the Blue Gold Booth. *Every Shopper’s Floating Garden—Elusha!*

On a nearby white blackboard are the lines of some exercise:

*Personally, I think the future is very exciting.*

*The future, I think, personally, is very exciting.*

*Very exciting, I think personally, is the future.*

*It’s always darkest before the dawn.*

*Before the dawn it’s always darkest.*

*Always it’s darkest before the dawn.*

Murphy slips out of Treasure Island Room but is still in the corridor leading to port promenade when the two boys emerge from the games arcade and give chase.

Murphy flees back toward bow and cuts into the walkway between the front cabins and shopping plaza. But one of the boys has circled over to starboard and now Murphy is trapped-- unless he zigs over to the spiral staircase. Instead he tries cabin doors and to his amazement, one of them is unlocked. He spills into cabin 2-524 and finds the lock in time.

After finding the light switch as well, he removes his shoes as he has been taught. Holding them, he takes a look around: two meagre single beds, like he imagines in a monastery, one on either side, at opposite ends. A desk on each side, each with some sort of fancy typewriter with screen. Each desk is piled with work, mathematical formulæ dealing with time on one side and portions of a speech saying how much the Global Garden cares about water, fish, plants, animals, birds, and air. On the wall of the mathematical side, a coloured rendering of a dark-haired woman gives Murphy a new jolt of *déjà vu*. This artwork is matched by another on the opposite wall of an auburn-haired woman. Both women seem familiar, and somehow the style of art does as well. The bursting style vaguely suggests Chagal and Ted Harrison whose scenes of the Yukon use simple lines and figures and romper room colours. In the lower right of each picture is the artist's imprimatur (Murphy has heard Malachi Blobinsky use that term): a stick man straddled over a circle.

Then Murphy hears women's voices outside the door, challenging the two boys and shooing them away. Still clutching the shoes, Murphy dives for hiding on the speechwriting side under the righthand bed.

## Section 6 Thoughts of Adoption

### **This section's 1963 Camp Vignettes**

This section's camp vignettes introduce Intermediate Camp's secret poker table, an official game called "Indians and Settlers," and the weekly hillside ceremony called Council Ring. Strictly against camp rules, Murphy joins George and his interloping friend Gisèle for a canoe ride in Intermediate Bay, collaborates with them as she infiltrates Indians and Settlers, and discovers Adrian's yen for poker. Dexter Singleton decides to have a "good talk" with Murphy one late morning, and reveals common acquaintances in Humphrey Straw and the great artist Malachi Blobinsky. Murphy has a difficult encounter with Murgatroy over the Chelsey Green boy's deluxe radio, and cleans rowboats for Friday clean-up in pursuit of Junior Camp Director's impossible ideals. Afterwards, George and Dexter show him a strange case of vandalism.

In this section, too, Widmark wonders if he could join the canoe-making classes, already underway. Even if he's in Section 3, he says, his aunt is Cherokee.

#### ◦ *Summary*-- Secret Table

Murphy has been paddling with George and Gisèle in her father's canoe. She has headed back to the village. Murphy doesn't want to return to Junior Camp along shore, as George is doing, because someone might see him. He insists on going his own way through the bush. On the other side of a dense bracken meadow, Murphy

follows an overgrown trail up a hillside. He encounters a knook in the trees; looking more closely, he discovers a round table tucked in between four stout pines. There's a canvas roof over the table. Pinned to the trees are a Union Jack, a *Playboy* pin-up, and a plastic-coated page giving the rules of poker. Murphy leaves just in time to escape notice of four Intermediate Campers coming up the trail: Gladwell Cleer, Mellon Head, Reddy Fox, and Older St. James. Cleer, the King of Intermediate Camp, with Senior-Camp alliances, has a cigarette going. He carries a big beach bag.

◦ *Summary-- Indians and Settlers*

Evening program on the Monday of Jack's first canoe-making class is Indian and Settlers. Earlier that day, when Gisèle sneaked into Intermediate Bay, she and George made the arrangements. They meet up under the big sugar maple he described to her. Near its roots, he's left a red handkerchief as sign. The game divides its players into two teams. Indians shove a red handkerchief against their spine under their waistband. Settlers do the same with their white handkerchiefs. This way they all have tails for the taking by those who can. High above Athletic Field is a flat open bluff where the Indians are to stake their flag. It has to be in the open and stay in one place, so that the game will be fair. The Settlers' goal is to capture the flag and return with it across the middle line in the Athletic Field below.

Gisèle isn't wearing her necklace or earrings. The small piercings in her earlobes, which had caused her parents to argue before she finally had her way, are the only tip to her true identity. Her hair's tucked up under a blue pirate-style bandana. She'll hunt down boys with white handkerchiefs. She'll pull out their

handkerchiefs and not get hers pulled. They'll have to go back down to the field and sit among the dead.

Village Kisisokôe, the local paper, has a youth call. They want stories of 500 – 1000 words, preferably with a good photo or two. The editor hates the English, especially rich ones, and pictures of girls beating boys, especially at their own games, can really move a paper.

Gisèle is carrying a green army bag. Inside is her father's camera with telephoto lens. She hands the bag to Murphy.

◦ *Summary-- Fishing and Afterwards*

Murphy has been asked to show Adrian around camp. On the Tuesday after the second canoe-making class, he gives in to Adrian's pressure to visit Intermediate Bay where he can fish. On their way back, Adrian discovers the secret poker table, though Murphy has tried to steer him a different way. Adrian has lots of experience playing poker, and when they encounter Gladwell Cleer, Adrian receives an invitation to their next game. Cleer admires Adrian's turquoise choker, a gift from New Mexico.

◦ *Summary-- Council Ring*

On Tuesday evening after the second canoe-making class, the whole camp attends Council Ring, an oblong of bleachers on the north bank above Athletic Field with a distant view from the top north side of Intermediate Bay. Cabe McCaffery lights the sacred council fire in the centre of the ring. No one is to cross between Big Chief's

chair and the council fire. Big Chief Mr. Castle wears an array of Native garments, including a Plains style war bonnet, given to him by “authentic Indians.”

Junior Camp Director presents new “braves” to be initiated, including George. When Junior Camp Director says the boy’s last name leading up to the solemn oath, the silence gasps. Next are various competitions, and Murphy is frustrated to come third in the paddle hold. Dexter Singleton cheats several times by surreptitiously locking the paddle grip against his wrists. JCD’s son lowers his paddle almost too far but lifts it back up. Nevertheless, JCD makes a great show of disqualifying him and celebrating Dexter’s success.

Adrian expresses his disgust afterwards. What makes these boys “braves” other than their parents paid a lot of money to send them here. Surely Murphy doesn’t think real Indians wear blankets and talk all solemn. Headresses are for the plains, and totem poles for the west coast. He tells Murphy some day he should come see where and how real Indians live. He also tells George about the poker invitation from Gaylord Cleer.

◦ *Summary-- Dexter-- Managing Chaos*

Half an hour before lunch on the day after Council Ring, Murphy sits on the porch of Main Lodge, sketching the ship’s bell, the roof of Jack’s tent, the water and far hills, when someone thumps his back. Dexter Singleton has just won his 33<sup>rd</sup> straight game of badminton. He calls Junior Camp Director “JCD.” He says Murphy could have beat JCD’s son if he’d “paced himself” (by cheating). He points out the “Kissy-cokers” can play by the rules, because the game’s fixed in their favour. Dexter

ridicules JCD for having disqualified his own son after the boy almost lowered his paddle too far but then recovered.

Then Dexter dispenses some advice on being an artist. It's best not to carry a sketchbook around. That can make one look like a sissy. The thing is to work fiercely in private and avoid the flowery fake stuff people mistake for art. Malachi Blobinsky-- the country's only "muscular artist"-- has seen Dexter's work and refers to him as "the young Norman Mailer of paint."

◦ *Summary*-- The Scion of Chelsey Green

Murgatroy St. James parks his trunk in Tent 19. He has soft curly hair, long lashes, and helpless baleful eyes that Helena would call the envy of females. On the day after his "artists' talk" with Dexter and one day before the first Visitors' Weekend, Murphy visits with Murgatroy in Tent 19, admiring the Chelsey Green boy's various possessions, such as his carrot orange suede windbreaker, which he keeps wrapped in a cashmere blanket and stored under his cot beside his trunk in a sanded wooden milk crate. It's nice but not as practical as Murphy's jacket, Murgatroy allows. It can't take the rain. George shakes his head later when Murphy tells him all this.

Murgatroy lets Murphy hold his deluxe radio-- but he must be careful. Very careful. As Murphy knows but can't always remember, sometimes trying too hard for something produces its opposite. Murgatroy winces as Murphy turns up Ray Charles singing "I Can't Stop Loving You," so Murphy shifts to adjust the volume. The radio slips and strikes the wood platform of the tent. Murgatroy shatters in a thousand pieces.

Murgatroy's parents visit that weekend in their Caramel Cadillac. When informed of the radio mishap, Mr. St. James gives Murphy a look of pain, then never looks at him again. The St. James take the damaged radio back to the city for a repair estimate. Murgatroy expects Murphy to pay. Murphy vows not to speak to or even look at Murgatroy again.

When informed, Dexter says Murgatroy has an aerosol can inside his prissy little chest. It was the grandfather's invention and source of family fortune.

"And you know what?" Dexter adds. "It's empty."

◦ *Summary-- As He Cleaned Row Boats*

Junior Camp Director is extra fired up about the importance of a good "thurrah" job during Friday afternoon clean-up. Tomorrow is Visitor's Day. Murphy, Dexter, and George are assigned to scrub all the row boats.

As they work, faces grim, Dexter says he met Mr. Saville once through his old hockey coach Humphrey Straw. Dexter says he'll call Humphrey. He's gone fishing with Warren Saville at least once, maybe even twice. Next lake over's best fishing in the Province of Gaulôre. Junior Camp Director's a grade-one suck-up to society-page people. He loves nothing more than getting a picture of them on the white sands of Camp Kisisokôe. Humphrey will arrange the fishing trip, and the Kissy-cokers' jaws will drop when they see the patriots owner making friendly with George and Murphy. and giving Dexter a ride in the. Dexter bets George his tuck account that he will swing the visit. When George loses, all Dexter asks is a ride in

the Chiang Kai Chek limo. These nobodies raised to think themselves somebodies need to see Dexter in action.

At supper a counsellor tells them Junior Camp Director did not pass their work and they will have to go back to it. If they hurry, they might be able to make the movie, *The King and I*. Murphy doesn't care about stupid musicals and love. He goes off to resume work on the row boats as rain begins to fall. Some time later, George and Dexter show up. They tell Murphy that Kris wants his drawing assistance, but he better hurry. They rush to Tent 24.

As they approach George points out something unusual: it looks like someone has laid out all the bedding on the ground. He complains that a quilt stitched specially by his grandmother will be soiled. Murphy worries about *The Return of Tarzan*. What if it is in the dirt open?

On the far side of Tent 24 they can make out the back of someone stealing off behind the cedars. He's wearing a carrot orange windbreaker.

"It's suede," says George. "Didn't you say Radio Boy has a *suede* jacket?"

◦ *Summary-- Special Request*

Widmark wonders if he could join the canoe-making classes, already underway.

Murphy petitions Jack on his behalf.

*Excerpt*

Jack paused in his whittling. Sitting one step above his father at the front of their tent, Adrian said, "*Il est trop jeune et en retard. Il manque les premiers pas. C'est pas correct pour nous autres.*"

Murphy said Widmark was from New Jersey. His father was an author on the *New York Times* best-seller list. Jack asked if Murphy was going to show Widmark his drawings of each step in the process so far.

## **2172: Excerpts and Summaries**

### *Summary-- Squeezed*

The two women find Murphy under the bed. They pull him out, leaving his shoes unnoticed. A red wig and dark glasses lie on a table. The woman who had been wearing them is auburn haired and seems athletic. The dark-haired one seems slimmer and more intellectual. These are the two Murphy had seen with Digana and Racine outside on deck 1-1, coming out of the office building. The auburn-haired woman also has a birthmark on her left cheek; Murphy places her as the female runner on the Race Announcement poster he saw upon arriving.

The auburn-haired woman accuses Murphy of having stolen her ring, which went missing a couple of weeks before. Murphy insists he arrived only today, by strange accident. They ask if he has a parent or guardian aboard, and he says no, nor can he show them any identity papers. They say he is liable to be thrown into CARE.

Murphy now recalls the race poster woman's name: Morgan. He learns that the dark-haired one is Ruby, and the two are sisters. Then it comes to him that they are the two women from his dream of the strange ship. He explains that he dreamt about them yesterday and shows them his drawings. They suggest that of course he would have seen all sorts of public images of Morgan, and even Ruby has a picture

at her Global Garden staff scientist page. Murphy repeats Viola's comment about Morgan: that she has good eyes and looks like someone who would care for the homeless. For some reason this annoys Morgan and she accuses him of having been put up to this by "Mr. Letourneau." That is the name the conspirators had used to refer to the man in the poster, the one with shoes like Murphy's.

Morgan is about to put Murphy outside when Ruby notices his drawing of the cat. She doesn't know how he could possibly have known about her Huckles. She suggests they let the boy stay,"on limited probation." Then she takes the cat drawing and leaves, as if wanting to take it somewhere or to someone for testing.

*Summary-- Morgan's Visitor*

Not long after Ruby leaves the cabin, a muffled sound comes from the ceiling. Morgan hustles Murphy into hiding in a bamboo laundry hamper.

A section of ceiling in the back corner draws back; a thick wound rope like the kind in gym class tumbles down. Using mainly arms because of his cybernetic leg, Woody Gold shinnies down the rope. He smiles like hockey captain after scoring the winning goal, then struts to Morgan's desk, reminding Murphy of the buck goat he saw one time with the Straws at Lake Champlain. He reads lines from the draft speech as if he's making the words up as he goes. His voice and cadence have the power of a symphony.

He says the speech should work, then asks, "What's wrong?"

Morgan explains how awful it is for Ruby being sent away from her family. Couldn't she be given a position working with Dr. Lepeintre, whose labs are

apparently in Red America. Maybe her family would be able to move east and join her. Woody says it's a shame but JR won't bend on resortation policy. "No favours," is one of his favourite mottos.

Next Morgan asks about Racine's proposed new adoption program. If Ruby could adopt a child, her spirits might return. Morgan thinks she knows of a boy who would be suitable. Woody isn't so sure the adoption program will move forward any time soon. JR sees it as threat to his baby CARE. The Woody asks for assurance that this isn't on board without papers. Morgan says of course not, but they'd like to bring him aboard tomorrow in gaulore and have him DNA tested right away rather than having to wait for DNA Thursday.

Woody wants to change the topic. He has a surprise for Morgan: her own cabin on Upper Deck. He says it will be nice for her and make things "more convenient." Morgan says she gets enough of Upper Deck each day going to the office and then the running track. She doesn't want to abandon Ruby. But if this adoption could be managed right away, she might reconsider.

Woody says all right, he'll speak to DNA.

Then they talk about the upcoming second race in Elusha. Morgan says not to expect miracles, it's tough if Letourneau gets to wear those weird shoes. Everyone realizes he's cheating, says Woody. It adds to the fun. He assures Morgan she should win the next one, and if things are looking bad after the third, Woody will do something about the shoes. In the meantime, he presents a bottle of brown liquid, something the researchers "rustled up." Morgan seems concerned but Woody says not to worry, it's "sports science."

Suddenly Woody feels dizzy, that is, he must be dizzy, because it seems as if things in the clothes hamper are moving around. Morgan kisses Woody. She says he's still dizzy from his rope exercise, so the kiss is an inoculation. He says he should take his shoes off and stay a while but Morgan prefers later that evening. She has track workout in fifteen minutes.

#### *Summary-- Running Track*

Murphy and Ruby go with Morgan to the Upper Deck private running track. Murphy takes a food capsule and wonders if it's why he feels a little sick. He's also dizzy after Ruby suggested sitting at the top of the bleachers. They settle on three rows up.

Ruby was unintentionally responsible for the Atalanta Competition. Her first day on board ship off the West Coast, back in mid-November, she'd been moping alone in the Galley when a man asked if he could sit at her table. He seemed uncomfortable in his lab clothes and smelled of Gauloise cigarettes. Cigarettes were illegal. He scribbled quickly, then handed her a caricature portrait. Her mouth was sad but he'd superimposed a lighter mouth that was happy. Even though he was suspicious, she thought he had a kind face. He was a plant biologist, Mr. Jason Letourneau. So his face must not always be smudged, thought Murphy.

Ruby introduced Letourneau to Morgan, and the sisters decided to play a trick they enjoyed. They made a friendly bet he couldn't beat Morgan in a 500 metre race. They went to the public track in middle ship, but it so happened Woody Gold was among the spectators, disguised in order to observe regular goings on about ship. Watching them run, he got the idea for the Atalanta Competition, something to

boost morale, since JR tended to be a downer. He contacted Letourneau afterwards, then ran a job search for a female competitor. When he selected Morgan, he didn't realize she was also trained in public relations.

Waiting for Letourneau to come out for a practice run, Ruby shows Murphy her family photos. She stands in flat dry country along a river, beside her son and husband. He holds up a small trout. They are native and Ruby is not, so she is being relocated.

Mr. Letourneau comes out and begins his stretches. He's the one who did the pictures of the two sisters on their cabin walls, and already on ship he's received impressive commissions. Ruby says they can show him Murphy's sketchbook after the workout. He'll be impressed, and maybe he'll have some good tips for Murphy's future.

The runners bend at the start line. Letourneau reaches back non-chalantly and taps the heels of his shoe. It's too far to see precise details, but Murphy knows what he is doing. Sure enough, a pink glow flutters around the shoes. As they loop the far end, Murphy gets his first look at their faces. Letourneau's is a smudge. Murphy asks how Ruby would describe Letourneau's nose. Just a nose, she says.

Morgan kicks into high gear and seems impossibly far ahead. But Letourneau throws his knees high, gains an extra spring, and the pink glow becomes fire engine red. He skims past Morgan, nears the finish line, and begins to fade. Murphy has the terrifying sense of watching someone die, and feels as if he will faint and never wake up. He can see through Letourneau to a little girl on the other side

watching through a glass door. She gestures amazed to her mother who pays no attention.

When Ruby tries to introduce Murphy to Letourneau after the race, he's evasive and just mutters platitudes before escaping to the locker room. Murphy hears his voice as if it comes from a closed cubicle. Where the mouth should be is a blur.

*Summary-- Slow-foor Taste in Fast-food Time*

Clumps of people linger over coffee in the Galley. They barely make it before closing. The girl behind the counter has a phony English accent. She talks in slogans and calls Murphy "sir." At the cutlery bin, Murphy encounters the lady in the blue hat. "We meet again, Stickman," she says. "See you later." She chuckles as if there is something funny about him. Ruby says the lady is her consultant, Madison Stanebate. "She knows things" and has spoken well of Murphy.

Despite the slogan, the food isn't very good. Morgan leaves the last of her eggs and takes out one of those small devices with buttons and a screen that lights up. She calls it a micro. Woody gave it to her and she insists it has special internet privileges, though Ruby rolls her eyes over Morgan's latest "mail" from a man in the UK who wants to meet her when she arrives. Morgan says it's not what Ruby thinks, because Morgan isn't using her real name. He isn't interested just because she's become a celebrity.

Ruby talks about a band of Objectors in the Rocky Mountains who refuse to be part of the Global Garden. When times are bad, they are said to trade their

children to smugglers. Murphy has the feeling the sisters are talking about things that could uncover information about him. Morgan tells Ruby that Woody has agreed to allow a DNA test tomorrow. If Murphy's DNA is more than 18.5% Native, they will have to sneak him off ship.

Morgan suggests they contact someone called "Ziggy" who might have ideas to help with their present predicament. But when Morgan tries sending Ziggy a message in Gaulôre, the device says "Access Denied." Then they notice Melvoy, a rough-looking sailor, someone they met recently in The Olde Sea Dog Lounge. Morgan says he's going shore leave tomorrow in Gaulôre. Maybe she should talk to him. "You know," she says to Ruby. "In case." Morgan goes off some ways to talk with Melvoy. They glance over at Murphy at one point. Then they both leave.

#### Summary-- *More through the Telescope*

Ruby and Murphy go out on Deck 1-1 and sit near the stern railing, near the great iron cage with its large pool of water. Although it's dark, patches and pools of light mark the shadowy city on shore. Ruby says Murphy can look at them through a nearby sight-seeing telescope.

He sees dark towers on Mount Bonpelier, with armed guards leaning out, throwing search beams through the dark desolate streets. On the mountain peak, the lighted cross has given way to a long pole called "Marie's Hoe." In a circle of blue and gold light at the top are the initials "GG."

Summary-- *Bedtime*

Using dividers, the sisters have set out a separate sleeping space for Murphy. Before bed, he works at calculating the average speed of *The Blue Gold* according to information and steps that Ruby has provided. He's not sure what a kilometre means, and still feels baffled by how a huge ocean liner can navigate from the west coast of the former Canada through the Bering Strait and Northwest Passage past Resolute Bay and down Davis Strait to the Hudson Sea and from there through the Great Lakes and into the St. Léonard Seaway.

A Global Garden officer calls at the cabin with an envelope for Ms. M. McWhitter, notes from Woody for a new rush speech for tomorrow's Procession. It needs to talk about relocation and use lots of French to flatter the locals. As the sisters discuss the speech, it comes out that 80% of people recently polled said they voted the way their children told them to. Ruby says not to put too much into the speech because Woody always throws away most of the text in favour of his latest Snuggle Kitten stories. It also comes out that Morgan stopped for a drink with Mr. Letourneau in the Captain's Lounge.

When Murphy goes to bed, Ruby lets him have her micro for twenty minutes before lights out. He agrees to search for useful information for the first ten minutes; he can then play a game or read comics for the final ten minutes. Murphy finds the official specs on *The Blue Gold*. He finds out what a kilometre means and is able to determine cruising speed: 35 k/ph.

"You didn't just look it up?" says Ruby.

"No," says Murphy.

## Section 7 Making to Sail

### **This section's 1963 Camp Vignettes**

This section's vignettes look more at Counsellor Kris's younger brother Jesse in his first year as a junior counsellor. They also find Murphy taking a cigarette at the secret poker table in Intermediate Camp, and swimming with Widmark and Adrian under the hawk eye of Dramatic Counsellor.

#### ◦ *Jesse*

Proud of his brother's military service, Jesse plans to enlist and serve in Vietnam now that a war appears underway. After that, he aims to be a musician. In the kisisokoe Hotel lounge, peering sweetly through his Buddy Holly glasses, he sings "I Can't Stop Loving You" nicer than Ricky Nelson, playing piano like Marty Robbins. A day after the St. James family visit, he stops by Tent 24 for an arm wrestle with his older brother. When he wins the left arm bout, Kris declares the next time they're in the hotel together he'll buy Jesse a CAHN-eh-jun.

Two days later, on his way through the tent line, Murphy happens to meet Jesse and hears the latest news. The hotel manager's son Zee was pretty impressed when he heard Jesse sing "Ruby Ann." Zee's a special genius who writes "beat" poetry, no end rhymes, regular metre, or flowers. Being French (like Jack Kerouac), he mixes languages, too. Jesse is going to play piano for Zee at his next reading. "Free form, man."

Later that week, when Jesse visits Tent 24 during Quiet Hour, Kris doesn't seem too happy with him. His usually athletic stride is a little unsteady, and during Murphy's reading from *Tarzan of the Apes*, he laughs unexpectedly at disturbing moments and can't seem to stop.

◦*Summary*-- Royal Flush

After Quiet Hour on Sunday, several boys from Intermediate Camp, three from junior Camp, and one visitor play hookey from afternoon program and slip away to the secret poker table on the forested hillside deep in the bush of Intermediate Camp past the bracken meadow. Murphy tells himself that no one ever takes roll call at program. He's virtually invisible and won't be missed, especially today, since the counsellors running soccer don't even know him. He'd told George he didn't really care about going to poker, but George as a "valued business partner"-- in other words, still possessing a number of *Playboy* magazines he could barter for cigarettes and safe passage back and forth-- is so proud of his power get Murphy in, that Murphy just can't say no. He also thinks someone should look out for Adrian.

*Excerpt*

"Fold," says Reddy Fox, who is also the bank. He tosses down his cards.

"Fold," says Melon Head.

George peeks at Murphy's hand, exchanges a nod with Dexter at Murphy's shoulder, and whispers "fold."

Relieved, Murphy drops his hand and says fold.

“Ill see you,” George says, and he tosses two chips into the pot.

“I’ll raise you,” says Adrian, and he drops four chips into the pot.

“I’ll see you,” Gladwell says, reaching across with four chips.

Gladwell’s also the dealer. He can shuffle the deck so fast the cards blur into a wave of light.

Gladwell waves off a mosquito. “James!” he shouts. Older St. James leaves his crossword and circles the table spraying a gooey-smelling repellent from a big red aerosole can.

“Fold ,” says George.

Dexter isn’t playing this hand. Having won the last one big time, he’s sitting out in order to coach Murphy.

Gladwell and Adrian don’t raise each other any more. As George explains later, Gladwell has a flush but Adrian has a royal flush, which means he wins again. Two hands ago Gladwell got “rivered,” meaning Adrian won with the last card dealt. It gave him a boat while Gladwell had a rainbow. Adrian gets another \$15 to go with the \$7 he’s already collected. Unless he gets very unlucky, he’ll get to keep his turquoise choker.

Gladwell seems as calm and cool as ever. He’s heard that Murphy is quite the artist.

“*Un autre Cézanne,*” says George. Older St. James raises his head for a moment, looks at them and wrinkles his nose as if at a sudden stench.

Gladwell thinks Murphy should do some character studies during the next round—omitting the poker pot, of course, and other tell-tale signs of underground activity. Then whoever wins the afternoon can buy his favourite drawing from Murphy for \$5 and donate it to the Lodge.

“Don’t assume that means you, my friend,” Gladwell says to Adrian. “I plan to triple my raises this time.

Before the afternoon winds down, Gladwell gives Murphy a cigarette and everyone watches with amused anticipation as he tries not to gag. Murphy doesn’t like the way Melon Head, Reddy Fox, and Older St. James share looks behind George’s back, making faces when he mispronounces a word or uses a wrong one. Murphy knows it’s useless trying to get George or Adrian to leave, even though Dexter has warned them that Gladwell could be a “rounder.” Once his dizziness passes, Murphy’s going to leave.

*Excerpt-- Buddy-up!*

From top of the water slide, lifeguard’s whistle shrills three times. His deep man’s voice booms through the megaphone. “Buddy-up!” Boys stop whatever they’re doing and stand straight, holding their swimming buddy’s hand in the air. Murphy stands near George and Dexter, who have buddied up. A wave of panic rolls through Murphy, but then Widmark emerges from underwater, choking with pride. They look at each other in

confusion. Where is Adrian? Every so often Lifeguard grudgingly permits a threesome.

Dramatic Counsellor looks on from a nearby dock along the east side.

“Buddy up, you two,” he orders with a trace of Cabe.

“We’re looking for our third,” says Murphy.

Dramatic Counsellor cups his hands and bellows *Ponokaminkway!* His voice crackles across the water like electricity. You can tell how he loves to send that name rolling from his tongue. Murphy follows the counsellor’s gaze west and sees the tumbling bodies in Intermediate Swim two football fields down the shoreline. For a moment a strange dizziness overcomes him and he feels half asleep, then falling, like that time on the toboggan with Jimmy Straw. This must be what it feels like to hurtle down the water slide.

A hospital bed hangs above Intermediate Swim. A nurse like Viola pulls a canvas spread up over someone. Murphy can’t see the sick person’s face. There are lines of seaweed and algae on the canvas and starfish sliding off it.

Dramatic Counsellor seems to hear something. He bends down and peers under the dock. Swimming under docks is “strictly prohibited,” along with throwing sand, and diving in the shallow areas.

“Hey,” says dramatic counsellor in a voice as booming as the megaphone voice. It sounds nothing like Cabe now. It’s more like a loud

ventriloquist. “Come out from under there.” Adrian’s puzzled face pops up out of the water. Murphy can’t hear, but Dramatic Counsellor seems to be speaking to him solemnly a little in the manner of Non-denominational Church Minister. The counsellor points to Murphy and Widmark. Others stand shivering, holding their buddy’s hand, resentful. Adrian heads toward Murphy and Widmark in no great haste, still more puzzled and even annoyed, it seems, than what Helena would call contrite.

Every eye in junior swim is on them. Murphy can almost feel Big Lifeguard shaking from his tower on high. Murphy wishes Adrian were on a line so he could tow him over lickety-split. He’s never seen anyone able to sashay in water before, but Adrian has managed it.

“*Eh bien,*” says George when Adrian finally sashays past him. “*Au milieu.*” Adrian stands between Widmark and Murphy and they hold up his hands. He looks back at the resentful and judgemental eyes like there’s something sadly wrong with the whole lot of them.

### **2172 Summaries and Excerpt**

The sisters go back to their keyboard clak-clak--clakking and Murphy notices something called “Search History.” A page called “Feral Children” talks about wolf children and someone called Kaspar Hauser who was kept all alone in a dark cell. Then there is a discussion of something called “psychosocial short stature” caused by the stress of threatening conditions together with not having enough education.

Murphy knows the sisters think he's under-educated. What if they also think he's too short? Furthermore, they want to test his DNA. Murphy searches DNA and finds that it's "the hereditary material in humans and most other organisms." It can tell who your parents were, what ethnic group you come from.

The boy thinks about his dream telling him that Native people couldn't be on this ship or there'd be some sort of trouble. Murphy doesn't think he's ever met a real Native person, but he remembers Viola and Nestor mentioning that sometimes they get treated mean.

Murphy notices the pages on feral children were visited in the last two hours. What if the sisters think he's feral, possibly Native, and impossible to educate? He searches for bands of people living in the Rocky Mountains and reads different reports of "objectors" who choose "isolation and subsistence" in the wild over the usual life of the Garden. Nothing says that these people are Natives, but they *are* considered rebels against proper education.

Murphy finds the Global Garden home page. There are statements on Restoration along with bios of Woody Gold and JR Elmore Fish. Murphy feels reassured that Restoration doesn't discriminate against Native people but actually restores their entitlement. He's equally reassured, after searching DNA, that authorities won't find much or any Native ancestry in him as only his great uncle Claude on Viola's side is suspected of having had a father who was rather "forward" with some of the Native women he met. The only worry about remaining on ship with Morgan and Ruby is that everyone has to get inoculated against a new virus that recently cut the population of Yurope in half.

Murphy next finds a timeline of Métropole history from 1962 to 2172. His head whirls. For some reason, he's most struck by how the angel on the spire of Bienfaisance Cathedral was altered when the building changed from church to homeland security headquarters. No longer opening her arms wide to comfort sailors from around the world, the former angel holds up a garden spade. Her wings have disappeared. But one can barely glimpse her now, since waters of the Second Great Flood have risen up to her uplifted elbow. Sailing in and out of harbour, whoever catches first sight of Spade Lady has good luck and gets to punch someone nearby on the shoulder.

Then Murphy imagines what Helena would suggest searching for on the micro. Since he's way past 1962, she'd want to know what happened to some of the most interesting people then, like President and Jacqueline Kennedy. Murphy feels stunned by what he finds. President Kennedy was assassinated over 200 years ago in Dallas, Texas, on November 22, 1963. Denny Blake's name appears in blue, which links Murphy to more information about him. Apparently Blake horrified people after the murder by saying he could imagine what it felt like to be the assassin. Denny Blake was much later inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. His biggest album was *Hot Shoes*. Murphy doesn't click on the title in blue.

He decides enough. He will take action against this increasingly unpleasant dream of 2172. Since he can't seem to wake up, he'll use his shoes to go back to 1962 NDC. He'll simply will them to go where he wants. Once home, he'll put these smart-aleck shoes to further use.

Murphy recalls the Chaussurie SheShe woman with the deep voice like Madison Stanebate's saying that she'd seen him before. Maybe she didn't mix him up with someone else. Maybe she *had* seen him before. Because he's not only going back to NDC, he's going to take up Mr. Straw's offer of the flyers job. He'll win the most-new-customers contest, meet the Golden Jet as a fringe benefit, and use his hard-earned money to buy Helena and Viola their gifts. Not only will he have presents for the party, he'll also still have seen *Tarzan and the Lost Safari*. Who says you can't still have your cake and eat it, like Viola likes to repeat.

A song startles Murphy. It comes from Ruby's side of the room. It's Denny Blake singing about a great ocean liner that sinks. Ruby then realizes it's almost 40 minutes past lights out and comes for her micro. Murphy asks what she was playing. She shows him an old album cover-- from 200 years ago. Someone had imagined Mr. Letourneau's shoes back then. The front cover is a picture of those shoes. Ruby says it's similar to one of Murphy's drawings. But the picture on the old album jacket isn't just similar: it's *identical*. Murphy assumes that awful man Hooter had to be behind this, though Murphy's name isn't mentioned anywhere. There is an autograph on the album jacket in purple ink: "To Carla. Go for it. Denny." Carla was Ruby's great grandmother seven times great. She went to McDuff Academy for engineering at a time when women were supposed to be housewives, nurses, teachers, or secretaries.

Next morning the sisters take Murphy for his DNA sample. It doesn't hurt. The man just scrapes the inside of Murphy's cheek. Then the boy and sisters join the gathering crowd on main deck as everyone prepares for the procession.

Great screens flash images of marching bands, dignitaries, bright ribbons, balloons, and a ceremonial bucket of champagne. Then on every screen the same special video presentation: early Europeans in funny wigs and plumed hats exchanging gifts and pieces of paper with solemn Indians. A shift of music. Slow, minor key. Hungry Indians, children desperate, villages diseased, graves, stony reserves, schools like jail houses, jail bars, city bars... then another shift back to major key, brisk, from despair to triumph. Things Murphy was told could never happen—a Native man sitting in parliament, waving a large eagle feather, a Native woman entering court in judge's robes, others in lab coats, at fancy dinners accepting awards, driving funny little crunched-up cars, shopping ... and finally shaking hands on shore, bidding farewell like Murphy's parents as the train pulls out of Chelsey Green Station.

*Salut salut salut*

After the video Woody Gold gives a speech, Digana sings , and JR tries to speak but the audience grows restless and Digana cuts him short. JR then hustles down the long gangplank to the island where more passengers are waiting to board. The procession marches onto *The Blue Gold* with enormous pomp and splendour. Even if no one else realizes, it's a Murphy birthday celebration like none other.

*Excerpt-- Departure*

The great procession pours up the swaying gangplank. Marching band followed by lumbering bear, by Mr. Fish intently pressing buttons at its tail, by a double line of travellers stretching all the way back to the island.

*“Mesdames, Messieurs,”* cries Digana, *“Filles et garçons...  
Souhaitez la bienvenue – aux comarades en voyages... et le magnifique  
Polaire!”*

A huge shout surges across ship. The band passes the stage and a camera catches Digana and Woody smiling across at the great animal ... and at Racine, tugging gently on the folds of fur and skin behind its ears.

“That’s quite the young woman, wouldn’t you say,” says Morgan.

“Indeed,” says Ruby. “You wouldn’t get me up there.”

A red ribbon tying back Racine’s pony tail dances in the morning gusts as the procession heads down the port deck toward the fence into Exclusive. Murphy’s eyes follow it all the way. Attendants open the gate. Racine, Mr Fish, and several others continue toward stern. Newly arrived waves of passengers mill about, making for replenished carts of Blue Gold and asking directions to their assigned cabins. A last rag-tag lot follows their escorts directly to stairways down to the hold.

“Oh look,” cries Morgan. Murphy follows her pointing hand over the bow, past the Liberty Torch and down to the sea where eight blue Wales frolic against their chains. Murphy begins to feel tingles all over his neck and shoulders right up past his ears as the loud speakers pound out the deep regular pulsing drumbeat of the whales: OOOMMMFFF....

OOOMMMFFF...OOOMMMFFF

“They’re talking to each other,” says Ruby.

“They’re as excited as we are,” says Morgan.

Meanwhile a matching rhythm of mechanical magic takes hold as the nearest great mast rumbles from its well, clambers up, up, up. Mighty arms unfold, stretching out great wide sails. Behind this first mast you see three others also rising and spreading pure white majesty in line to the stern. A hum and rumble. Your feet tremble with new vibration. Chains creak, squeal, anchors wheel upwards, buckets from a well. Turbines lower and whirl. Back on shore, three cannons blast. Involuntarily, people step back from the Office Block as from the rooftop, Ship's Bell bursts forth:

*CLANG-CLANG-CLANG*

Murphy has to lean on the rail. He's never felt this faint before. It can't be real; it's more spectacular than anything he's ever seen or imagined. Not even Tarzan dashing through treetops the way you dash down a sidewalk seems equal to this. He watches the Liberty Torch. Far below the mighty dark shadows weave their effortless tack forward .

"Maybe, we'll see her," says Morgan.

"Maybe we will, says Ruby."

Whatever they're referring to, Murphy knows that being up high partly explains his dizziness, but for the first time ever, he thinks he might actually like this. Moist air fills his lungs. The only pall, as Viola would say, happens as they leave the new shoreline of Métropole behind. Murphy catches a passing fear that someone has fallen overboard. Off to port an arm rises from the waves, surely calling for help. But then the boy notices a small garden spade in the motionless upright hand.

“There!”

“Yes, it’s her.”

“I saw her first—my good.”

“Ow,” says Ruby, Morgan having punched her on the shoulder.

## Section 8 Latchkey Kid *Sans Clef*

### **This section's 1963 Camp Vignettes**

This section's vignettes deal further with consequences of Murgatroy's broken radio and with more vandalism. They find Murphy at his private sketching spot, having received a letter from home and remembering Jimmy Straw's violation of Nestor's Luger. He also draws a memory sketch of Widmark at the last day of canoe-making and has a moment alone with Kris.

#### *Excerpt-- Opening Vignette-- Little Dipper*

One night when it was too hot and muggy for the boys to sleep, Kris let them sit quietly on the tent steps and look at the dizzying spread of stars.

He pointed out the Little Dipper and said there was a famous child pickpocket in Brownsville, like some urchin out of *Oliver Twist*, who was the most expert pickpocket in Texas. The press called him "The Little Dipper."

#### ◦ Summary--*More Radio Waves*

On Monday after first Visitor's Weekend, Murgatroy's family phone in the repair estimate to Tuck Shop Counsellor who tells Murgatroy who tells Murphy. Murphy empties his \$50 Tuck Account and tops that up with the last savings from his paper route to pay the \$80 estimate. A day later Murgatroy relays another telephone message: the actual repair bill came in at \$92.75. Murphy says he doesn't have any

more money right at the moment, and Dexter tells Murgatroy the safest thing for his pretty face is to disappear immediately. Murgatroy gasps like in the movies. He says that is a threat. He is going to tell his brother in Intermediate Camp whose priest works at Lord Wobeson Academy with Mr. Merritte.

That afternoon Murphy finds Tent 24 vandalized again. This time his *Tarzan of the Apes* is in the dirt, open. Next day Dexter leads Murphy, George, and a boy from Tent 17 who says he witnessed the vandalism to the Administration Building to report the misdeed and the prime suspect. Mr. Merritte is away on family business, but Dexter says that's good, because JCD is more liable to deal harshly with the "malefactor."

Egged on by Dexter, Murphy concedes that he did see a boy fleeing the scene in Murgatroy's suede jacket. But after these words, a sinking realization hits him. It was *raining* when they saw the boy running from Tent 24, and Murgatroy would never wear his jacket in the rain. Murphy suddenly realizes why Murgatroy strangely accused him yesterday of marking his jacket. He recalls hair the colour of Adrian's over the jacket collar.

Before they leave the Administration Office, JCD produces a copy of *Paroles Village Kisisokôe*. There is the article by Gisèle about killing English boys, and there is Murphy's photo. He tries hard to hide his laboured breathing as he searches for an attribution. Then he must disguise his relief, because the photo says "anon." JCD asks if they saw any boy taking this photo. Murphy realizes he can say "no" and not be lying, though Nestor might call that a technicality. JCD assures them Mr. Merritte

will be consulting his village contacts shortly. The photographer will certainly be found and dealt with.

That night, after a sour stew in the dining hall, Kris hustles Murphy outside. The boy throws up violently. Kris takes Murphy to the Infirmary where he spends the night, observed every so often by Nurse O'Flaherty with her bubbly laugh.

Summary-- *Driftwood Log 1*

Murphy has staked out his own private place for solitude, art, and reflection. Along the shore, it's far enough from Intermediate Swim that memories of his hospital bed vision are muted. Being here, he thinks, will keep whatever it is away.

Summary-- *Letter from Home*

Helena's portion of the letter described a magnificent Chinese restaurant she and Esther had gone to. They will take Murphy there between end of camp and start of school. Helena said Nestor was going extra long hours on his sailing clipper, which was now almost completed. She thought he should win some sort of award for it. He was going to write Murphy soon, with clippings of Métropole Mohawks games. Helena didn't know much about them, except Murphy would be pleased with the results. She did worry about Nestor's back pains and wished he'd slow down a little more. Viola sent her love and would send another postcard and box of date squares soon.

Then Helena told the latest tale of Aunt Hilary. She'd been watching the planes that flew over their rooftop dropping toward Dorval Airport to Métropole

west or real south. She'd noticed that for two weeks now they'd been flying lower and lower. Soon they would clip the roof. Outraged by this laxity—another sign of French bureaucratic indifference to matters in the Anglo districts—Aunt Hilary assailed the local police station. There a cheerful young French Canadian constable told her to wait. He went into the back and came out with a push-button control. He advised the good lady which buttons to push when planes began flying too low.

“Your Aunt reports that the device works marvellously. ‘Some French gentlemen are models of citizenry,’ she declared. ‘I always said so.’”

William said he'd been getting lots of practising done and was now moving on to some difficult Bach pieces. Before closing, he said he wished the police would do more to try to locate Nestor's stolen Luger which had been missing since the birthday party last fall. The police kept saying they had the serial number on file, as if that was an answer. Sure they'd questioned a few people, but what did they expect them to say? Ya, I stole it. Cushy government jobs—Murphy should steer clear of them if he didn't want to turn into a barnacle.

*Excerpts—Driftwood Log*

◦ Under the draping willow boughs, screened by ash thickets on either side, Murphy can look out, unseen. A football field to his left, Junior Swim rages, shivering lifeguards posted along the corral of floating platforms. No one missed Murphy this time, thank goodness. It's hard to catch a moment to himself. A football field to his right, the same shivering bustling scene with Intermediate Swim.

Leaning back against the big driftwood log, he settles his sketchbook against his knees and tries to see the Luger as clearly as Macbeth sees the imaginary dagger before his eyes.

◦ Murphy's parents hadn't been gone more than a couple of minutes when he heard a bird-whistle just down the hall. Sensing bad news, Murphy looked out from the parlour where he intended they would play table hockey. From the doorway of Nestor's office, Jimmy gestured *c'mere*, urgent and excited, like in a silent movie.

Helena and William wouldn't be home from classes for another half hour at least. Aunt Hilary was taking afternoon tea at Murrays with the Royal Tree Ladies. John Fitzsimmons had gone with their parents, not that having him here would stop Jimmy. *Now we can look at the Luger*, the eager boy said. Murphy pointed out that Nestor locked the gun in his desk drawer and kept the key locked somewhere else. Jimmy opened his hand and there was the drawer key. Behind him, the metal cabinet door gaped open. One black army boot lay overturned.

*We can't*, Murphy said. *My Dad wouldn't like it.*

Jimmy reminded Murphy that he'd sneaked down the long curved World War I sabre from the Straws' basement ceiling beams—even though Mr. Straw had said never, never touch Grandfather's sabres. Murphy got to hold it.

Buddy- up whistle blows from Junior Swim.

◦ Jimmy thinks it's a good idea to see how cartridges go in the magazine.

Murphy says his dad doesn't keep ammunition in the house and it's time to put the gun back. Jimmy looks thoughtfully at the akimbo boot. *Balance, son, balance.* He's mimicking his father. Jimmy goes over to the cabinet and finds the two boxes of bullets in the toe of the other boot.

Murphy has never felt so cold or frozen. A sickening spray whooshes through him. His knees stiffen straight as if in vices. This must be what people call terror. You never know what these abstract nouns mean until some moment like this with no way to stop the scene and no US cavalry around the bluff. All Murphy can think to do is fight Jimmy for the gun—and that would make a mess as bad as a bullet hole. That's what Miss Carat calls a tragedy—a situation with only doomed options.

Meanwhile Jimmy has instinctively mastered the small trigger on the magazine that lets you drop each bullet in place. He puts in eight rounds and clamps the magazine up, but it won't click into place.

*Don't jam it, don't jam it,* Murphy cries.

*Relax.*

Jimmy can't pass any of his reading or math quizzes, but he understands tools and instruments like what Viola calls "a born genius." He pulls out the magazine and removes one round. He pops the magazine back, and this time everything clicks.

Next he's pointing the Luger into the corner.

*Hold it right there*, he says, throwing Murphy a proud look with what seems an unmistakable note of mischief gone mad.

*Put it down! Cries Murphy. Put it down!*

◦ Helena arrives the same time as Murphy's parents, and they all agree after Jimmy leaves that he has the manners of a perfect gentleman. While Helena recalls tell of his having used vulgar comparisons in days past, he's now mastered respect for social proprieties that Murphy would do well to observe. A paragon, says Viola. He and his father, who has taught him so well, will be a delight at the party.

Everything's back exactly like it was: bullets out of magazine and back in beige box; beige box back in toe of boot; empty magazine back in pistol grip; breechlock cocked open, locked by safety; pistol back in squeaky leather holster, holster back in drawer, pipe tobacco back on top of holster; desk drawer locked; key in toe of other boot; boots side by side exactly as before inside closed cabinet. No bullet hole anywhere. No telltale smoke. *What a nervous Nelly*, Jimmy had said. *Can't you see the safety's on?*

*Hey Dad*, Murphy could say as if thinking of something "out of the blue." *Shouldn't you make sure your cabinet's locked? Sound care-free. You know, the one in your office?*

Yeah, sure

*What makes you ask that?* Nestor will say.

This is all Jimmy's fault. He wants Murphy to confess his indifference to Nestor's history, or lie to him. What would Miss Carat say to that?

◦ He simply can't see the Luger as clearly as Macbeth sees the imaginary dagger. So Murphy takes out his shameful support, the Brownie box photo snapped in a mad dash after Jimmy unloaded the magazine in Nestor's office and ducked out to the bathroom. When the police asked Nestor for a picture of the missing gun, thank goodness he had one. Murphy didn't have to struggle with whether to reveal his secret snap.

The work's not proceeding to the boy's satisfaction. He whacks a willow branch away in frustration. By the time Junior and Senior Swims to either side of him sound their final Buddy-ups, however, he's got what might be at least a pre-draft. In middleground a wildly tattooed biker stands like a statue, frozen by the ray guns of police officers who have him surrounded. All the officers look like Murphy. One reaches up to the biker's right hand for his Parabellum P-08 with the letter "Y" over the barrel.

◦ Jack and Adrian will spend the next couple of days replacing old totem poles with replica carvings of authentic masks. They've agreed to be on hand after that for special demonstrations of traditional dancing over visitors' weekend. On Monday they're off to Lac des Isles for five days of

fishing. They'll return Saturday morning in time for the new birch bark canoe honouring ceremony and virgin launch.

As Jack explains how the canoe needs 40 ribs to give it shape and strength, Adrian rolls his eyes. Widmark has mosied up beside him.

Widmark's wearing his blue polka-dot tie.

Widmark examines Adrian's neck.

"Hey," that's a cool choker. "It's a lot like my aunty's."

Widmark pronounces the word so it rhymes with "haunt," which sure sounds funny. His mother and sister are half Cherokee, he says. His father's researching a book on their family. Adrian looks at Widmark like he wonders is the American boy making fun.

*Excerpt--Alone with Kris 1*

Murphy sits on his cot in a rare moment. He's by himself. The others are still at afternoon swim-- or, in the case of George, at poker with Gladwell, Adrian, and Dexter-- but Murphy's declared his own Murphy rule: late afternoon is for floating alone in his private mind. He's checked off another day in the back of his sketchbook—just 10 more as of tomorrow. He's trying to decide whether to go back down to the driftwood log for one more drawing of the mountains and thickets or perhaps find somewhere else when Kris arrives.

"Not swimmin'?"

Murphy shakes his head. Because he teases Kris a little sometimes, he says, “Not swim patrolin’?”

Kris says no but acts pretty secretive about what he’s up to. He changes out of his everyday clothes and starts putting on the ones he wears into town. He puts on the gold wrist which is only for special occasions. It was a gift from his father honouring his step into manhood at the time he was assigned to the Military Assistance Advisor Group.

Finally he tells Murphy that he’s been invited to dinner with senior staff, but it’s best not to mention this. When a substitute counsellor heads their table for supper, just say that Kris was meeting with some staff on camp business.

Murphy suspects this will be a family dinner with Mr. Merritte’s younger daughter on hand, but he decides it’s best not to tease about that. So he mentions the news Jesse gave him a few days ago about playing piano with Zee. To Murphy’s surprise, Kris’s face gets as hard and disapproving as Viola’s can sometimes get. This doesn’t even seem like Kris anymore. Murphy doesn’t expect he’s going to say anything, but finally he says there’s no doubt the manager’s son is creative, “but some folks ain’t the best inFLEW-inse.”

## **2172 Summary**

Morgan has to lead classes in cultural adaptation, and Ruby has her science research. They show Murphy where he can find them both in case anything urgent comes up.

He will, however, have to be on his own for four or five hours. The cabin door will be locked. Morgan gives him a \$20 money card and a paper saying he is Murphy Beckridge in temporary custody of Ruby Bigrock and Morgan McCallister. The paper bears a Global Garden stamp and the signature of Capo Giardiniere himself. Murphy is to show it only as a last resort and not let it out of his possession.

He can visit the petting zoo in the atrium by the food court and find a private bench there to draw. It will also be all right to spend an hour and a little money in the games arcade. At 1:30 p.m. he is to visit Madison Stanebate, the woman in the blue hat. Ruby has arranged it.

Murphy's plan is to sneak the cabin card-key out of Ruby's handbag, get his shoes from under the bed, return the key, and take off back to NDC, September 1962. He wonders if Madison Stanebate might be the one to tell how to operate the shoes.

But the two tough boys from the hold spot Murphy. In trying to escape them, he winds up hiding again in the pseudo-apple barrel in Treasure Island Room. Once again he overhears a secret meeting, this between Big Man and Jason Letourneau. Letourneau defends himself, saying the Atalanta Competition wasn't his idea. Capo Giardiniere insisted, leaving no choice. Letourneau suggests the race could play into their plans. By race seven—if the competition goes that long—*The Blue Gold* will be in quarantine along the UK coast. Letourneau knows someone with influence close to CG. It might be possible to dock at Graymore military compound and hold the last race there. How convenient to be placed right inside their target. Big Man wants further assurance that Letourneau's "stuff" is really reliable. He says it is. Big Man

says that given what's secretly stored in the hills above that base, if anything touches off, goodbye Western Yurope. Not that some of his colleagues would care.

Once out of Treasure Island Room, Murphy hurries back to the atrium where he became separated from his sketchbook. But the toughs catch him, and he's forced to nick Ruby's card-key. Before the boys reach Cabin 2-524, however, a police officer stops them, demanding which one is Murphy Beckridge. Suspicious of the two toughs, the officer has them escorted back to the hold, which gives Murphy a feeling of righteous satisfaction. Then the officer leads his new charge up to Level 4-1 to a fancy café, Strictly Continental.

It turns out Murphy is command guest of Racine who is curious about boys and wants to be properly educated for her future as a sister to Nexus as well as Global Garden advocate of social programs. She intends to overturn Mr. Fish's CARE program as well as implement proper adoptions and foster care. Over Eggs Benedict prepared by a specially selected French chef, Racine reveals she is test subject for Human Enhancement Research (HER). Implants at the base of her skull help test the limits of power in math, music, memory, astronomy, physics, athletics and—at present—dream functions.

She had a dream about Murphy in fact a few days before he arrived. A voice said, "This squirt will hit the page." But precognition is deemed unscientific, so Racine had said nothing about her foresight. Other unusual powers seem to have been triggered by the dream implant. Shortly before arranging the café brunch, Racine had heard Murphy's voice telling her he was going to visit Madison Stanebate. Was that so? The boy considers it best not to lie. Racine doesn't approve

of Madison Stanebate. She is a natural-born psychologist but uses her insights for trickery. She's bitter and lonely and understands how to gull others. People are so superstitious still, says Racine, despite the end of religion. Madison Stanebate breeds fear. People think she can help remove bad magic. They also believe that she can cast an evil spell. "But throw Madison Stanebate the hardball of science and she strikes out every time." Murphy feels tempted to confide in Racine about his hot shoes but can't quite do so.

Murphy does mention that his sketchbook went missing in the atrium. Racine says not to worry, she'll have it returned after her meetings. At the moment she must run, but first she gives him her pink micro and call code and says, "Let's keep in touch."

Before leaving Upper Deck, Murphy stops at a boutique called ~~Not~~ In the Club and finds two new gifts for Helena and Viola. Then he hurries back to the cabin to retrieve his shoes. But Madison Stanebate is waiting out front, wanting to move their session forward. She leads him directly to her cabin, which proves to have the only big cushy armchair that Murphy has seen on ship. Surrounded by candles, signs, symbols, and potions, Madison takes the arm chair and Murphy the deck chair. A chain smoker, Madison praises "that wonderful Mr. Letourneau" who supplied her current stock of Gauloises.

She gives her guest some Blue Gold, referring to it somewhat sarcastically as "the one and only woo-dah." She says her clients include over half the scientists and dignitaries on board including Woody, Digana, and physics superstar Ruby Bigstone. Most of them think Madison uses some sort of technology, even though

science still regards precognition one of the remaining scientific impossibilities. Few seem to listen when she says she gives strong probabilities, not absolutes. Why view yesterday as a hunk of cement and tomorrow as thin air past the edge of a cliff? She laughs.

Madison tells Murphy to relax and see in his mind. He describes his vague impression of a horizontal blue line. Madison tells him to turn around and look at the object she was projecting. He sees a book with a blue spine lying on its side, the first book he has seen in 2172. Madison says Murphy has “talent no more, no less, than our remarkable Mr. Letourneau.” But both are missing something. Again, her laugh.

Although the ring hanging from Murphy’s neck is hidden by his jersey, Madison asks to see it. She says it’s a “slave ring,” having come over with Africans on the slave ships of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Rolling it in her palm before returning it, she remarks, “She’s a good one.”

Madison explains that while she relies on no tools whatsoever apart from her mind, touching objects can connect certain readers to the subject. It’s called psychometry. Murphy should think about what it could mean for the problems he faces. Furthermore, he should consider how he has been wearing the ring. Isn’t this the way people usually wear important tokens of other people? Her expression says put two and two together, but she abruptly announces that it’s time for his one question.

Murphy asks if it is possible certain people are scheming against the Garden, and could Mr. Letourneau be involved? Murphy would like to ask him some advice on how to make something work, but he isn’t sure if that would be wise.

Madison-- who has told Murphy to call her Mrs. Stanebate-- assures Murphy there *are* what she calls subversives. Some don't like the food supply system. Some don't want the artificial intelligence experiments. Some don't want Elusha, others Excelsior. Some don't want any technology at all. Of course, Restoration has triggered many new malcontents, and few are fans of CARE. They mostly all agree on restoring natural species, cleaning up centuries of pollution, and using clean energy—but they disagree fiercely on how. Some even want religion back— can you really fault them? Why can't we have *open* online networks? Many don't trust a thing they're told. They don't believe atomic weapons have been rounded up, disabled and destroyed. Some believe they have been concealed in one formidable compound, a monopoly of terror.

Murphy, Madison says, is “up to his neck in this ship.”

He's heading down the corridor away from her room when she calls him back. She hands him a white candle and says “happy birthday.” She tells him white candles bring calm and acceptance. She says they help the soul when crossing over. “Your father's a fine man,” she says as Murphy heads away again. “You have something of his, don't you?”

## Section 9 Insight and Farewell

### **This section's 1963 Camp Vignettes**

All of this section's vignettes find Murphy at the driftwood log, his private drawing place. There he speculates about changing the past. He also thinks about Aunt Hilary and remembers his experiences during the birthday party for Helena and Viola.

#### *Excerpts-- Driftwood Log*

◦ Murphy shifts on the long driftwood log backed against the ash bushes. Branches nod around his head. He is all but hidden. A football field away to his left, at Junior Beach, afternoon swim is just winding down. Towel-decked boys drifted away. To his right the same scene plays out at Intermediate Beach. Murphy found he could skip afternoon swims with no never mind. He could steal time for himself.

He has been half-heartedly drawing the hills directly across the lake with the heavy canyons of cloud above them. Then he starts a drawing of Aunt Hilary. But mostly he just lets the river of thoughts and feelings pass through him. It's easier to skip swim now that Adrian and George no longer ask him to be their buddy. With Dexter Singleton, they have sneaked away again to afternoon poker at Gladwell Cleer's round table in Intermediate Camp. Murphy knows they'll get called before the directors. That will be too bad for George, but at least they no longer bother trying to haul Murphy along with them.

◦ This has become Murphy's favourite time of day. He still feels refreshed from morning swim, and he's not really missing out now because after supper he can go for evening dip, which always leads to an extra-refreshing sleep. The babble of voices from departing swimmers to his right and left reminds him how pleasant it is to be alone.

Adrian hasn't lost his turquoise choker yet, but Murphy can feel it coming. That will sure be too bad for Jack, given how the camp already makes him feel.

◦ Imagine you have a double. What if that person is figuring out how to make an Atom Bomb but hasn't quite made all the connections yet. And what if you live in the future, when the bomb is about to blow up the whole world, and you just happen to look exactly like that scientist. Someone in the future with a time machine could go into the past with you and kidnap the scientist, putting you in his place. Then you could say the experiment failed and the world would be saved. But would you do that? Would you act like a failure?

Boy, no one has ever thought of that idea before.

◦ Murphy likes his drawing of Aunt Hilary. It flows and has proportion. He's put her in a wicker chair against Owl's Head on Lake Memphremagog in the Eastern Townships.

She hasn't always talked with invisible visitors at night, some of them enemies, or complained about other groups of people. Back when Murphy and Jimmy Straw were about to start kindergarten, Aunt Hilary taught Sunday school at

NDC Non-demoninational Church. She was more fun than any of the other teachers, and really good at showing how Jesus wanted you to love and forgive everyone. She didn't let kids pick on other ones for any reason, including being French or some different race. You couldn't even pick on kids who seemed shy and stammered, like Billy Costoritos.

Billy's real name was Bellerophon, and even though he was smallest in the class, he was the only one who'd already started school. His teacher called him Billy so the rest of the kids wouldn't make fun of him. For show and tell one Sunday morning, Billy made everyone stand outside the classroom except Sally whom he was always wanting to talk with and never succeeding because of his stammer. With much effort, he asked her to stay in the room, push in the door handle, and pull the door shut. Then he got Aunt Hilary to try opening it. She confirmed to everyone that the door was locked. "Ta-dum!" cried Billy, as if he'd been practising all evening. He held up a bobby pin. He said it was from his grandmother. He poked the bobby pin into the small hole on the outside knob and there was a click. "Open Sesame!" said Billy without a hint of stammer. He whipped the door open to see Sally's expression.

"*Everyone* knows how to do that!" said Jimmy, quite loud so others could hear.

Strolling home along NDC Blvd., Aunt Hilary told Murphy he must be careful not to do everything friends like Jimmy did. If they were being mean to someone, he musn't imitate them.

◦ Nestor said during the war Aunt Hilary had gone through as much as any soldier. She organized a program to send children out of London. The part of the city where she worked at an orphanage was one of the most heavily blitzed. Blitz wasn't just a football term. It meant bombs dropped by air raids. The city would go pitch dark at night and people would huddle in underground shelters holding their breath at the sound of a long fierce whistle from above.

◦ Nestor made sure Aunt Hilary walked around the block at least once a day. Most often he would escort her, but everyone else had a turn, even Murphy. Only rarely did she go on her own, when no one else was able. Aunt Hilary could say some nice and funny things. Murphy especially liked her stories of growing up on the farm. Like her niece Clare, she knew when certain things were going to happen. For example, she predicted how many children Viola would have and the sex, personality, interests, and gifts of each one. She said in this family a boy would be the one with second sight, and it would be hard learning to live with it. Murphy didn't want to think too much about that. Sometimes he did know what was going to happen. He wanted Aunt Hilary to get better. He sure hoped he wouldn't start talking to invisible people at night.

◦ After that dapper French man in the Green Valiant brought him home, he'd spent the party lost in his parents' great bed, coats piled at his feet. He wasn't letting on how confused he felt, but you can imagine it's pretty weird not remembering much of the past three days. He remembered Thursday evening, the whole scary episode

with Jimmy and the Luger in Nestor's office and the rest of that day. After that was pretty blurry or void. He remembered Saturday waking up at dawn, playing ball hockey, going to Hamsun's, taking the 103 bus somewhere. He thought he remembered sitting in NDC Park earlier today—Sunday, it felt like years ago-- waiting for Sol. The man who brought him home said he'd been chased and mugged-- by a gang of delinquents. For some reason Murphy was in stocking feet. They must have stolen his old worn sneakers.

◦ It was hard to believe everything going on at this party. It seemed too fantastic. Adding to weird, he seemed to know what others were thinking and feeling. This had always happened a little bit now and then, but now it was what William would call "acute" and "intense." Like those stories where the author can get inside everyone's head, like a virus.

The door of his parents' room off the kitchen was partly open. Over the pile of coats he could see them coming and going, hoisting drinks. He could certainly hear them. Hockey players wanting to meet women, Denny Blake still wanting to meet Freddy Framboise but now also wanting to enchant Moidra. Hooter wanting to impress Helena, the man from the Green Valiant wanting to be offered another job, a round man in flowing costume like yellow pyjamas wondering if Murphy would remember in times of trouble to hold some object in his hand . What object? Murphy couldn't make out. This man was hard to read. Was he just imagination? All Murphy could see of him now was Viola's copper bowl hanging glum on the streaky white wall.

He remembers this with his back to the driftwood log between Junior and Intermediate Swim, looking at his failed drawing of Rocky and the Parabellum P-08.

◦ Aunt Hilary seemed 30 years younger. Helena would describe her manner as flirting. She was leaning into an elderly man named Thel. Mr. Saville had introduced the elderly man as his father. Thel said Aunt Hilary should consider a cruise through the Caribbean. She was already planning her suitcase and wondering what type of wine he would order.

Denny Blake was strumming some dance music that sounded Middle-Eastern or Greek. A man named Hooter was dancing around with an arm flat over his head and legs kicking out as Helena laughed and giggled. He was going to ask her to help him get something from Murphy. Denny Blake was thinking about Moidra, and Rocky was thinking about punching Denny in the nose. After the thought came to Murphy, Denny said, “Back off man,” in a style that certainly didn’t suit Viola or the occasion.

Jimmy was speaking with perfect etiquette to one person after the next, saying how glad he was to see them and asking in a really cheerful voice how they were. He asked one specific thing for each person—what book was Esther reading now, what picture was Malachi painting. He even asked Armand Piquet who was avoiding everyone’s eyes, ashamed of his English and resentful of being ashamed, for his autograph. Like his dad, Jimmy looked down on the Patriotes as much as Jews and blacks and hoped to see them miss the playoffs. He wanted the autograph

not only to be polite but also to taunt Murphy by promising to give it to him and then saying he'd spilled Coke all over it.

For a moment Murphy thought the outline of Freddy Framboise in the parlour wall really had come to life. He seemed to float past the kitchen from the door. He was thinking about driving Helena up onto the mountain and parking somewhere dark and private. You might believe it's fun knowing what adults are thinking, but really it isn't.

Angéline looked in and smiled. She asked, "Is it okay I come in?" She had a glass of Canada Dry for him. She was thinking she really wanted to give it to him and hoped he'd get better. If Helena didn't want Murphy to sit with Angéline all the time, he'd probably want to. Viola's mother Amanda who married her father's foreman Théo LeGrand from down the St. Léonard used to say, "When you get big, Murphy-duck, the thing to do is marry a nice French girl."

Murphy's feet felt strange, hot, cold, tingling. It felt like they were racing despite lying still.

He remembers this with his back to the driftwood between Junior and Intermediate Swim, looking again at his failed drawing of Rocky and the Parabellum P-08.

◦ Viola calls for quiet. She's going to show one and all. She pushes play on Professor Bloomgardle's tape recorder. First, a Goldberg Variation, then Scott Joplin, Art Tatum, Thelonius Monk, Fats Waller, Oscar Peterson, and Little Richard. Denny Blake remembers how a young blues player Jimi Hendrix whose day would come

once said his two favourite musicians were Bach and Blake. Hooter's making a point about how much greater Denny's pianist is than all the rest. He jabs his finger to make his point. "Excuse me. I'm not wearing goggles," says William, as cold as the ice of NDC outdoor rink.

After the tape Denny performs one of his new smokey songs with that spruce gum voice and William's surprised how much more interesting he sounds live. Afterward everyone drifts back to their babble. Aunt Hilary can't even feel the hardwood. She's sure she'll float right through the ceiling. But when Thel says he's off to Corsica for business and doesn't care if he ever sees the land of ice and snow, 30 years crash down on her like a rack of lights from the rafters of *Place des Spectacles*, and Murphy crashes, too, into sleep, away from the glancing image from the side of his right eye: a boy in a soiled blue corduroy windbreaker, with a deep brown tan, stealing across the kitchen as children always do unseen by the countless adult eyes above the forest of countless legs. Skimming the brown linoleum on the boy's feet, the most unusual if soiled-looking shoes.

With his back to the driftwood between Junior and Intermediate Swim, looking again at his failed drawing of Rocky and the Parabellum P-08, he remembers this image of himself.

◦ Monday morning Murphy wakened to his headache and strange feet, but at least he felt a little less weird. Helena bustled into his parents' room, and he could only guess she was cranky from having slept in the parlour so their parents could use her room, leaving Murphy in theirs. Guess what had gone missing during the party. It seems

Nestor had a war souvenir, a German pistol. It was locked in his desk drawer. Viola is terribly upset, of course. Terribly. Would Murphy have any idea what could have happened?

◦ Helena's eyes remained on Murphy. Well? Did he know anything about the missing pistol? Murphy just knew that Jimmy was thinking about taking it. That's not the same as taking it. Murphy shook his head.

When he was up and walking again—still gingerly on his sensitive feet—Murphy told Jimmy during Harry Floggins recess about the Luger gone missing. He looked Jimmy in the eye and his old friend knew what he was thinking. Jimmy said ask Tommy McGoo about Gunther. The cops never were sure who shot his mother.

The police pulled Rocky over a week later but all they found was marijuana. When they asked about the pistol he said he was an invited guest at that party. What sort of scum would steal from a guest? He said half the Patriotes showed up with their hangers-on, groupies, people from bars, pretty shady types. He said Denny Blake and Hooter seemed to think the world was theirs for the picking. Hooter would steal from his mother if he thought the loot made a good album jacket. But obviously the Sûreté had eyes for the Emperor's new clothes, while simply being in a Marie-Reine-de-la-Paix motorcycle club was guilty without trial.

Murphy tears his drawing from the sketchbook. He tossed it crumpled into the fire pit down the beach toward Intermediate Swim.

## 2172 Summary

Murphy goes straight from Mrs. Stanebate to cabin 2-524. His bedroom arrangements are gone, the cabin restored to its former state in case Woody “drops in” again. If Murphy clears DNA testing, they will make out he boated at Gaulôre, consistent with what Morgan previously suggested to Woody. Dreading that the runners have been removed, Murphy dips under Morgan’s bed. No worries-- what a great feeling to have his hot shoes in hand again.

But someone’s card-key clacks at the door; Murphy thrusts the shoes back and follows after them. Morgan enters, her second class having been postponed. She puts music on loud and begins to wash dishes, her back to the beds. Urged by imagined suggestions from Jimmy Straw, Murphy leaves his shoes and tip-toes briskly to the door. Before he can get all the way out, Morgan turns and thinks he has just come in. She says good, they can spend some “quality time” before her next class.

They go up two levels to 1-1 and outside onto main deck. They sit together on a bench toward bow. An ice breaker chugs ahead of them. On either bank they are accompanied by motorcycle police; military helicopters hover above. The river is much wider than in 1962 and keeps getting more so. Abandoned docks, boat houses, and fishing homes dot the north shore. With constant threat of flooding, no one lives within three miles of the river. Fish occur only in special bodies of water stocked by the Garden.

Morgan says Ruby reported having seen Murphy with those two boys again. She wants to know if that is true. Murphy says they were trying to give him a hard

time, but he doesn't know them and didn't arrange to meet them. Morgan also seems suspicious about his new micro. He says that a girl gave it to him, but he can tell she doesn't believe him. Imagine if he said who the girl was. Why was everything that happened to him something no one would believe?

Morgan spends a few minutes checking for messages from the UK gentleman on her micro, so Murphy does some searching of his own. He wonders if the Patriotes are still holding first place in January, 2172. He opens what Ruby calls a browser and types in the name Patriotes. This micro is way better than school, where he has to sit still with clean fingernails and choking tie until someone decides to tell them something interesting. With the micro he can look up any subject he wants.

But something must be wrong, because when Murphy finds the NHL Standings under SportsGarden, there aren't just six teams. There are 40, all across the continent. Unthinkably, the Patriotes are listed second-to-last in the West Division. They are listed as the *San Diego* Patriotes, and not one player's name is French. More searching and Murphy finds a page telling him the Patriotes were sold to a man from San Diego in 2081 when the Canadian dollar crashed, shortly before national borders were dissolved. He realizes his stomach has been spinning for some time.

They continue through a series of lakes and locks. The ship drops a good 50 feet with each lock, much to Murphy's emotional and physical distress. He begins to feel quite sick.

They pass the now abandoned Grandeslaumône Company hydro-electric generating plant, built in 1930 with much political corruption and upgraded through

similar processes over the years. Morgan knows a fair amount about the plant's past, having researched the history of Gaulôre's energy for Woody's speeches. She's amazed Murphy knows even that much more about the subject, especially considering he seems so ignorant of the present .

The plant now lies mainly under water, no longer separated from the shipping canal. The river here is at least three times wider than Murphy recalls. Morgan says the rapids disappeared under water back in 2148. Grandeslaumône had provided electricity to most of the eastern north and seaboard, but relentless storms knocked out the power lines, including those through vast miles of uninhabited forest. With fears of global warming increasing, ongoing loss of power intensified efforts to implement alternative energy. Murphy sees a giant tube on shore, some sort of new power technology, but before he can ask how it works, he realizes its method is to heave up the insides of his stomach.

Morgan hustles him to the nearest women's washroom.

It's a relief to have the pressure out of his insides. Morgan has him undress and take a shower. She turns the sleeve of his shirt inside out, and he feels as if that's happened to him, restoring him to proper position. But after he comes out of the shower, she notices the ring hanging against his chest. She examines it, eyes angry and confused.

Morgan takes the boy back to the cabin and lies him down on Ruby's bed. She's tight and fidgety like a fist clenched in anger. She gives him one of her white T-shirts to put on and a pair of her red gym shorts to wear until she can wash his soiled clothes.

As she rushes to get ready for next class, Mr. Letourneau calls on her micro. He's in a panic as he can't locate his running shoes. Morgan says to calm down, they're probably under some things in his gym locker. Bitterly she remarks to Murphy that Letourneau will find the shoes as she described and not even say thanks.

Once Morgan leaves for class, Murphy retrieves his hot shoes.

*Excerpt—Putting Two and Two Together*

He unties the canvas and places the runners on the bed-spread beside him. Then he goes to his jacket hanging by the door. He pockets the card-key and Nestor's knife. Next, a browse through the drawers in the nook where they have installed the sink, small fridge and hot plate. He finally finds what he's looking for, a piece of string. It's all balled up, the coarse hairy brown kind, but it will do.

Nestor's knife has a small ring attached, so that you can hook it onto your belt or whatever. Murphy cuts the string into the right length, then pushes it through the ring. He ties the string in a big loop and slips it around his neck. The knife rides against his chest over his heart, same as Morgan's ring. *Touching objects can connect you to their subject.* His visit with Mrs. Stanebate has given him the answer to the shoes, or at least some of it: a person's object against Murphy's heart will take Murphy to that person in a different time.

Staring at the heels of the runners beside him, at the numbers there, Murphy becomes as excited as when he realized what to say in answer to the last word in Harry Floggins grade 3 spelling bee. 01092172. The same numbers on both shoes. Under the 01 a little dot. Above the 01 a little dot. Same for the 09. Same for the 2, the 1, the 7, and the 2. Remembering the official letters on Nestor's desk and what Nestor told Murphy about their way of writing the date, the boy realizes that 01 means the first month of the year—January—and 09 the day. Yesterday, when Murphy arrived, was the ninth of January. It's suddenly clear that 2172 makes the year Murphy has travelled into.

The little dots hold promise, too, now that Murphy has seen how you can simply touch flat buttons on micros and other devices and change what certain things say. Murphy touches the dot over the 01 and, sure enough, the number changes to 02. He touches the dot underneath twice, and the number changes back to 01 and then to 09. September. Murphy moves to the next two digits and uses the upper button to change them to 16. Then he adjusts the digits for the year to 1962.

But should he go back to Sunday, the birthday party day, or to Saturday the 15<sup>th</sup> when he bought the gifts and ended up with these shoes? Or to the 14<sup>th</sup> before he even went to Chaussurie SheShe? If he goes to the 14<sup>th</sup>, will the shoes disappear, because he hasn't received them yet? His head begins to hurt.

He remembers the numbers on the insteps of the shoes. *1200*. After all the times Nestor has said the time using the military 24 hour clock, Murphy should have realised that 1200 means 12:00 hours, or noon. Just after his arrival yesterday, the speaker belted out eight bells, announcing noon. He remembers one bell for 12:30 when they left the alcove for their promenade, and two bells for one p.m. when he and Racine sat in the Upper Deck shopping concourse.

Murphy decides to move the 1200 setting back to 1130. That will be fifteen minutes after Viola and Helena have left for church and half an hour before Sol is to meet Murphy in NDC Park . Since Murphy will have the replacement gifts from ~~Not~~ In the Club, he will call Sol and cancel the trade. He will spend the extra time making things ready for the party and wrapping his special presents. Viola will forgive him for skipping church and be delighted with her present. Everything will be back exactly as it should be—and Murphy will have his special shoes. The day might come when they prove useful for something else.

Murphy prints a note for the sisters explaining what has happened, thanking them, and asking them to say goodbye for him to Racine. He leaves a drawing of both sisters and one of Racine. He also pays back all the money Morgan had given him and directs the remainder of Digana's gift to Racine for her adoption program.

His micro plays the Global Garden theme. It's Racine telling him Atrium Security will drop off his sketchbook within the hour. She refers to him as "Murph,"

which no one ever calls him, then has to get back to business. As soon as the sketchbook arrives he will sneak the card-key back into Ruby's handbag as it would be embarrassing to leave it with the note.

But then Murphy feels a swelling in his throat as he thinks of the things he still wants to do, see, and draw in 2172. It occurs that he could stay a few days more at least and still travel back to the same time just after Viola and Helena leave for church. Then suddenly the secret door in the ceiling cracks open and the great twisted rope tumbles down. Murphy whips his shoes back under Ruby's bed but has no time to follow them before seen by Woody Gold.

The thick rope continues to wiggle in air behind Capo Giardieniere as his eyes fasten on Murphy like those of a hypnotist. They also make the boy think of his Brownie box camera: it feels as if Woody Gold is snapping shots for police files. He wants to know where Ms. McWhitters might be. Her second class was to end at 1400 hours. As Murpphy gathers his thoughts, the eyes move, scanning high and low. Murphy can feel him wondering what's under the desks and beds. Murphy says Ms. McWhitters' class was postponed till 2:00 p.m.

Woody thumbs through Morgan's latest speech notes, making dismissive grunts. He paces to Ruby's desk and stares at the new drawing of Racine. Murphy realizes there could be some small advantage to demonstrating his regard for the Garden and its rulers, so he says, a little too apologetically perhaps, "It's my work, sir." Woody wants to know if Murphy knows Racine. Murphy says yes and Woody says he gets around. But Woody likes the Racine drawing and the others of Morgan

and Ruby as well as others on the walls, Murphy's picture of the horse-drawn milk wagon on Cambridge Street circa 1957 and Helena dancing with René.

Woody likes these much better than what he calls "Letourneau's kid's stuff," a disapproving wave toward the framed portraits of the sisters. When questioned, Murphy denies he is staying in the cabin. He says he calls on the sisters from time to time with art for sale. Today Morgan said he could use a desk for some new work.

Woody poses grandly for a suitable picture of himself: something to stir the public. Murphy whips it off but Woody wants one that speaks more to "his people." Murphy should imagine them all there, eager, wanting the goods. Murphy draws Woody scaling an impossibly high mountain peak. The rope he's climbing dangles so far down that it breaks the bottom frame miles below. Behind the peak one can see a distant garden like the Upper Deck Atrium. Woody declares Murphy an "under-utilized resource." The Garden has no time for waste. Woody tells Murphy to date the picture—11 January 2172 (Murphy's birthday) and says he will pass it on to Advancement.

Murphy tries excusing himself to use the bathroom but Woody demands further attention. He says Murphy's stories are half-baked. He also suggests he's "packing a blade." Murphy hands over his father's pen knife, Woody scornful of how it is worn. Woody puts on a virus protection glove, grips Murphy's tongue, and skims the knife blade over it, warning the boy that if he wants to keep his tongue in his head he'll remember to forget he saw Woody in this room.

Woody returns the knife and tells Murphy to call Racine tomorrow. She'll arrange for them all to meet with Advancement. Murphy may have talent, but there are no "free rides." Woody lets Murphy out to the bathroom.

When the boy returns about fifteen minutes later, the door is locked. Taking a chance, he lets himself in, relieved to find Woody and the rope gone and the ceiling back to normal. Murphy is just bending down to look under Ruby's bed when Morgan comes in. She has picked him up some jeans and a jersey. Morgan sits at Ruby's desk with her back turned as Murphy changes in the corner. Her foot swings nervously over the purple pumps Ruby had been wearing earlier in the day.

Murphy has to go to the bathroom again. Morgan tells him not to dawdle. But after he's done, he decides to get a quick breath of fresh air. He climbs two levels to 1-1 and steps out into a blend of sun and mist. Captain Max's voice comes over the loud speaker announcing their approach to the City of Gaulôre with its spectacular Chutes Sansbout only partly flowing at this time of year. He likens them to a glorious back-lit ice sculpture showering in Blue Gold. Among other attractions of the province's "historic capital" are the ramparts along the walls of the old city—the only walled city in former North America. Its ancient canons still stare out over the water. For romantic contrast, there's Le Chateau d'Or, the great railway hotel dominating the skyline at the eastern thrust of harbour. Then the military Island of Boulogne and the old earthen fort that General Wolfe built.

Murphy doesn't think the river banks seem nearly as high as before, not even at the cliffs up to Jake's Fields where Wolfe claimed Gaulôre but lost his life. The great white stretch of foaming Fleuve Montcalm tumbles over the long cliff side into

the St. Léonard. It appears as if two frozen bathers stand beneath the half-solid cataract : a man with no head and a woman with no legs.

Murphy ventures right out to the rail, challenging his fear. Morgan finds him there; she's more relieved, it seems, than annoyed. A man from DNA happens by on his way to their cabin with the test results. After looking at the file, Morgan grabs Murphy's hand and they race back to 2-524.

In the cabin, Morgan stuffs Murphy's things into a small duffel bag. Ruby comes in and leaves her handbag where Murphy is able to sneak back the card-key. He sees that she has found a replacement in any case. Atrium Security drops off Murphy's sketchbook and Morgan says "just in time." She dials someone on her micro and is relieved to hear a sullen male voice answer. "We'll be right there," she says. "Wait!"

"C'mon," she says to Murphy. He is scrambling on hands and knees at the side of Ruby's bed.

Section 10    Marooned Barefoot

*[This Section appears in its entirety.]*

*Day after Tomorrow*

Day after tomorrow starts the last Visitor's Weekend of summer. Important guests, like Widmark's father, will be coming. Swim Director's in charge of making sure those arriving by train get met at Kisisokôe Village. He's asked Murphy to find a counsellor to drive the camp van on Saturday and go along with Widmark into the village for his parents. It'll be nice for the visitors to see their son has a friend in Section 4, so Murphy can sit with them for lunch in the dining hall. After lunch, he can take them out on the lake. Murphy wants to use the 16-foot red canvas canoe but Swim Director says a rowboat feels more stable for land people, and they can face each other that way.

*On the Ramparts*

On first day of Grade Five, Murphy met a boy who seemed to have walked right out of *The Rifleman*. Calvin Hart's family came from Norwesta, land of cowboys and oil wells. Calvin said, sure, he'd ridden plenty of horses-- ever since he was small. Quarters, Palaminos, you name it. No way his parents would stay in Métropole once they realized what they'd given up. Soon enough, Calvin would be ridin' again. Ropin', too. He said if you weren't used to it, though, riding a horse made your stomach go up and down.

That was Murphy's problem right now. He was riding feet-first through the air while footsteps below seemed to bounce on some sort of trampoline. Imagine a horse trying to walk along a high wire. He had to stop his mind from going to one scary thought after another.

Then the footsteps got more solid, and that helped. The sound of water against timber echoed from below. Occasionally something brushed against Murphy's leg or arm. He heard someone wheeze past. Melvoy cleared his throat with a grumbling noise. He spat. The smack below sounded too loud, as if like Aunt Hilary, Murphy was wearing a hearing aid, cranked up.

Before long the footsteps crunched and then came the punching bag sound of stomping up stone or cement steps. The boy felt himself lifted higher. Seven punches later and they were springing again, rolling on wood. Melvoy swung to Murphy's right, and right again. A thump and something in front of them sighed. Musty biting odour rushed into Murphy's nose along with the smell of cleanser, making him cough

"Shh!" said Melvoy.

More turning and banging. Murphy's ankle flinched from a sharp blow. Then he was falling backwards and feet touched ground—through the duffel bag—and then the canvas lifted from his eyes and he was washed by grubby light. He was standing against a toilet in a dimly-lit cubicle, stall door closed. Melvoy glowered.

"You got something to tell time?" Murphy showed his pink micro. Melvoy snorted. The micro said 3:48 pm.

"Wait here till 3:53—understand?"

Murphy nodded.

“I’ll be on the ramparts.”

Melvoy cinched and shouldered the duffel bag--only half-full now, without Murphy and his smaller duffel bag inside. Murphy sat on the toilet to keep his ill-fitting canvas shoes off the sticky floor.

Five minutes later he shouldered the small bag. But when he limped outside, favoring the bruised ankle, he met a wobbly case of three or four free-standing wooden steps. Startled by the sudden shift of weight, unable to see the ground because he had the bag against one cheek—which also made him a little top-heavy—and troubled by his tender ankle, he lost balance. He stumbled. His feet lunged on something squishy. Foul-smelling. Big as a Cocker Spaniel pup. A dead rat.

Something stirred about the belly. That would be maggots. Nestor had told him. Beetles, too, it seemed.

Murphy skipped away. He tore off his shoes. They now smelled horrible. He found a boardwalk running to his left to a staircase down to a walkway sloping to a pier. That must be how they’d come in. Near the pier you could turn onto some dead grass that ran down to river’s edge.

Murphy soaked both shoes under water. He wiped them with one of two small towels Ruby’d included, then stuffed it in a bag she’d remembered for laundry. A gruff yell. Melvoy glared down from the rampart. Beside him, the bore of a canon stared, a black bull’s eye. Murphy better hurry, or miss going where Morgan hoped he could stay.

*What's with the Bare Feet?*

Melvoy leaned on the rampart not far from the steps down to the pier. Murphy sidled up to him. In the jag beside Melvoy the antique canon now pointed straight at something other than Murphy: plenty of football fields out, sails lowered, bobbing at the end of a gangplank zig-zagging out from the pier, *The Blue Gold*.

On the boulevard up the hill behind them, a motorcycle engine revved: one of the security escorts waiting till ship set sail.

“What’s with the bare feet?”

“Shoes got dirty, so I washed them.” Murphy placed the shoes on the vacant jag beside him. They needed to air and dry.

“Oh, they got *dirty*.”

Melvoy’s sympathy sounded a little insincere. Murphy pretended not to notice as he deposited the small duffel bag on the pebbles between their legs.

It was growing as murky as Madison Stanebate’s room. Down river, eastern sky wore the diluted charcoal hues of her cigarette smoke. Long shadows crept everywhere. But the air felt warm still. Melvoy carried his seaman’s jacket hitched on his thumb over his left shoulder. The wrinkled long-sleeved shirt he’d been wearing over his *Blue Gold* T-shirt now dangled from his waist.

Melvoy opened and closed his right fist, like a heart pumping. Tattoos rippled over sinews of his arm. Moidra’s biker friend Rocky sported a geranium on the back of his left hand and a pistol on his right arm, but Murphy had never seen

anything like this. Madison Stanebate hardly crammed so many images into one space.

The tattoo that most attracted the boy was a serpent. Wearing seven red dots from its tail to its brow, the snake stretched from a woman's tail bone up to her head where its open mouth flashed between her eyes. Its tongue flew through gleaming fangs. With her pony tail, the woman reminded Murphy of Commander Felicity Novak and, come to think of it, Racine. The flickering tongue almost reached the turned-up sleeve against Melvoy's right shoulder, as if hungry for the bulge of whatever was stuffed inside. Cigarettes, no doubt.

Three raggedy children came by. They had dirty faces and torn shoes, except for one who had no shoes. The girl stopped beside Murphy, put her elbows on the jag of the parapet, and rocked forward, looking down the other side. As she sawed back, she glanced at Murphy as if something funny was happening. The two boys lingered nearby, one smaller, one taller than she. None of them smelled much better than the dead rat. Murphy turned his back and shuffled closer to Melvoy, pebbles tickling his bare soles.

As the boy did so, the seaman appeared to awaken from deep contemplation. He smacked the cannon's rump as if commending a lively horse.

"Okay, we'll do it a bit different. Just *wait* here."

Murphy asked what was to happen next.

"They'll come for you."

Murphy wanted to ask when, and whom to look for, but he knew better.

### *A Mournful Air*

Duffel bag re-settled on his shoulder, the seaman strode up the dusky slope toward the boulevard. Through passersby, Murphy glimpsed him fading as images do in a movie dissolve. The last thing the boy saw of Melvoy was a tattooed hand reaching up underneath the short sleeve of his T-shirt. He disappeared east past a crooked building. Then came the mournful air of a harmonica. Nestor would probably know it, an Irish ballad, perhaps: a widow, a drowned husband, that sort of thing. The sad melody snaked through Murphy, down to his toes.

How long has he been gaping up the slope to the boulevard, not really seeing anything as the mournful air circles slow but steady, insistent as “Pomp and Circumstance” at outdoor chapel? Like that strange purple cookie, Melvoy’s harmonica seems to have lured Murphy into a trance. But he snaps out of it, looks around to his right. The scruffy children have gone. So have his canvas shoes.

### *Useless to Run*

A wind has come up. It blows a candy wrapper against the black tire of the nearest motorcycle. The officer turns his visored eyes to Murphy.

Way down the rampart, west, Murphy had caught sight of scruffy feet disappearing into a stairway up to the boulevard. Like Beagle Boy—or better still, Black Jacket—he tore off after them. At the top of the stairs he encountered the black motorcycles. Long lines of them. He snapped into a new manner. He tried to look like a boy sent by his parent up the street for a newspaper and half-dozen eggs--

not that he's seen a newspaper since leaving NDC. He looked both ways, indicating someone studious of the law, as respectful as they come. Still from behind the black visor eyes stare. *He wants you to look guilty*, Jimmy Straw says. *Don't look guilty*.

Murphy steps into the boulevard. From the corner of his eye he sees the black visor turn away. The boy heads up a steep narrow street still spotted in places with cobblestones. Two blocks ahead, he sees the thieves cut west. He hurls a rock after. What sense in chasing three bigger kids, not to mention they have shoes or that his right heel's now so scraped it's bleeding. He turns back.

At first he saunters, but he starts to run again after remembering his duffel bag leaning on the ground against the rampart.

#### *Waiting for a Private Moment*

To be sure of finding a driver for Saturday, Swim Director said to start asking right away. Murphy has been waiting for a private moment with Kris to ask him to pick up Widmark's parents in town. Waiting for a private moment is a good idea in case Kris can't go. Then it won't be so embarrassing for him to say no.

#### *A Look Around*

In his mind the mournful harmonica continues. It's less upsetting now he has his jacket, sketchbook against his heart, duffel bag between his ankles. When he dashed up to the bag, a boy walking west on the other side of the promenade seemed to eye it, so Murphy shot him a warning look. The boy looked angered by that, and for a moment Murphy dreaded a fight. No one seems to look others in the eye here. But

the boy resumed his way and Murphy checked through his things, heart still pounding.

Murphy prepares to take his first real look around. He studies his surroundings partly in search of the person or people coming for him, partly to take his mind off that feeling again. Relief over his bag can't block it: more pressure in his stomach. Maybe it's still only the size of a thimble, but that's how it started last time. Think about other things, Viola says.

Directly across the promenade is the bathroom where he came out of Melvoy's bag. It's in a round stone tower, three stories high. On the tower roof, solar panels lean at the darkening sky.

One door east, a low crumbling building says *Station de Recharge--Bicyclette*. Barely peddling, a woman glides up on a bicycle. It hums like Benoît Lecoup's electric train, but louder—quite the whine, in fact. Imagine, an engine on your bike. A man in grubby clothes attaches cables to it. A long stone's throw from them and higher up the slope to the boulevard another woman approaches a rack of bicycles in front of some bushes. She fits some sort of card into a slot, and pops off the lock on one of the bicycles. She turns up the collar of her coat, and Murphy does the same with his jacket. That warm feeling's gone from the air altogether, in its place a chilly, moody wind. When the woman rides away, Murphy imagines how it feels to be half sailing with the rising wind at your back. But her revolving knees make him wish he could lie down on his bed while Viola fetches baking soda.

*The Harbour*

Distant laughter carries across the northeast corner of the harbour from the hotel. Adventure novels would liken it to a dark sentry, a great warrior's castle, dominating the outermost point of east bay. Murphy can make out waves licking against a breakwater along the majestic foundation.

He leans over the Rampart wondering if he'll see the blackening dart of a fish. He's sure he does, but it's only a fluttering strip of red and white canvas from the top of an awning. He can even see some old lamp poles down there, and a boardwalk-- *refracted*, as William would say. The boy gives up trying to spot fish, big or small.

He recalls his visit with Nestor to La Ville de Gaulôre in August 1960 between end of camp and start of Grade Three. Back then, the big imperial hotel sat on a cliff high over the river. Brightly dressed people filled the terrace that day, laughing, pointing cameras, dashing to kiosks for snacks. Murphy enjoyed all the sights, especially the falls on west point across from Hôtel Gaulôre—but what he really hoped to do was go camping.

Nestor knew a place not too far outside the city, and they were going to go. But Nestor called Viola, and she said Helena was sick with a virus. They'd put the girl in hospital. Viola sounded so worried, Nestor said they better skedaddle back to Métropole and go camping another time.

*Alone with Kris*

Murphy gets his chance after breakfast. The others have all finished making ready for morning inspection and run off but Murphy lingers in Tent 24 for another sweep. Kris is sitting on his cot. His gold watch lies far back in his orange crate, almost as if it was thrown there. He's staring into space and seems what Viola might call a little moody. That's not like Kris. Murphy wonders if maybe he and Mr. Merritte's daughter had a disagreement last evening, which sure seems to happen a lot with people dating. Murphy wonders if the whole thing is worth the bother.

The purple lines on Kris' cheek wiggle. Murphy recalls his foolish idea of asking about the monk in Vietnam. He doesn't want to ask anything now, but Swim Director said to ask soon. There might not be another good chance.

Not knowing how to start, Murphy finds himself asking if Kris had really been looking for him to draw something a week ago yesterday.

"No," says Kris, definitely sounding a little cross. "Who said that?"

Murphy says a couple of his friends and Kris says he wouldn't put much stock in some of those chaps, using a word from visits to Mr. Merritte's.

Then Murphy asks about picking up Widmark's parents day after tomorrow, and Kris says he's sorry he can't.

*Blue Gold Leaving*

Calvin Hart lowers his branding iron. When he lifts it, the darkening eastern sky wears a majestic crown-- Hôtel Gaulôre rooftop outlined in lights. Calvin must be able to brand with two hands at once, because on the opposite point, straight across

from the hotel, the western sky now wears an equally majestic cape-- outline in lights of Chutes Sansbout. The brands are blue and golden lights, festive yet melancholy. Morgan had said that cities and towns were on a “policy of targeted night lighting.” Even in the largest cities, apart from work sites, only three “exteriors” could be lit.

Does that mean there won’t even be street lamps? So far, the only resistance to gathering dusk spills from building windows, the occasional passing bicycle on the promenade, or car on the boulevard above.

Out on *The Blue Gold*, however, targeted night lighting includes a generous array of overhead lamps. A colony of worker ants darts about bow deck as the sails rise and stretch. Seamen open cabinet doors and press controls while others pull on wires. Murphy imagines diving silent into the darkening river, a dolphin powering underwater, a kitten on bedroom drapes scampering up the hull.

### *In the Little Library*

Everything hurtled, cascading, like water over Sansbout Falls. He was lying on towels with something hard underneath. His face felt cold and wet. Melvoy brandished a half-filled bottle of Blue Gold. Morgan placed a hand on the seaman’s wrist.

“Can you sit up,” Ruby whispered. All three of them whispered. Murphy sat up. He was on a table in the middle of a small room. “Can you talk?” said Morgan. Murphy nodded. He asked what happened. He’d fainted, said Ruby. He should

know better than dart around while still recovering from stomach flu. There'd been no time, so they'd carried him, and all his things.

They were in the little Library on Deck 2-6, lined with a few shelves of old books honouring the past. It was a good place for private meetings since people so seldom went there. Morgan had locked the door. She chattered out everything she'd put into his duffel bag. He couldn't follow much at all. She took back the card signed by Woody since it wouldn't be any use on shore and might just cause trouble. Before too long, water willing, his guardian there would be able to get him official ID.

Melvoy kept making impatient noises, so Morgan rushed harder. She pressed something into the boy's hand and made him promise not to lose it or give it away. Then Ruby and Morgan both kissed him on the cheek and they stuffed Murphy's little duffel bag into Melvoy's big one, with Murphy after it. He was still clutching the memento from Morgan: her gold ring.

So chances were good he'd find his shoes still under Ruby's bed. If Woody hadn't taken them. If someone else hadn't taken them. Either way, after scampering up the hull of the ship, Murphy would use his jungle nose and other super senses to hunt down the shoes. He'd find them all right. He'd teach anybody who got in the way a lesson. Then he'd *rentrer chez lui*.

*Open Horizon*

A winch rises from bow deck. Up, up, up. So that's what the worker ants were doing. Then it releases its passenger—a huge kite, a sort of giant umbrella trailing spider web lines. The water's choppy now, and a great gust of dark wind puffs out the kite into a globe. Two lights, white and blue, blink on and off its upper sphere. Great shafts of white leap from newly lit head lamps along bow.

Not far beneath stern deck rail, an orange window marks the Old Sea Dog Lounge. Murphy can tell, because three seamen lean out and lift specks which Tarzan eyes know to be tankards. The boy remembers the loud murmur of voices woven with cigarette smoke inside Gilbert Glace Taverne. One time, waiting for his dad, Jimmy Straw poked his head inside and dared Murphy.

A gleam of metal cage appears above the stern deck railing. Murphy imagines the bear dipping a giant paw into his pool, raking the reflection of black iron bars. Down below on ship's stern hull, between the railing and orange window, crafted polar bear head stares at the churning wake. Perhaps his wooden brain wonders --like Murphy-- why there aren't sea gulls trailing along. Murphy finds the red lights shining from the bear's eyes a little spooky. Their glow bleeds in with other spots of red on ship's stern, so that the frothing wake below seems to overlie a feast of sharks.

Fog horns blast from two tugs in front and suddenly all three ships, two tiny, one immense, strain forward to open horizon. Back on shore, from the boulevard, motorcade roars.

### *An Artistic Hunch*

As they shrink into the distance past Hôtel Gaulôre, and the roar of motorbikes fades to the east, Murphy notices for the first time a shadowy tower rising behind the festive hotel roof. A dim ghostly white light glows in the top booth portion; armed guards stare down at the shore. Following an artistic hunch, Murphy looks across the bay and, yes, lurking near Chutes Sansbout another of those towers leans skywards. Out on the sea-like St. Léonard, the tugs are two dots, *The Blue Gold* a ship in a mickey bottle.

### *In Another Moment*

From ship in a bottle, *The Blue Gold* has shrunk again to minnow in a saucer. In another moment it will be gone.

If only he'd spoken up about Racine's interest in him, about Woody wanting him to produce artwork for Advancement, about his shoes and their power to loose him from the ship better than a thousand Melvoys ever could. But everything happened so fast. His head was so confused. Something like warm goat's milk leaks down Murphy's cheeks. His shoulders are shaking. Watching his family's faces shrinking as the train leaves West-Met Station for Kisisokôe turns out nothing compared to this.

### *Tuck Shop Counsellor*

Tuck Shop Counsellor was once roly-polly. But he'd been told to lose a hundred pounds. He'd turned into a gaunt, silent solitary spectre. His heavy five o'clock

shadow added to an impression of a lone wolf, one of the perambulating skeletons Jack London wrote about.

Tuck Shop Counsellor sits behind a wicket where he hands out mail, sells snacks, and advances sums from your account. Murphy feels more and more embarrassed the longer he stands in front of the wicket, saying nothing.

“Well?” the counsellor snaps. “What is it?”

Murphy feels his cheeks burn. He turns and leaves. It’s already Thursday evening, and still no driver for Saturday.

#### *A Note*

The man from *Station de Recharge* removes the cables. The woman remounts her bike and adjusts some switches. The bike begins to hum. She pulls her toque down over her ears and resumes her course eastward, wheels spinning in Murphy’s stomach.

She whisks past a pair of black-suited GGP heading his way.

GGP. He doesn’t want them thinking he’s what Helena calls *loitering*, like those punks she and Murphy saw hanging around NDC Park. He doesn’t have any ID, and Morgan and Ruby made it clear how important ID is. Everything you ask to do on the micro wants your number, telling where you live. He grabs his bag turns and heads south-west along the ramparts, as if wholly lost in reaching some urgent destination, the way people here seem to walk.

He turns northwest up the same narrow street where the thieves escaped. He passes a bench beside a street-car stop and turns into an alley. By and by he peers

out. The two police lumber past, heading down the ramparts toward Jake's Fields and Chutes Sansbout. Murphy hustles back to his meeting spot passing an ancient-looking street-cleaner, removes a page from his sketchbook, and uses a jag in the rampart as desk. Sooner than later he'll need the washroom in the tower across the promenade. He doesn't want his new guardian to think he's run off. It's still light enough to guide his careful printing:

*Bonjour. Merci beaucoup pour m'aider. Je retournerai bientôt.*

*Hello. Thank you for helping me. I will return shortly." Sincerely,*

*Murphy Beckridge.*

#### *Retres Chez Toi*

He places the note in the jag underneath the cannon. That might protect it somewhat from rain and wind. He finds a rock to use as paper weight. A man in a fluorescent green trench coat, polka dot scarf, and brittle hair looks at a lighted plaque on the other side of the promenade facing the rack of locked bicycles. Murphy has the impression he was watching the boy and just turned away.

A sharp metallic scraping comes from the martello. The ancient-looking street-cleaner uses a shovel to scrape up the dead rat. He drops it thump into a bin in his cart. He has a boxer's nose with a wart, like the old crone the evil stepmother becomes in *Snow White*. Murphy's grateful to see the stinking rat removed. Despite his efforts to think of other things, the thimble in his stomach has become a fist.

Bag in hand, he hustles across to the tower. As Murphy approaches, the ancient cleaner steps down from the wobbly stairs, clanging a ring of keys.

“*C’est fermé,*” he croaks.

In French and English, a plaque beside the door says “Martello erected by the British upon occupying Gaulôre, September 1763.”

“*Mais monsieur—sui malade.*”

The ancient man shrugs. “*Rentres chez toi. Il est tard.*”

He turns and clatters away, putrid cart wobbling behind.

*Hup, Hup, Hup*

Murphy checks the time on his micro. Four twenty. He looks across the ramparts upriver, into the distance. A work crew now laboring under flood lights does something with big tubes, digging into the ground around some falling-down factories near the water. Halfway up the cliffs, silhouetted across the flickering blue and gold outline of *les Chutes Sansbout* is the second watchtower, like the one by the hotel. Both resemble the one he’d noticed on Mt. Bonpelier in Métropole. A dark figure holding a gun looks out over the ramparts and lower town.

“Hup, hup, hup!”

The voice is a young man’s, sounding much like one of the eager outdoorsy, sports-loving counsellors at Camp Kisisokôe who chase you out of the tent and keep you doing things sunrise to sunset. “Hup, hup, hup!” A line of uniformed children – some around Murphy’s age—marches along the boulevard with rifles over their shoulders. The young man—their commander—marches beside and to the front with machine-like precision. He has red freckles and probably carrot hair that sticks straight up, but it’s hidden under his helmet. Over the visor inside a white oval is

some word. It's too dark and Murphy is much too far away to read what is says, even with his Tarzan eyes.

“Hup, hup, hup” fades to the east past the crooked building where Melvoy disappeared.

### *The Voice*

Of course his guardians will arrive. Morgan arranged it, Morgan.... Part of him wants them to come. Part of him doesn't. Because what if they won't help him get to La Crique aux Pêcheurs in time. What if they even try to stop him.

*Go on your own. You can do it.* Murphy looks over his shoulder with a start, but the voice— Madison Stanebate's—is nowhere outside. It's inside his head. “Morgan wants me to wait,” he says under his breath. She set things up. It would be rude. *She dumped you off ship, didn't she?*

Although his stomach wobbles like a horse on a high wire, sending out whinnies of disgust, in between those whinnies Murphy feels bolts of hunger. His day was so rushed and unpredictable that he never had a moment to buy lunch. Since breakfast, his only food was that popcorn in the movie *Polaire*. He rummages in his bag. Maybe they included something to eat. Murphy finds a small plastic bottle of capsules. *Pilules à Nourriture*. His stomach winces at the sight. They've given him at least 15. That's a lot. These things are hard to get and expensive. He drops them back. At least, for now.

East along the promenade a stroke of white light approaches, weaving up and down in a manner that doesn't do Murphy's insides any good. By and by a figure

appears behind the light. A man in a business suit. Murphy looks hopefully. The man's wearing a headband with small lamp attached over his forehead. It makes him look like those pictures of smiling doctors. Except he isn't smiling. His eyes stare blankly forward. He passes.

*Thanks a Heap, Mr. Beckett*

People get delayed for different reasons. Murphy recalls William at the dinner table lecturing on Samuel Beckett's play *Waiting for Godot*. Apparently two clownish hobos are waiting for someone important to come. But the only person who arrives is a slave driver. This cruel type, who fancies himself important, merely adds to the misery of the two hobos, and-- Murphy would add-- of the listeners around the dinner table. Thank goodness Aunt Hilary, who declared that theatre ended with Shakespeare, cried "Enough!"

*Back to the Infirmary*

That evening the sick feeling hits Murphy again and Kris sends him back to the Infirmary. Nurse O'Flaherty laughs in her bubbly way and says it's always nice to see Murphy, and maybe he'll do her another lovely drawing. But she hopes he gets truly better this time

### *Urgency*

He can't wait. He has to find a bathroom or, failing that, some private place to relieve himself. He snatches his bag and trots southwest along the ramparts, bare skin flinching from cold ground.

Passerby headlamps conspire with spills of light from nearby windows to hold back the murk, like Madison Standbate's candles. It's easier on the eye, she'd say. You won't see the dirt, Viola would say.

Lugging his bag, rounding a bend as the old stone walls circle the top of the hill, Murphy presses through murk over Porte St. Gaston, a gate leading to Jake's Field. He scrambles down a circular stone stairway—lucky not to miss his footing with the bag always in the way-- and runs along fine gravel. It scrunches underfoot. Then comes a set of wooden stairs down a slope of short dry grass. It's much darker here. In a fog of gloom at the base of the slope, a rolling meadow dimly appears. Ghostly benches and more martellos. A dark wall of forest about fifty yards away.

### *Blue Paint*

Murphy's knee knocks against a chain across the top of the stairs and he almost pitches forward and down. He's always had a fear of falling headfirst down stairs; he remembers his vision of blood on the stairwell linoleum. But he swings his legs high over the chain, one after the other. He's already gone down three steps before he fully registers the cool sticky feeling on his soles. Blue paint. More turquoise, really, in the pinched light. He skips every other step the rest of the way to “minimize the mess,” as Viola would say. As best he can so encumbered, he scrambles down the

big hump of dead grass. By the time he hits the flat meadow, he doesn't feel wet on his soles anymore.

He's at the top of the cliffs where British and French butchered each other, along with Indian allies, 187 years ago, or make that nearly 400 years ago. Murphy drives himself on. Stomach cramps rise. He gasps for breath. Oh, for his hot shoes!

Tears of loss and frustration seethe from the boy's eyes. He notes young trees in the distance, a grove grown up from the older growth behind. Push, push, run. The duffel bag sure doesn't help. It's not that heavy, really, but throws him off balance. He can't swing his arms like normal. He tries to launch himself, willing himself airborne. He merely spindles on, hitting every divot, and more than once tumbles, tucks, rolls, and leaps to his feet again, dragged by their will. Then he is there.

He dives into the bush as he would a river—a shallow dive, taking him on his belly to the bole of a birch tree.

### *Luck at Last*

After emptying his stomach and bowels, then shaking through an endless period of dry heaves, Murphy cleans up. In the near absence of snow, he finds moss. On the north sides of trees, just like Mrs. Castle tells them at camp. He finally finds a small niche of snow. It stands in all right for water. The moss serves quite well as towels. For final pat-dry, he uses the last clean towel the sisters gave him. He stores it then inside the laundry bag.

He's a little weak and wobbly, and very thirsty—like one of those marooned sailors on a desert island-- but the nausea seems to have passed. Next is finding his way back in thickening darkness. At least the sky hasn't entirely clouded over. Fingers of moonlight waver down. For once, some luck.

*Lost in Jake's Fields*

His eyes adjust so far as to show him a hazy outline of the long slope on the far side of the meadow. When he reaches it, though, he wanders abject. Where are those stairs? How will he ever find them in this pitch? Losing hope, he fumbles up the gruff hillside, but it takes him to a stout line of bush. Just when he feels doomed to wander Jake's Fields till morning, he notices a faint trail of gray spots on the dry grass. As he kneels for a closer look, the clouds crack wider apart and a beam of moonlight reveals turquoise.

*Alone in Junior Camp*

Next morning Murphy feels quite a bit better. Nurse O'Flaherty says they should wait till evening before making a decision about checking out. She does, however, say he can go back to his tent for *The Return of Tarzan*. Provided he comes straight back.

Outside the Infirmary, Murphy notices two workers draping black cloth over the small totem pole on the side lawn by the picnic table. Murphy follows the road that runs in from the highway. If he stays straight, he'll go up the hill to the Dining Hall. When the road forks, however, he turns left toward Totem Arch, the Main

Lodge and waterfront bluff, and past that, the tent-line. It's pretty strange—what Helena might even call eerie- to be so alone in camp. Everyone is at morning program. Those two workers, probably the OD by ship's bell on the waterfront bluff, Murphy, and otherwise, no one.

Something doesn't look right with Totem Arch. Getting closer, Murphy realizes the support pole on his left, near the east side of Main Lodge is covered in black cloth, like the totem pole outside Infirmary. It seems a little funny to be covering up the totem poles with important visitors soon to arrive.

The back of Main Lodge rests on stilts because the land rises at a steep angle to the bluff overlooking the lake. There's room for a shortcut right under the floor, and Murphy likes to look around under there drinking earth smell. He can spy out and not be seen. Along the west side of the building, Administration Office is really part of Main Lodge. As Murphy passes under Administration Office approaching the back stairs up to its outside porch, he hears voices that don't sound real. They sound like part of a movie. If they weren't part of a movie, they would be shocking.

### *Feelingly*

Murphy follows the turquoise smudges up the slope to the stairs. Once again he skips every other step to minimize the mess. But he hasn't gone too far when the clouds close, leaving him in total darkness. He bends lower and widens his knees as if bracing for a hit in football. He eases his duffel bag into his right hand. He side-steps left, feeling with his left hand. For a moment he thinks he'll stay frozen on this

steep stairway forever. But at last his baby finger brushes wood, he grips the handrail. No more skipping steps. Slow and deliberate, his only hope.

### *The Walls of Administration*

Murphy can hear a man's voice inside the Administration Office getting louder and louder. An older boy answers in short gruff sentences. There is no mistaking the heavy French accent. It's Le Gros. "I asked you a question," the man's voice shouts. "Answer me. Do you understand!" The voice seems like Junior Camp Director's, but he's never sounded anything like this before.

Administration Office begins to shake. Its walls aren't that thick, and they bulge when Le Gros falls into them. Murphy can't see inside, but he's sure it's Le Gros hitting the walls. He cries out and Junior Camp Director's furious voice shakes with what Helena might call righteous indignation.

"Do you understand now!" Junior Camp Director shouts, the walls bulging again and again.

"No I didn't," Le Gros cries, "No I didn't."

He sounds like he means it, but Junior Camp Director sounds like he won't stop till Le Gros says "I did."

### *Blacker Still*

Before each faltering step, Murphy takes a deep breath. His left hand trembles. Three times he stops when fingers or toes cramp. He loses all sense of time. It could

be an hour later when his right foot comes down on soft powdery gravel. He spills forward onto the path like a shipwreck onto shore.

Right or left? It's even blacker here than it was in Jake's Fields.

*Mr. Merritte's Great Rolling Belly Laugh*

Back in the Infirmary, Murphy has trouble settling into *The Return of Tarzan*.

Nothing suggests that Mr. Merritte was inside the office when Junior Camp Director bounced Le Gros off the walls. Murphy was pretty sure he wasn't. He wouldn't have dealt with the matter that way. Would he? But as the scene repeats in Murphy's mind, for some reason as the office walls bulge he hears Mr. Merritte's great rolling belly laugh.

*Right*

Right.

Because when he took the stairs on his way down, he'd turned left.

Murphy finds his duffel bag, stands, and feels with bare feet. As long as they stay on soft gravel, he's on his way. Under the light shuffle, he remembers Aunt Hilary reading from Shakespeare, an odd thing that didn't make sense at the time: *I see feelingly*.

A cool night breeze caresses his cheek. It seems to pat him on the back, like football coach. Stairway receding behind, he's strangely calm and elated. He feels light. He feels peaceful. He'll work things out.

*Sunny Morn*

When he opens his eyes Saturday morning, Murphy feels like waving his hands and cheering like you do after another goal by The Torpedo. Sparkling sunlight bathes his face. Lake water washes shore in a steady pulse. God has answered Murphy's prayer for Visitor's Weekend. Today the Lacasses, which makes him feel a little anxious. But he'll do his best for Swim Director. And then tomorrow, his very own family.

*VIP Pick-up*

Tuck Shop Counsellor hunches over the wheel with a long-suffering expression like Viola when she has a bad headache. The van bumps and jolts on the winding gravel road. It needs its shocks repaired. Counsellor takes the turns at alarming speed. His hat shifts about and he slaps it into place. It resembles a limp floppy white bowl with a wide brim that sticks up giving the impression of a halo. It's a little odd, a corpse with a halo.

Counsellor's long-legged apprentice, a bean pole from Senior Camp, sits beside him in the front seat, bending his neck as not to hit the ceiling. Murphy and Widmark sit in the back row of seats, leaving the middle open for his parents. No one's talking as Tuck Shop Counsellor continues to stew, Swim Director having told him to do the trip since no one else was available. Clouds of dust roll up the side windows. Murphy thinks of Tarzan deigning to ride along with the rangers since he's their only hope for catching the poachers.

### *Back on the Ramparts*

Back on the ramparts where second-hand light brings shapes and even colours again, Murphy finds a water fountain. But when he presses the tap, no water spurts out. Then he notices a sign in the window of a kiosk across the promenade: *Blue Gold*. He goes over and peers up at the manager half-fearing a request for ID. But the manager merely takes Murphy's two dollars and hands over a glass bottle of Woody's fortune.

### *VIP Pick-up 2*

The van crawls along Rue Principal, toward Hotel Kisisokôe where on special outings from camp you can go to the café for *patates frites* with vinegar. Across the lobby is the lounge where Kris treated Jesse to his celebratory CAHN-eh-jun, and where Jesse played piano and met Zee. It's the place most of the counsellors head to on evenings out.

Peeking out behind the hotel, a convertible Ford Mustang. You don't see cars like that in Kisisokôe Village. When Murphy replaces Skeeter Colt as star halfback with the Métropole Mohawks, he's going to own a Mustang convertible, with his sweater number 15 large on the doors.

On the hotel steps, two tough looking boys smoke and stare across the street at the straggly long grass in front of the liquor store. They appear about William's age. Between them a dark haired heavy boy chews on a wad of gum like a cow. He's around the age of Bucky, that lanky punk from NDC Park who stole Murphy's

hockey stick. Bucky's in grade ten. For some reason Murphy's interested in this boy. He can't see see him that well.

### *Rising Spirits*

Sipping Blue Gold on his amble back to the cannon adds to Murphy's rising spirits. Despite what Miss Carat would say, it's hard not to feel some miracle just happened. More than one, in fact. First, he was able to find his way thanks to the blue paint tracks and moonlight appearing in what comic books might call "the knick of time." Then he climbed a tall steep stairway in total darkness. But the darkness actually made it easier. So once again, things happened in the knick of time. And again: he was wondering how he could ever find the stairway at Porte St. Gaston when a headlamp appeared from the other direction, and the man under it turned up the stairs. All Murphy had to do was mount behind him at what Helena would call a "discreet" few paces. To heck with Miss Carat. That was magic.

### *The Author*

"There they are!"Widmark cries.

His parents leave the front of the train station. His smiling mother waves a red and white polka dot umbrella. His solemn-looking father hugs a large leather bookbag to his chest.

The van pulls up, the apprentice jumps out, and he opens the door into the middle of the van. Mr. Lacasse dips his head inside. He's wearing strong after shave. He looks to the front seat. He looks to the middle seats. He frowns.

“Would you prefer the front, sir?” says Apprentice.

“That would be better,” says the author. “I have long legs.”

Widmark’s father stretches long legs straight, expensive brown leather shoes pressing the musty floor mat. He writes in his notebook, as if calculating the requirements of a suspension bridge. When done, he clips the book shut and files it into his bookbag, which sticks up between his knees. The bag smells of rich leather. It has a solid metal clasp fastened to a wide strip of leather. Widmark’s father clasps the bag, then turns and pockets a key.

Clouds of dust leap up behind their wheels. Hotel Kisisokôe lies far behind when Murphy finally places the dark haired heavy boy. Of course. He’s LeGros. George said he was expelled yesterday, after not answering questions or agreeing to proper behaviour. Tuck Shop Counsellor drove him into the village for the train to his home in Mt. Extase.

“My, my, you folks have so much water up here,” the author says.

“Is it safe to drink?” says his wife.

Murphy says next lake over you can drink the water straight from your paddle, but with the village and cottages on Little Lake Kisisokôe, the water is questionable, even though it does look clear.

“Yes indeed,” says the author. “A vey pristine setting.”

“Widmark is fortunate to be here, aren’t you love?” says Mrs. Lacasse.

Widmark nods. “And to have such a nice friend. Rowing us all over the lake like this.”

“And a remarkable command of English. Very impressive.”

Murphy says thanks and feels himself blush as he leans back into a big pull of the oars. He wonders what’s so remarkable about saying you can drink water straight from your paddle. Then he realizes: Widmark’s parents think he’s French because this is Gaulôre and outsiders seem to think the whole place is French. He decides not to explain.

It is lovely out on the lake this afternoon. The sky is so clear, and the air. Colours pulse. You can see the smallest details miles away.

On the distant beach, two figures look out. Murphy recognizes Kris’s straw hat. That must be Jesse beside him, coming up to Kris’s ear. Murphy thinks maybe he sees Jesse’s dark-framed glasses. The kind that singer wears, Buddy Holly. It’s time to go in. He points the bow toward the two Texans.

Widmark’s father has a deep rich voice:

*Things fall apart: the centre cannot hold;*

*Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,*

*The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere*

*The ceremony of innocence is drowned;*

*The best lack all conviction, while the worst*

*Are full of passionate intensity*

Mr. Lacasse grips the gunwale , staring into the water as if he can see to the bottom and everything in the mud below. His wife peers into space before them, the approaching beach, the dock, Kris and Jesse. Suddenly the author's mood changes.

“That office of yours,” he says, meaning the Administration Office. “It's safe, is it?”

Murphy wishes he could tell the truth and say “no,” but Mr. Lacasse might have a heart attack. He left his bookbag there, under Mr. Merritte's desk, with Junior Camp Director's solemn assurances a staff member would be present all day. Is the truth that important, Nestor would ask. Mr. Lacasse nods as if recovering from a brief seizure. His voice sounds tight now. “My notebooks are in there.”

It's still a few football fields to shore. Murphy's arms ache.

“Wilbur's next book is due in nine months,” Mrs. Lacasse says. “It's such hard work.”

The author looks Murphy directly in the eye. The boy feels he's back in the Administration Office for questioning.

“You draw pictures,” says the author. “Widmark sent us some.”

He's got the evidence. He'll tell Murphy to cut it out. But instead, he says, “Good ones.”

In a new lighter voice, Mrs. Lacasse says Wilbur should call on Murphy if he needs an illustrator when the boy gets older.

“Maybe I will.”

Widmark shouts from the bow seat behind Murphy, over the squeak and splash of oars and the babble of other voices carried by the water. He says his friend also tells good stories. Murphy visited Widmark's tent one quiet hour, invited to show some art and tell a story. It dawns on Murphy that Widmark's ancestors might have come from Africa. Viola says Edgar Rice Burroughs never set foot in Africa. His first Tarzan story included a tiger. Murphy's glad he didn't tell anything about Tarzan.

"A painter paints stories," Mr. Lacasse says. "He's like a writer."

"Or she," says Mrs. Lacasse.

"Or she. They must not lack conviction."

He looks Murphy in the eye again. "You must choose where you stand."

It's still a football field to shore. Murphy pulls harder, though his arms want to shut down.

Mr. Lacasse has just told a story about Ananse, the Spider. He seems almost to smile for a moment. "Do you want to know the secret of telling a good story?"

Murphy has no idea what to say. But then he realizes he's not expected to say anything. "If you want that then you don't really want to tell a good story."

He bursts into laughter. It rolls across the waves. Families on the dock and out on the water look away, like you do when someone is not only embarrassing but perhaps a little mad. Then the old ship's bell stationed high above the waterfront breaks into its frantic peals. OD looks out, eyes straining against the distance. The megaphone lifts. "Too far!" he shouts.

Murphy looks behind him. Widmark reaches out for the dock and catches a rope. Kris seems like he might have a touch of food poisoning. For some reason Jesse stews like you do when the Patriotes lay an egg. But of course they're waiting to meet Mr. and Mrs. Lacasse. Murphy mentioned at least twice that Wilbur Lacasse sits atop the *New York Times* Best Seller list. But before Murphy can wave, they turn and mingle with the festively decked people going back and forth between the water and Main Lodge.

#### *Back at the Canon*

Back at the cannon, Murphy's sure someone was reading his note. But it's still there, under the rock, with no apparent guardian in sight. Perhaps they got tired of waiting, like he did, and decided to try later. But then *Murphy* will get tired of waiting, and then *they* will, and so on. He checks the time on his micro. 5:42. Maybe it's best not to count on this guardian business. He looks at the bushes behind the rack of bicycles. They have a crawl space in the middle, like those in NDC Park. He digs in his bag again. The sisters have included a fuzzy warm-looking sweater. He'd be warm enough in the bushes, with his bag as pillow.

His micro tells him that tomorrow at 1300 hours a train will be leaving City of Gaulôre for St. Mathilde, a town 12 kilometres southwest of La Crique au Pêcheurs. Expected arrival time 1845 hours. Fare \$120, plus tax. He remembers Digana Gold saying the ship would arrive at La Crique some time on Wednesday. But with the weird storms around this place, who knows if there might be a delay

that would buy him more time. It also seems that whenever the ship anchors in harbour, it stays over *two* nights at least. He finds a report on the ship's "itinerary" thus far, and that seems to have been its pattern. He also clicks on Elusha and learns that the floating city isn't scheduled to dock at La Crique until Thursday morning at the earliest. Furthermore, the second race between Morgan and Letourneau will be Monday, January 17—Garden Day—in the Elusha Ice Palace. How could the ship leave before then?

If Murphy can get to La Crique by Wednesday morning, he'll have six days to recover his shoes. People will be coming and going from the ship. He'll find some way to get on board. Maybe he'll even meet up with the sisters off ship. They'll understand and bring his shoes. It could be as simple as that. Of course, the sooner he acts, the less chance of the shoes going missing for good.... But oh to think he was a few seconds from grabbing them under the bed. Fainting when he did—what would Jimmy Straw say?

For a moment the boy looks around. Head lamps crisscross as people pass up and down the ramparts, but none shows the least interest in collecting him. At a park bench across from the notice board a headlamp hovers. It's that man with the brittle golden hair. He's looking into a micro. Since he's been hanging around, Murphy wonders if he should go up to him and ask if he's waiting for Murphy Beckridge. But something tells him not to.

Murphy surprises himself. He goes back to the train station page and clicks on "purchase tickets." But they ask him for his credit card number, whatever that is. In the back of his sketchbook, he writes down the train station address. If Metallic

Man weren't so close to the notice board, Murphy would go see if it gives a map of the city. He starts to search for maps of Gaulôre on his micro, but when he looks up again, Metallic Man's gone.

There *is* a map, with some wording underneath. He can barely make it out in the dim picture light:

*Hommage de Gouvernement de Jardin Global.* This is followed by a motto: *Jardiniers d l'Avenir.* Someone has removed a piece of glass over the map, crossed out *Jardiniers*, and substituted *Fardiniers*. In any case, the train station is less than twenty blocks from here. Straight up past the boulevard is Rue le Forêt. He can take it north six blocks, past the Funicular to Upper Town, to another large boulevard running east past the train station. Maybe he'll find somewhere good to eat along the way. His *pilules à norriture* can wait till tomorrow. Today is Murphy's birthday.

### *Le Grand Spectacle*

Widmark's parents asked their son to show them the Craft Shop where he earned his first feather in wood-work. Delighted with his bird house, they wanted to thank Mr. McCaffery for the boy's new skills. Mr. and Mrs. Lacasse also can't wait to see Widmark swimming. Just two days ago he took his first strokes and went ten yards without stopping. Murphy remembers that first cold gray day. Widmark looked at him so mournfully. "My nuts are the size of peas," he whimpered. Junior swim's in twenty minutes. Murphy has promised to be Widmark's buddy. So now he must hurry.

As soon as his guests head to the Craft Shop, Murphy scoots off—alone—to the deserted Theatre. As he trots along shore, he thinks about tomorrow. He doesn't care if Mr. Saville ever visits camp. In fact, he hopes he doesn't. It'd be kind of embarrassing. But tomorrow he'll have Lacasses out of the way. He can hardly wait for the rented Rambler to pull through Totem Arch. Nestor always rents the same car, which reminds them of the first tour they took together down into the Townships

The whole family will be inside: Viola, Nestor, William, and Helena. He's even looking forward to seeing Aunt Hilary. It isn't her fault she has anxieties and invisible nightly visitors. William's in the front passenger seat with the window open for fresh air. He's not troubled by the puppy Helena holds in her lap in the backseat. The puppy sure looks happy. Like a contented polar bear cub.

Murphy's already received permission for William to use the piano that used to be in Main Lodge but has been moved into the new Theatre. He's told Jack, Adrian, George, Dexter, Kris, Jesse, and everyone in his tent they may be able to catch a sonata—and if you get William in the right mood, he might even pound out some rock 'n' roll.

### *Maps*

Maps. All they show is routes in theory. Not reality. Le Forêt slopes at what William would call a 45 degree angle. The map never mentioned that. Murphy leans forward. He imagines his nose will touch the ground. Most of the cottage-style homes he passes appear deserted. They have broken and boarded windows. Some have padlocks on the doors. Rubbish somersaults across the ground. Here and there

light spills from windows, breaking darkness just enough for Murphy to make out warped sidewalk. Occasional small headlamps appear from darkness across the street, floating down toward the harbour like fireflies.

He drops his bag and rests. Murphy asks the maker of this bad dream for time out. He's hungry. He can hardly walk. A small square of carrot cake would suffice. It's his birthday.

He shoulders his bag and plods upward. Mournful harmonica returns inside his head. The song's about him. Dead star.

### *Chicken Soup*

Viola would recommend chicken soup. She'd put a hot cloth over his forehead while he rested, waiting for the scrumptious broth, not too much at once as he's just thrown up. Something must not have agreed with him, she'd say. He feels run over by those mad bulls from Marie-Reine-de-la-Paix who played his NDC football team at city tournament. Rue de Forêt reminds him of the slope at the town dump Humphrey Straw took them to one time at Lake Champlain. The sidewalk's shifting like walls in the Edgar Allan Poe story William read aloud one night. It's getting steeper. Soon Murphy will slide down... into the piles of rot.

### *Café Pain Chaud*

Murphy passes an abandoned day care, crooked rotting wood porch with ramp as well as stairs, abandoned youth hostel, dark alley, and then—incredibly-- next

door, number 16, says “Café Pain Chaud.” The door’s nicely painted, bright red and white, like houses and shops used to be in Gaulôre. There’s light inside.

Murphy puts his hand on the doorknob. *You can’t go into a café with bare feet*, says Helena. *It’s rude. It’s unsanitary. People will assume we’re poor. There’s rules against it. What do you think you’re doing.* Murphy uses the knob to keep his balance. Then he eases into the café.

The tables are all empty. He sits at the nearest one, so he can tuck his feet under the chair into the shadows. A young waitress slouches out of the kitchen.

“*Tu a de monnaie, toi?*” She slaps her pad on her knee. She’s smacking gum.

Murphy nods. He sees a chalkboard that says *Soup à Poulet \$12*. He places two twenties on the crisp checked table cloth that smells mildly of soap.

“*D’ou viens tu?*”

“*D’autres parts.*”

The waitress blows through her lips.

“*suis avec le militaire—regiments des enfants.*”

“*Q’est-ce qui’l’ y’a?*” says a lower female voice. The older woman has a waitress’s pad, too.

“*Un militaire,*” says the young waitress with a snap. Murphy’s pretty sure her tone is mocking. She glances under the table with a raised eyebrow. “*Where’s your army boots, toi,*” she says in heavy French accent.

“*Assez,*” snaps the woman, sounding weary. As the girl sidles back to the kitchen, the woman leans down. She has a pink scar over her left eyebrow, with a

trace of green at the tip where it fades into a small wrinkle. “It’s very dangerous here—you understand?”

“*J’ai tres faim,*” says Murphy. “*Je voudrai le soup a poulet, s’il vous plait. Un pain. Et un pièce de gateaux, n’importe quelle. Et s’il vous plait, un verre de l’eau Blue Gold.*”

In a sad way, the woman almost seems to smile. Her name tag says *Maude, Proprietaire*. “Your French is not bad... for a *gamin étrange*.”

### *Real Food*

Maude’s food tastes real, so nourishing Murphy can think again. He figures things out with little drawings and notations in his sketchbook. After supper he’ll continue to the train station and buy his ticket to St. Mathilde. Morgan wouldn’t take any of her money back. In fact, she gave him another \$10, raising his total to \$200. Minus the cost of his earlier bottle of Blue Gold, his supper and his train ticket, he’ll have about \$60.

Tomorrow he’ll find a store with good prices on a pup tent. He also needs some matches, a flashlight, and toilet paper. He’s got 15 *pilules à nourriture*, more than enough for the time he needs to get his shoes. If he can afford a small knapsack to make hiking easier, he’ll get that. And of course, shoes.

At the bottom of the street he’d noticed a shop called *Second D’Or: Comptant*. It sounded like the *mont-de-piété* across from the Colisée Métropole. From the window of Gilbert Glace Café, Murphy and Jimmy Straw could watch people skulking into the *mont-de piété* with different items and leaving without

them. Jimmy said they *hocked* their goods. You got a ticket when you did that, so you could redeem the item if you ever got the money to buy it back. *Hocked*.

Jimmy liked saying the word. You could tell.

Murphy could try hocking his gifts from Not in the Club and Morgan's ring. But he would feel pretty rotten if he couldn't get the ring back. The gifts, too. Better to wait. Elusha must have a *mont-de-piété*, if he gets really desperate. He searches his micro. Yes, Elusha has as many *monts-de-piété*, as Métropole.

### *Dress to Fit In*

As he's finishing his carrot cake, Maude walks past him out the front door. She returns a few minutes later and drops something on the table beside him: an elasticized band holding a headlamp the size of a small flip-top pack of American cigarettes.

"Going around with no light after dark—*c'est illégal, tu comprends?*"

Murphy nods.

"They put you in the child's army. Maybe they put you in a *usine*—ten hours a day. *Sans repas. Jusque la capsule à nourriture. Puis les coups sauvages.*"

According to Maude, the government pays people well for turning in homeless children. She adds one more thing to the table top: a small container. Murphy counts seven pills inside. She asks Murphy if he's ever seen these pills before. He nods. She says to take one each day. She says it's hard otherwise to find any food to keep you alive. If he can't get more of these *capsules à nourriture*, then he better take one every other day or every three days.

*“Puis des souliers,” says Maude. “Il faut porter des souliers.”*

*Sgt. Patch and Bowlooster Giroux*

He’s heading for the door when it opens and two young soldiers enter. Both wear sergeant’s stripes. The one nearest Murphy looks familiar. He has freckles and an eager manner like a big puppy. He’s the one Murphy saw leading the squad of uniformed children along the boulevard. He’s maybe a year or two younger than William. Over his left breast pocket: *Sgt. Patch*.

On the visor of his helmet four capital letters inside an oval made by four words, two above and two below. The capital letters say *CARE*. The words—much smaller and harder to read—say *Children’s Army Reserves Eternus*.

Sgt. Patch appears to have a naturally friendly face, but Murphy thinks it clouds for a moment with suspicion. He’s noticed Murphy’s bare feet.

“Shoes needed a wash,” says Murphy in rapid-fire style. “Rats.” He gives a big smile. He assumes the sergeant was posted here from elsewhere and speaks English. “Stolen by street punks. No time to replace before supper. Keep up the great work.” He notices the gum-smacking waitress looking on. He gives Sgt. Patch an impish but not mocking salute. He decides not to pat the sergeant on the elbow. He ducks out the door.

He plans to hustle south to the alley behind the restaurant, dash to the next street over, then north as fast as bare feet allow. That snarky waitress is sure to mention Murphy’s little exaggeration about being in the children’s army. Sgt. Patch seems like one of those boys who do every bit of their homework and try to answer

all the questions in class. Teacher's pets. When assigned to class supervision, they won't let a single violation go. Sgt. Patch will be out at any moment looking for the homeless suspect. Murphy just knows it.

His plan, however, falls apart in an instant. Helena would say it's because he never listens. She has told him many times look both ways before he steps out a door. Don't assume the coast is clear. But eager to put his plan to immediate action, Murphy walks right into someone.

"*Tabernac!*" shouts the man as he tucks his long beefy frame to steady his cargo. The clattering bundle in his arms sounds like empty milk bottles as Viola sets them out on the porch with her note rolled into the mouth of an empty for morning's delivery.

A snug red pick-up truck rests by the curb. Several bales of straw and hay stick up over the sides, conveying a pungent odor. One hot June day, Mr. Straw let Murphy accompany him and Jimmy on a country visit. Despite the heat, Jimmy rolled up the window and crinkled his nose. "It's the dung," said Mr. Straw. "You don't get country without it-- and lots of hard work. Don't forget it."

The big man with the clanky bundle sure seems like a farmer. The boy had been promised visits to his aunt's farm in Thunder Bay where William spent part of one summer—but the invitation fell through, and Murphy could only dream what a farm must be like.

The big farmer shuffles over to the snug red ripe-smelling pick-up. He leans over the lowered tail gate, places his bundle beside a red bicycle lying flat on its side. Beside the bicycle a large flat sweep of white wool raises dark sleepy eyes.

The creature blinks. He stretches up on all fours and studies the boy with a brisk wag of his enormous tail. Murphy suppresses a laugh of delight at the big round sight so much like a friendly polar bear.

The farmer fixes Murphy for the first time. He appears a little less annoyed now. With his thick glasses, Dennis-the-Menace cowlick poking out the back of his baseball cap, and large yet rounded frame, he's an odd-looking man, part bear, part owl, part rooster. Nestor might suggest his name to be Bowlooster Giroux. The first name blending bear, owl, and rooster, and the surname printed in felt scarlet over the peak of the green cap.

*"Gardes-toi la route."*

Murphy says *"excusez-moi"* and the farmer says *"pas problem,"* as if he at least half means it. The big white wooly dog woofs.

Bowlooster Giroux gives the dog a look. *"Intelligent... et suprenant."*

The café door opens. Fastening his helmet clasp under his chin, light brown eyes deadly serious, Sgt. Patch looks out as Murphy and farmer contemplate intelligent and surprising dog. Polar Bear himself appears to be joining in the conversation. The sergeant begins to say something to Murphy but cuts himself short when he recognizes the big man.

*"Oh, good day, Dr. L.... Is there any trouble?"*

*"Oh no. C'set correct. Pas problem. Pip pip."*

Sgt. Patch smiles.

*"You've been practicing your British."*

*"In case I'm re-rooted That's rooted with two Os, what?"*

“Wouldn’t it be France for you?”

“I’m feeling more British today. I had tea this afternoon.”

“You must remember, I’m from the prairies.”

“Yes siree, pardner. And don’t forget my Mohawk genes.”

“I was just wondering about that boy... has he ID?”

“Not to worry. He’s with me.”

“Thanks, doctor.”

Sergeant Patch goes back inside. Dr. L. turns to the cab of his truck. “*Bien—au revoir.*” Polar bear woofs a friendly goodbye, or so Murphy imagines, as the red pick-up glides away with merely a whirr. Like Benoît Lecoup’s electric train.

#### *Dance of the Head Lamp*

Murphy’s headlamp dances into the distance along Boulevard des Pins, a movie projector casting lost images of business trucks, fire hydrants, awnings, fences, and people milling outside the door of a nightclub with loud music throbbing through walls. A burly man in a shiny black shirt with silver stitching that looks like it’ll pop at the seams creates some room down the middle of the line-up for people leaving the club. Several of them push right in front of Murphy, including Melvoy, arms wide like wings, each around a different woman.

So you can’t believe everything someone says. Murphy believed he was seeing Melvoy for the last time, but here he is again. He’s more unsteady than Jesse that Quiet Hour when he came by Tent 24 and laughed oddly during Murphy’s

reading from Tarzan. Melvoy and the two women spill into the boulevard. A car honks loudly.

Two blocks further east, still seven blocks from Gare du Palais, a boy with one sole several times thicker than the other calls Murphy into an alley and tells him to kill his headlamp. By the ghostly light of a side window, the boy shows Murphy several micros, knives, small chunks of something like black tar, bottles of alcohol, and *capsules à nourriture*. He tells Murphy from time to time he can even sell cigarettes and a bicycle. The boy is bigger than Murphy and though he walks awkwardly on his special shoe, he looks like the sort who might have a switchblade. Murphy considers it wise to buy something, so he gives the boy \$10 for three more *capsules à nourriture*, bringing his total to 25.

His heart's beating hard as he resumes his way. He remembers advice from a film about the cement jungle: put most of your cash inside your shoe. Fine advice, no doubt—if you have shoes. Murphy puts \$40 in his left jeans pocket and keeps \$16 in the right. If he's challenged by thieves, the best he can do is hand over the \$16 and hope they believe it's all he has. Pretty lame, Jimmy Straw would say. Murphy imagines striding along with \$40 in his Hot Shoes. He imagines so hard that for a moment the shoes are really there. What a shot of confidence that brings. Quite different from the feeling offered by the street and by the darkness slowly but surely swallowing it to nothing.

### *Official*

A few blocks further on, the landscape turns less wild and scary. More official, in fact. Murphy passes an enormous stone building: Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Gaulôre, first church in the New World to have been raised to a basilica. A sign out front says *Autorité regional du jardin global*. He continues up the Colline Parlementaire lined with massive edifices from as early as the seventeenth century.

His headlight picks out a stone tableau on one of the official buildings. An Indian brave with long braids shades his eyes as he gazes at the horizon. A child clutches the man's leather legged thigh while a noble-looking woman turns gracefully to weave a basket, right breast uncovered. Helena says that's what makes Gaulôre and Métropole such fun. Toronto would never show that sort of thing.

Stony Europeans stand on pedestals alongside the next building. A colonist in a greatcoat with lace and a powdered wig points into the distance. A second one beside him raises a musket.

Finally Murphy reaches the bus station. It's dark and sealed. *Condamné*, says a sign. *Défense d'entrer!* The train station should be just one more block. After all this, what if the train station's closed, too.... But its massive door sighs open.

### *Gare du Palais*

Murphy's never seen such a cavernous station with so few people in it. On a bench not far from the entrance, an ancient couple lean against each other, propped like subjects doped for an operation. One time William had to have his wisdom teeth removed. The dentist had given him a pill to take two hours before the surgery.

Helena had had to go to the dentist's with him—by taxi, no less-- because the prodigy was so dazed. The ancient couple are certainly dazed, but they don't seem to be sitting at a dentist's office. The old-fashioned wood bench with its high curved backs makes it seem as if for some reason they have been abandoned in a church pew.

Far down the vast floor, an equally ancient looking custodian swings a mop that reminds Murphy of the lady said to have snake hair. The old man swings away in a steady deliberate motion like farmers in a documentary scything wheat. Murphy thinks of Grandfather Carter and his snaths. Why couldn't he be here.

Murphy ventures into the cavern, soles numb on the cold black floor. It's embarrassing to hear them go pat, pat, pat. Ticket booths run down both sides of the station, but all appear shuttered. Then in muffled illumination past the old man's mournful mop Murphy spies dim orange light-- a wicket with its shutter raised. He stalks toward it. He's about to cut across through an even blacker section of floor when the old man halts in mid swing.

*"Pomme pourrie!"* he croaks with a nasty stare. *"Ne passe pas sur mon travail."*

Murphy realizes the blacker sections are still wet from mopping. But they seem to be everywhere. The wicket might close at any moment.

*"Mais monsieur, je dois acheter un billet."*

With a grimace of impatience, the man shakes his arm toward the far end of the station. *"Contourne l'eau, p'tit zouave."*

Murphy sees a lane of dry floor on the far side of the station running way down to the end and up the far side. Things have definitely gone bad over the years. In 1962 janitors at Royal Station in downtown Métropole use ropes and portable posts to section off drying tiles. They don't yell at you like you're a criminal. He'll have to run.

It's even more embarrassing to hear his bare feet smack, smack, smack on the cold tiles as he dashes down the long floor. He's panting hard and his leg muscles ache by the time he pulls up under the open wicket.

"*Ah, oui?*" says the clerk in a deep resonant voice. Perhaps it sounds a little suspicious? The ledge of the wicket comes to Murphy's forehead, so he stands back in order to look up. With eyes as big as purple grapes the clerk stares down, one eye peeking past the corner of a hooked nose. He seems to notice Murphy's bare feet. For a moment he looks like Mr. Straw deciding which side of beef to choose at the butcher's. Then he looks away in a cloud like Esther when she adds a whole lot of numbers in her head.

Murphy explains that he wants a one-way ticket to St. Mathilde for tomorrow's 1 p.m. departure. The clerk gives a sad smile like Murphy's tried to play a pathetic trick. If he's to sell the boy a ticket, the clerk will need to see Murphy's ID, and a parent or guardian must sign permission for him to travel alone-- and provide the name and ID of the person meeting him at the other end. Murphy reaches for the closest thing to ID, his collector's series card of Freddie Framboise, when he realizes he is simply, as William would say, "protracting the inevitable." He turns without a word.

*“Hey, hey, mon p’tit gas.”*

Murphy looks back.

*“J’ai quelque chose à te montrer.”* The clerk waves c’mere. He reminds Murphy of guests on *Magic Tom* who use exaggerated gestures and seldom seem to be smiling for real. The clerk disappears from the window. Then a sharp click echoes into the station like a pebble into the sea and the door beside the wicket wags open. The clerk waves again, an eager expression of something wonderful to share.

*“Mon train électrique. C’est un p’tit train, tu sais? Un jouet formidable. Je te le donne. Vient-ci’t. vient-ci’t.”*

Murphy backs up, turns, and starts to walk quickly away. He remembers warnings at the swimming pool not to run on wet tiles in bare feet.

*“Vient-ci’t,”* the clerk shouts in a much different tone. He’s coming after.

One way Murphy has of dealing with stressful situations is to think calming thoughts. He remembers an amusing tale of Ananse’s Feast.<sup>4</sup> It was in the midst of a terrible drought. No one had anything to eat except Ananse the Spider who had hoarded lots of goodies. Ananse covered up all the cracks in his house hoping no one would smell his feast, but his old friend Akye the Turtle did and knocked at the door.

Ananase had to let his friend in, but then he had an idea. He said it was only good manners for Akye to wash his hands. But the nearest water was a puddle in the dried up river. Since Akye had to walk on all fours, each time he returned from washing, his hands were dirty again. Ananse got every bite of the feast for himself.

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<sup>4</sup> Retold from the retelling by Arusha Masai author Tololwa Mollel, published as a children’s picture book *Ananse’s Feast: An Ashanti Tale*, Clarion, 1997.

Later a great rain came and produced crops but then ruined most of them. Ananse was without food. So he went to visit his friend Akye at the bottom of the deep river with a pile of goodies. Ananse had to put on a weighted robe to sink down to Akye's house. But as Ananse was about to dig in, Akye informed him that he had removed his robe as a proper eating custom and it was only polite for Ananse to show the same sign of respect. So Ananse had to remove his robe, which meant he floated up to the surface and never got one bite of Akye's feast.

Telling himself the story again, Murphy has almost doubled his pace.

### *Wet Floor*

Murphy reaches the far end of the station . There are three large doors to the dark street outside. The boy tugs on the nearest knob, then the next, then the next. Locked, every one. He nips along to the far side. Now he's in a corner of dry floor with the clerk paused and watching from further up and across the way. The clerk stands between Murphy and the opposite end where he entered the station. There's still floor to cover for the clerk to reach Murphy's side.

Adrenalin—that's the hormone Esther said gives you superhuman strength. She told of a mother who lifted a car off her child who'd become pinned underneath. Murphy's scared enough, all right, just like in a nightmare. If only he didn't have to lug along the cumbersome duffel bag. But it holds too many practical items to be left behind. If need be, he can try using it to club back his pursuer. He takes a few deep breaths as football coach would advise and bolts forward down the long narrow strip of dry floor.

Jimmy Straw would point out how hopeless this is. The clerk's way up the floor, stepping across to the middle on an angle to cut Murphy off. He has big long arms and legs. If Murphy thinks he'll slip by, he's dreaming. But what else is he supposed to try.

Like a patient leopard the clerk watches Murphy approach up the far side. Then he springs. Two prodigious strides-- and suddenly he's flying upwards. Then backwards. He lands on the wet floor with an ugly smack and cry. From farther down, the old janitor hurls curses. He's too feeble, it seems, to do more than shake his mop. The clerk lies stunned. He flails with one hand. It seems that if you want to run, shiny black shoes with smooth leather soles aren't much safer on sleek surface than bare feet. Still on dry floor, Murphy kicks into high gear. You never know when that crazy man will get himself righted. Soon the boy's speeding past the old couple on the bench. Glancing back, he sees their frightened eyes follow him into the night like ghosts.

### *Grand Spectacle 2*

Theatre Director lent Murphy the front door key, to be returned tomorrow evening after the visit. Entering the empty building, Murphy hears Dramatic Counsellor imitate MC at Métropole's lavish new place des arts.

*Mesdames et messieurs—le grand spectacle!*

Deep, resonant, terribly proud voice sounds strange echoing through musty air and gray ghosts. "Is this a dagger I see before me?" Mr. Merritte wails, bug-eyed, hands to temples, floods of laughter. "The wolf had rabies!" Murgatroy gasps.

Sure enough, they pen Old Yeller in the corn crib after he's bitten. He was just protecting them. And when Arliss, too young to know better, opens the pen, older brother Travis has to shoot their beloved dog. Not only Murgatroy is crying.

That morning, under strict supervision of Junior Camp Director's eldest son, boys completing this week's Improvement class moved the great planks and saw-horses that created seating for last night's screening of *South Pacific*. George said they made like pros. This was the finale of their week's work: to clear the theatre floor for Monday's badminton tournament

George didn't want anything to do with Improvement. He'd asked for Cooking Instruction but Junior Camp Director gave the alternative placement. George has a gory-looking splinter for his pains. Part of their test was to have the seating all neatly stacked before the first camp visitors began to show up, at which time boys were supposed to be free to join their families.

Murphy works from a stack of church-basement style chairs along the west wall. About fifty feet back from the piano he arranges two rows in a semicircle facing stage right. He decides on sixteen chairs, maybe more than necessary, but it's good to be prepared. Others may hear of the performance and want to attend. Too bad the Lacasses can't make it.

#### *Forty-five Minutes Later*

It's forty-five minutes since Murphy left Gare du Palais. He's on a hard bench across from Café Pain Chaud. He's seen other such benches, in places where you

might expect bus stops. But since arriving, he's not seen a bus. Just the occasional streetcar clattering by on the crackle of electricity.

His headlamp scans the restaurant, an abandoned gifts shop next door, and a faded cottage with a sign out front *Le cordon d'or: centre pour personnes âgées*. An elderly tenant could reach across and stroke the cracked brick walls of the dwelling next door, its broken windows imperfectly blinded with plywood. Two fox-sized rats scurry back and forth between the buildings. Murphy shuts off his lamp.

On the way back he stopped at the ramparts. His note under the stone was in yet another position, but nothing had been written—or rather printed-- on it. He watches as the lights go off inside the restaurant and Maude comes out and locks the door. Either she will observe and call him over or she won't.

Someone passes in front of Murphy. Maude glances over. She seems to scowl. She walks around the corner of the building alongside the alley.

**This section's 1963 Camp Vignettes**

This section's vignettes focus on Murphy's anticipation of his family's visit, the visit itself, and an unplanned meeting with Mr. Merritte. Another strand involves Murphy's preoccupation during certain private moments with working out Tarzan's birthday.

The night before his family's visit brings a spooky mood.

*Excerpt—Spooky Night*

Murphy feels satisfied with his hosting of the Lacasses. The last thing Widmak's parents said before driving off to the village for the night was how helpful Murphy had been. They hoped to see him again tomorrow when they returned for lunch and Mr. Lacasse's bookbag, which they decided would be safer in the Administration Office than the local hotel where thefts had been reported.

Murphy can't believe it's almost Sunday, the day of his own family's visit. But the night feels spooky, like weird things are going on. Like Halloween. Sure enough a rough voice breaks from the darkness.

*Roll out those lazy hazy crazy days of summer*

*Dust off the sun and moon and sing a song of cheer*

The words wobble like you imagine the singer wobbles, staggering from Gilbert Glace Taverne. The voice has a heavy French accent.

Murphy sits up in bed with a cold wash in his heart. Where is George?

George is snoring away in his bag at the back of the tent. Murphy settles back into his relief, not entirely convinced, however, that something isn't wrong. Once he does fall asleep, it's to a disturbing vivid dream. Dead fish flood in from Little Lake Kisisokôe. They cover the beaches in great mounds. They lie rotting. When he manages to awake, the boy finds it impossible to shake off the vision. With no desire to go back to sleep, he stewes in his worries.

Who is he kidding, counting off the days as if he's going to slip through? He'll be called into the Administration Office again before Friday. Junior Camp Director promised they'd find out who took the picture of Gisèle at Indians and Settlers. That's one right there. Another is Adrian. He said he wouldn't tell about poker, but he might. He won't necessarily spare names. Then there's George, always a concern, likely to go off like a firecracker at any moment, even if it wasn't him singing drunk this night.

And a new chilling fear: what if Mr. Saville *does* turn up tomorrow? Dexter, being so pushy, one never knows. Murphy tries a prayer. *Please God don't let Mr. Saville come tomorrow.* Tomorrow's going to stay sunny. Viola's bringing a picnic basket and they're all going to sit on junior beach right near the old driftwood. Viola, Nestor, William, Helena, and Aunt Hilary. Mr. Saville and all his fuss would ruin everything.

In contrast to the bright sun which greeted the Lacasses the day before, a cold gloomy rain awaits the Beckridges. Murphy haunts Totem Arch where parents arrive, checking the time every so often with the OD. At one point he sees Mr. Merritte in the distance, talking with a parent near Tent 1.

*Excerpt*

*Sir, may I present Corporal Nestor Beckridge of the 49<sup>th</sup> (West Riding) Infantry Division.* Nestor blushes a little. He smiles modestly and adds aka the Polar Bears. *Crikey*, says Mr. Merritte. He knows all about the horrendous campaign in Norway, the Iceland Garrison. He's deeply moved to learn that Nestor, driving one of those funny aquatic vehicles, led the charge across the Nederijin in Operation Quick Anger. The boy decides not to mention that Nestor was part of Murphyforce; it could lead to teasing comments. So he starts to tell how his father taught himself French, but Nestor says enough. Mr. Merritte himself lost partial hearing in his left ear at the Siege of Dunkirk. The two men arrange to meet later that day in town.

Forty minutes after the Beckridges' planned time of arrival:

*Excerpt*

Through a thickening curtain of rain another car appears from around the bend. This one's not the Rambler, either. It's a great boat-like sedan with a silver bumper resembling a swollen lower lip. The bumper runs up and around in a gaping whale's mouth. The fine slats of the grill might be

lines along the upper plate. On either side of the upper lip appear double-barrel headlights. They shoot yellow beams through the gray wet air.

As the car follows the curve Murphy recognizes a De Soto Adventurer. He recalls Grouchy Marx telling us to hurry down to the nearest dealer for one. It must be the length of one and a half birch-bark canoes. A war canoe, like the new ones Junior Camp Director gushes about so. The De Soto's long green fins increase the impression of a deep-water monster. *This baby can flick its tail at anything on the road.*

As the car straightens out and heads for Totem Arch, Murphy scarcely believes his eyes.

Behind the wheel is Viola who hardly ever drives. Helena is beside her, no puppy. Viola has a bad headache from the stressful drive, and Helena is in sullen spirits. But she brightens considerably, Viola, too, when Kris happens by and invites them to see Tent 24. Kris delights them with stories and Texas charm, and they discover a mutual acquaintance: Skeeter Colt, star halfback with the Métropole Mohawks once coached Kris and later took Helena on a date aboard Tribal Class Destroyer HMCS Haida (G63).

The rain subsides; sun even breaks through. They plan the rest of the afternoon. Murphy will give Helena a grand tour while Viola visits an old classmate, head nurse Mavis at the Infirmary. Kris has things to look after in the canoe trip stores under the dining hall, but once that's done, he and Helena will go for a paddle

in Intermediate Bay. Weather permitting, Viola and Murphy will go down to his driftwood log on the shore between Junior and Intermediate swim areas.

Helena goes into the Inirmary with Viola for a few minutes while Murphy waits outside at the picnic table beside the hooded totem pole. She's given him a letter from Nestor:

*Excerpt*

A black and white photo falls out of the envelope with the letter. When sunlight rushes through the white maple, it's warm and the boy feels hope. When moody gray clouds curtain the sun again he's chilly and sad. Hunkered beneath its drop cloth, the totem pole is surely sad. Murphy begins to read:

Dear Murphy

I hope you have some new work to show me. I got the clipper done about a week ago and took a photo of her—thank goodness (more on that later). I'd like you to do a bang-up drawing from the photo. But first, you're probably wondering why I couldn't drive up this weekend. I sure wish I could, but isn't that quite the buggy we rented? Mario didn't have the Rambler, so he said we could book the De Soto for the same cost. Let me tell you, that's quite the deal. Your grandpa used to say that doing good to your customers does good to you in the long run. I'll always go back to Mario.

Anyway, poor Helena and Mom were all tragic realizing I wouldn't be able to come along—and you know William and his

asthma, he had another attack and just couldn't take the risk—but I told the girls not to worry. It's not like Murphy's a kid anymore. I told 'em you'd understand, and I know you will. Let's remind them that you'll be right back here in another seven days.

Say, did you get any more invites to read and show your drawings?

The letter goes on to explain that Nestor had to stay home to look after Aunt Hilary. She wasn't in shape for an outing. In fact, time had come for her to get special care in the hospital for people with mental difficulties. They had new treatments these days, and with God's grace she would be back home before too long. The hospital was up on the side of Mt. Bonpelier with a beautiful view of the city and river below. Since Aunt Hilary was moving there on Saturday, the day before Murphy's return, she would definitely like him to visit soon, with his pictures from camp. The whole family could go along, and then have a picnic on the mountainside.

Meanwhile, Nestor would sure appreciate it if Murphy could do a nice drawing of the clipper. Nestor guesses he must have forgotten to lock the basement door after giving the clipper its final touches. Next morning they discovered a break-in. Some things were stolen, and the ship—well—it was cracked up pretty bad. He'd like to send the picture to a doctor in England who helped him feel better after the fighting. The way Murphy draws, it will mean more than the ship itself.

It sounds like Nestor has lost heart for starting on the ship all over again. Murphy sure hopes he can make a picture good enough for a doctor. Too bad the photo is so dark and blurry.

Helena comes out for her tour.

*Excerpt*

On their walk Helena talks mostly about the ordeal of her wisdom teeth. After the teeth were extracted and the novacane wore off, she languished in bed in agony. Esther visited with some chicken soup, which her grandmother said had carried the Jewish people against improbable odds onwards to another day. Esther was careful not to start any political arguments. That wouldn't have been fair. Then Viola said it would be all right for Moidra to drop by with her sympathies. She hadn't been that welcome since the party when Nestor's Luger vanished with you know who.

But of all the effrontery, Moidra brought along Rocky. Always too forward with the ladies, he patted Helena's leg under the cover and said not to worry, it was darkest before the dawn. If Helena hadn't been too weak to speak, she would have asked when Rocky thought he might be done with her father's army souvenir." I came this close," she says.

After they slipped out, William slipped in. He hadn't said anything to her yet. Just stared with bemusement, the way he looked when he couldn't figure how to make something work. This time he did say

something. He'd overheard Rocky's comment about the dawn and wanted to point out that it was an uninformed cliché. In fact, the darkest point comes at midnight when the sun is at 180 degrees opposite the field in question. "If I'd had the strength, I would have thrown my chicken soup at him," Helena said. "It was still hot."

As they are admiring the big dining hall gong, Murphy tells Helena about the Murgatroy affair. She says it reminds her of a time in grade nine when a number of girls were convinced that a new girl was spreading bad rumours about them. They paid her back by refusing to speak to her for the whole year. Later they found out the girl became so depressed that she even attempted suicide. They also found out that a different girl—runner up for Princess of Grade Nine Winter Ball—had been spreading the bad rumours.

Helena gives Murphy \$12.75 for the remaining costs on the radio repair. She says Murphy has done the right thing and should try not to blame Murgatroy. It isn't his fault that he's been taught his particular attitude toward things and money.

Sometimes Helena is as helpful as Nestor. And even thoughtful, too. She's brought Murphy a reel of William's sonatas to make up for his baving stayed home because of his asthma. Murgatroy may consider himself grand with his millionaire's radio, but can you believe Widmark has a Grundig tk14 reel-to-reel tape player? Murphy mentioned it in his last letter home, and Helena made sure to use a reel with a 5.75" diameter.

*Excerpt—Picnic Basket*

The picnic basket, which had belonged to Viola's grandmother, sat on the white sand, on a red towel. Neither of them had eaten much, Murphy half a peanut butter sandwich, Viola a banana. The sun continued to play hide-and-seek. Right now it was hiding, and they both wore sweaters. They leaned back against the driftwood log where Murphy did his drawing.

Viola put her arm around his shoulders. He leaned into her and put his arm around her waist. It didn't feel as if she was throbbing anymore. She felt calm. She'd had a nap after visiting with Mavis.

Helena should be feeling calm now as well, skimming through the rushes and communing with outdoor chapel. That is if she wasn't all wriggly and cuckoo over Kris, which seemed to happen whenever she liked a boy and considered him good looking. They'd had a pleasant walk, giving Helena a close-up look at the camp-craft grounds, the Nature Cabin with all its specimens, one of the nature trails up the hillside, then the archery and rifle range over the hill and then back up the other side of the hill past the great dining hall with its six-foot high gong hanging out front on a chain. Murphy made sure he described the big mallet that Gaston the cook used to bash the gong when it was time to call everyone.

Murphy looks up at Viola. Is that a tear on her cheek. She whisks her head away and flicks her cheek. It may have been a fly.

They all go into the village with Kris for hamburgers. It's dusk by the time they say goodbye. Viola's so tired she concedes to Helena taking the wheel. The girl got her licence last year after learning on Esther's third-hand Austin-Healey Sprite. After Helena and Viola drive off in the De Soto, Murphy has a strange sense of peace mixed with sadness for Aunt Hilary, Nestor, and Viola. Things have been pretty tough for them all. Helena's still working too, hard, too, and William's always had his difficulties, like asthma.

Exactly what's going on seems murky, like the question of Tarzan's birthday. For over ten days Murphy has been using a combination of close reading and biological deduction to calculate Tarzan's day of birth. He's settled on November 15.

As Murphy passes the Administration Office on his way to the tentline, a large shadowy figure comes up the slope from Parliament Valley. It heads for the back stairs of the Office. It's Mr. Merritte. Murphy acts without thinking. He runs over and asks if he can talk for just a minute.

*Excerpt*

“You wish to retract... ? Oh, here.”

Mr. Merritte snaps off a piece of his milk chocolate bar. Murphy thinks hard during the bonus moments allowed to chew a piece of chocolate. How should he say what he must? An owl hoots from the birch tree behind Mr. Merritte.

“I was angry with Murgatroy St. James,” Murphy says. “Over an accident. So when some campers said they saw him near our tent after the sleeping bags were thrown out, I said I saw him, too.”

“But you didn’t?”

Murphy shakes his head no.

“You lied?”

Murphy remains still.

“I was angry because I broke Murgatroy’s radio by accident. I paid for the repair bill but then the shop wanted more money so he told me... but my sister gave me the rest to pay it all, and I’m going to.”

Mr. Merritte strokes his chin. It’s not clear to Murphy if he’s listening at all.

“I don’t want Murgatroy to get in trouble,” the boy continues. “Nothing bad happened to our things. The Laundry knows how to clean George’s blanket.”

“My, you’ve worked it all out.” Mr. Merritte sounds distant. After what Helena would call a long awkward pause, he gazes off at the lake past the peak of Jack’s tent. Murphy imagines what he is preparing to say:

*Who do you know that hates Camp Kisisokôe?*

Maybe that’s what he’s thinking, but what he says is different.

“You’re an unusual lad, Master Beckridge. Why don’t you run along before my uncharitable temper returns.”

Murphy's run toward Tent 24 soon becomes a saunter. He's deep in thought. Talking with Mr. Merritte has left a feeling of peace and hope. He didn't see the Lacasses at lunch yesterday after all. He hopes he can stay in touch with Widmark. Imagine if Mr. Lacasse wasn't just kidding about using some of Murphy's artwork some day.

He's been invited to show some drawings to Tent 1 during Tuesday Quiet Hour, and to read something from *Tarzan of the Apes*. He's settled on a passage he can recite from memory, the way certain adults recite Shakespeare:

*That night a little son was born in the tiny cabin beside the primeval forest, while a leopard screamed before the door, and the deep notes of a lion's roar sounded from beyond the ridge.*

*Lady Greystoke never recovered from the shock of the great ape's attack, and though she lived for a year after her baby was born, she was never again outside the cabin, nor did she ever fully realize that she was not in England...*

*A year from the day her little son was born Lady Alice passed quietly away in the night. So peaceful was her end that it was hours before Clayton could awaken to a realization that his wife was dead.*

*The last entry in his diary was made the morning following her death...*

My little son is crying for nourishment—O

Alice, Alice, what shall I do?

### **2172 Summary**

Maude reappears at the side of her restaurant and calls Murphy. The simple one-bedroom apartment upstairs matches the rectangular shape of Café Pain Chaud below. Maude removes the boy's smelly laundry from the duffel bag and washes it in a tub, along with the clothes he was wearing. She gives him a pair of boy's pyjamas to put on.

Maude has made up a couch for Murphy to sleep on along the east wall. "*Mets-les.*" She holds out a pair of boy's running shoes with a pair of fluffy yellow socks. Murphy tries them and can't believe how perfectly they fit, how good they feel. He then leaves them by the entrance and they sit in two meek arm chairs in front of a fireplace which has been boarded over because Maude can't afford to meet Mr. Fish's new carbon emissions protocol. During especially cold periods she relies on a rickety second-hand electric heater and layers of second-hand clothing.

Maude has been looking at Murphy's sketchbook. She says, "L'art est leau de vie." A framed picture on her coffee table shows Maude on stage in costume performing in a play from 1962 by a Métropole French writer who defied standards of the time by writing in joul.

"Comedienne," she says, as if something is unavoidable so you may as well like it.

Aside from the pops of 22 calibre rifles at Campe Kisisokoe, Murphy has never heard a gun shot before. He's pretty sure he hears one now. It's rough-looking across the back alley. Angry voices rise from the parking lot of le Bar Toto. Maude shrugs and asks if he would like some more warm goat's milk. He would. It's delicious.

She gets it from her supplier in the country. After two centuries of suppression and bankruptcy, the Garden has been easing back small local market farms and gardens. The surrounding lands are still dangerous and must be thoroughly tested. Some are then restored a plant at a time, others quarantined. Pain Chaud is one of the only cafés so far with a local supplier. Maude's just lucky he's a nice guy who likes her cooking, because he can't be making much money from paltry business the likes of hers.

Between two white candles on the mantel piece a framed picture shows a boy standing proudly over the handlebars of a bicycle. He's wearing running shoes like those Maude has given Murphy. Jean dreamed of riding in the Tour de France. With the pittance he made from his agreed-upon two-year term in CARE and Maude's meagre take from the café, they were saving up to get him a bicycle. You couldn't get one for less than \$250, not even used on the black market. The rent-and-rides—like the one in the picture-- were for pattering around home. You couldn't leave the city with one for more than 24 hours.

From some sort of album on the coffee table, Maude removes a fold-out map. It shows bike routes through the city and up and down the river. They zigzag in strange detours -- to avoid condemned grounds marked by skull and cross bones.

Jean talked all the time about a bicycle trip with Maude to the Gulf de St. Léonard. He talked about it like it was already happening, never mind that they would need two bicycles and Maude could never pedal that far.

Beside the framed picture is a cross and beside the cross a delicate figurine of Mother Mary. Murphy usually finds religious statues a little troubling, but this one sends tingles down his spine. Maude's great great grandmother made and painted it.

*"Tu n'as pas vu aucune chose. Comprends?"*

Murphy nods.

Maude gets a call from someone with a rough voice. It sounds like Melvoy after a long afternoon in Taverne Gilbert Glace. Maude says, "She told you that? Do you have a note? All right, tomorrow."

The voice rumbles on. Maude says she wouldn't leave her worst enemy in that place but agrees to go out. Murphy is already drifting into sleep. Maude has noticed his micro; she leaves her number and says to call if he has any problems. There's an outside chance a visitor may call for her. Murphy can say she will be back soon.

At the door she stops and asks if he has papers, if he is *Autochtone*. He shakes his head no.

Murphy feels awake again after Maude leaves. Telling himself it isn't right to snoop, he goes to the walk-in closet by the entrance to put his sketchbook in his jacket. There he finds all manner of theatrical costumes, accessories, and equipment. Curious to see more theatre pictures, Murphy returns to the album on the coffee table.

The first photo he sees shows Maude holding a tiny bundle. *En retour de l'hôpital.* Another shot on the same page shows young Jean in a party hat eating cake beside other children. *Jean. Cinq ans. Fête de naissance. Le 15 Novembre 2165.* The last page in Maude's album contains a newspaper clipping: *Notice Nécrologique. Mort le 3 Octobre 2169, Jean Louis Lemer, perdu dans un manoeuvre militaire en fier service du Jardin.*

Maude returns. She says the guy told her she had to meet someone. She doesn't really understand what it's all about. Anyway, she says Murphy can stay for a while. Depending how this business settles, maybe longer. Murphy thanks her but says he has to travel to La Crique aux Pêcheurs. When she asks why, he starts to cry. She says, "*Ne te dérange pas. Demain nous allons le corriger.*"

Before going to bed, she brings his wash in from the fire escape and folds everything on the duffel bag with the bike routes map.

In the middle of the night a key fumbles in the lock of the main door. Hippolyte Braveau staggers into the apartment, outraged to find Murphy there. He shoves the boy out and throws his belongings including the bike routes map, down the stairs after him. Murphy realizes his jacket with sketchbook and micro is still in the closet upstairs. The shoes from Jean remain on the inside boot mat. Murphy goes back up and gets Braveau to hand over the jacket with its contents but when he asks for the shoes, the drunk man says, "*Un gamin comme toi? Tu n'as pas besoin des souliers.*"

Murphy sits on the streetcar stop bench across from the restaurant afraid that Braveau will hurt Maude, whom he shut into the bedroom closet before ejecting Murphy. The boy laments his resources in contrast to Tarzan's. He calls 911, grateful that it still operates in 2172. A half hour later the police arrive and go up to the apartment. But when they come down and drive off, Braveau isn't with them.

Murphy wanders the back streets without lighting his head lamp, which would only attract unwanted attention at this hour. He sees a notice confirming that the Garden pays people well for turning in children without ID.

In an alley not far from the poster Murphy happens on the street-boy who had sold him some food pills the previous evening. The street-boy sleeps soundly under a mouldy-looking sleeping bag. Murphy steals the boy's orthopedic shoe and flees back to the bushes near the Ramparts to await the dawn.

## Section 12 The Road to Jake's Fields

### **This Section's Camp Vignettes**

Events follow hard in this section of camp vignettes covering Murphy's final five days.

◦ *Main Lodge Music*-- On Monday the day after visitor's weekend, Murphy finds Widmark feeling too upset to think about morning swim. Maybe something went wrong at archery. It turns out worse than that. Mr. Lacasse had to go back to New Jersey without his bookbag, including material for his work in progress. Sunday morning between two a.m. and dawn, thieves broke into the Tuck Shop as well as Administration Office. Cash and other things went missing from both locations. "It's what happens to the only black layer in the white cake," Widmark says.

Viola would say it's best to keep doing things as normal, and Widmark has to admit that his mom would say the same. They go to morning swim. Widmark hurtles down the water slide for the first time to much praise from Dexter as well as Murphy. By end of swim the New Jersey boy feels better.

They go to Main Lodge, where there is an electrical outlet on the front porch, and plug in Widmark's tape recorder. They listen to his Uncle Henry playing "Bird gets the Worm" on alto sax, accompanied by bass, drums, trumpet, and piano. Each instrument takes a solo. "It's 340 bpm's," Widmark declares. "Sure ain't 'Blowin' in the Wind,'" Tuck Shop Counsellor mutters on his way by.

Next they listen to William playing Beethoven's Sonata 3 in C Major, Op. 2, No. 3. Dramatic Counsellor happens by and makes a great show of enthusiastic listening. But he quickly loses interest and leaves after deciding the pianist can't keep time. Indifferent to Dramatic Counsellor, Widmark asks if Beethoven is William's favourite musician. Murphy says he thinks it's probably Louis Armstrong.

George joins them with the news that Adrian lost his turquoise choker in yesterday's poker game. Widmark suggests they try getting him a replacement through his Aunt. They could all chip in and maybe get others to, as a thank you for the birch bark canoe.

◦ *Blue Fire*-- Later that day, after lunch, on his way down the hill from the dining hall, Murphy meets Jack. He's on his way to the canoe trip stores under the dining hall, which stands on great tall posts because it juts out from the hill. There's a cavern under there, with storage closets for all the gear needed for canoe trips. Jack's going to get some provisions for his fishing trip with Adrian. They're leaving before evening, returning Saturday for the birch-bark canoe honouring ceremony.

Jack has a way of stating information with an unspoken instruction under it. He tells Murphy that early Sunday morning he heard a disturbance, left his tent, and beamed his flashlight at the back steps of the Administration Office. He saw someone hightailing it down the slope into Parliament Valley. Afterwards he informed JCD there would most likely be some stuff in the swamp heading for the road to the dining hall. It seemed that JCD put stock only in things seen with the

physical eye or detector equipment. Murphy makes a note to do some swamp searching whenever he gets the chance.

Sometimes it seems to Murphy that Jack knows what he's thinking. As Jack turns to resume his climb up the hill, the two having nodded so long to each other, he says matter of factly, as if he'd been asked, "Adrian's in his tent right now."

*Excerpt-- Blue Fire*

Adrian sits propped on his cot, scowling at his bare knees. He reminds Murphy of those camp fires that smolder blue long after orange flame has disappeared. Blue is by far the hottest part of the fire. He waits for Adrian to speak first. Finally, without looking up, he mutters "Allo." Murphy says he was just talking with Jack. "Il s'appelle Docteur Ponokaminkway," Adrian says coldly, still without looking up. Jack got his Ph.D. in Political Science from Trent University and teaches there part time while also developing plans for the country's first program in Native Studies. He's asked everyone to just call him Jack, but Murphy says, "Je m'excuse. Docteur Ponokaminkway."

*"Qu'est-ce que tu veut?"*

Murphy sure wishes they could speak in English as it would be so much easier for him to try explaining their idea. But he forges ahead in French. He assures Adrian that his father—meaning Docteur Ponokaminkway—will be able to explain things to Mr. Merritte. The

camp director will flush out the gamblers and make sure every bit of ill-gotten money and goods is returned to the rightful owners.

Adrian still doesn't look up. He says he hasn't told his father and isn't going to. He's already had too many rotten things happen. Too many thefts and losses. Murphy mentions the alternative plan to kick in for a new choker through Widmark's auntie. Adrian says there's no replacing his choker. He doesn't even like chokers normally. Then Murphy notices blood on the underside of Adrian's left arm, a line of what might be teeth marks.

With red eyes Adrian shoots Murphy a look of fury.

*“Tu racontes les histoires au mauvais temps.”*

His low voice sings like fire.

*“Tu as fou.”*

He swings his legs around onto the floor, reaches under his cot, produces a cigarette, and thrusts it into his mouth. Without looking he tosses another one toward Murphy. Adrian's voice has now become expressionless.

*“Tu as déchaîné l'ours dérangé.”*

**[Format Note:** At this point the text will play visually with the word “chaos” and then present a page of scrambled subheadings. These are the subheadings for the remaining sections of Section 12, which will now appear without any titles, making transitions between the two plots less immediately clear.

◦ *Reasons for Guilt*

As well as shattering the universe with his improperly timed story, Murphy has a list of other reasons for guilt. He sits on the front steps of Tent 24 and reviews them all.

He should have told Mr. Lacasse not to trust the Administration Office. He should tell someone about his waking dreams of bad things coming. He should refuse to go along with George and Dexter in their law-breaking, a sure path to offending Mr. Saville and disappointing his family. He shouldn't push away what Jack and Adrian have been trying to tell him. What if it all really happened, like the stories Sol Blobinsky tells of his grandparents and parents in World War II?

He should tell someone about Adrian's behaviour—Nurse O'Flaherty, Mr. Merritte, Kris, Cabe, Jack... Not to get Adrian in trouble, but because maybe he needs help. What if tonight instead of spray paint he uses an ax, a knife, or maybe Jack's hunting rifle. But people don't believe kids. They'd just do bad stuff to Adrian and then he'd blame Murphy.

Like Jimmy Straw said, Rory Calhoun in *The Texan* always knows the right thing to do and by the end of each show he does it or gets someone else to. Real life situations aren't like that. At least Murphy's aren't. With other people involved, you never know what will really happen from something you do. You feel you have to try. But what difference will it make. Still, he should have told Nestor about the unlocked cabinet. That's as clear as *The Texan*.

George arrives barely holding back a big grin. Did Murphy hear the news that Counsellor Lebeau was fired for coming back from the village drunk on Saturday night? Murphy doesn't think George should be happy at someone getting

fired. It's also a sign that being a few days from the end won't save you if they discover a misdeed. Murphy also thinks it strange that George is so happy when the English just fired a French staff member, who happens to be a really nice guy and outstanding counsellor as well.

But George is happy about something else. He's just heard unofficially that after supper, Section 4s get to paddle the war canoes into the village. They can have snacks in the café and best of all, see Gisèle. Murphy says he doesn't want to go. George says he better. Murphy can't think of anything good at all, except maybe that Mr. Saville never did show up. Dexter the blowhard, William would say.

◦ *Last Trip to Town*

*Excerpt*

Paddling a war canoe sure hurts your arms worse than a sixteen footer. Murphy wishes he could have stayed in camp. He doesn't want to see anyone. He thinks about how Tarzan felt after Kala was killed—motherless, all alone, the only one of his kind. Or so he felt. No family to advise him. That might make you bitter enough to play cruel pranks. He brushes an ant from his ankle. It kicks its legs, upside down on a cedar rib.

Camp people in the café sure notice when she enters, crosses to their table, and sits between George and Murphy. Gisèle, the girl in the photo that ran in the recent *Paroles VK* with a write-up on infiltrating the

English. Murphy goes over what he can possibly say when his family pick him up alone at West-Met Station with everyone else still back at camp.

But then Gisèle says some interesting things, switching into fluent English for the benefit of the majority at their table. It seems she's the daughter of the town's mayor who is a former colonel. He and Mr. Merritte went into battle together and remained fast friends. Unlike the other staff at Camp Kisisokôe, says Gisèle, Mr. Merritte speaks capable French and always shows the courtesy of using it to begin conversations in the village.

In their living room last week, he laughed so hard over Gisèle's adventures that tears ran down his cheeks. He demanded a description of how she killed each boy and marvelled that she then got clean away. He did suggest that publishing a photo and story was going a little too far for some of the camp's more stern administrators, and Colonel Deslauriers agreed it was certainly going too far. He assigned Gisèle to ten days' slave labour in her aunt's laundry, with orders she should specialize in the consignment from camp and do a better job than the usual workers or else.

To make peace, she apologized to Mr. Merritte and assured him she had worked entirely alone and would never commit another such offense. The photographer was someone just passing through town who came along for the lark. Mr. Merritte said, "*Mais oui, mon cher, d'accord. Je*

*vais assurer mes collègues.* ” His merry look suggested he didn’t believe a word she said but would uphold her wishes to the death.

From across the lobby, a piano leads into “I Can’t Stop Loving You,” and then you can hear Jesse, singing nicer than Ricky Nelson. George points to a scruffy-looking man heading through the lobby toward the lounge. He wears sandals. With his dazed eyes and pointy black beard, he looks like pictures of beatnicks.

“Stoner,” says an older boy at the table.

George says his name to Murphy. “Zee.”

Before leaving later that evening, Murphy looks around again in case he sees Le Gros. He doesn’t.

Lying in his sleeping bag that evening, listening to the voices and guitars from Intermediate Camp Fire--“Blowin’ in the Wind,” “If I Had a Hammer,” “Hello Muddah, Hello Fahdah”-- Murphy relaxes and even feels at peace. Thanks to Gisèle and Mr. Merritte, Junior Camp Director won’t be able to charge him with taking the cheeky photograph. Beware of letting down your guard, Humphrey Straw would say. But it’s hard not to feel a little more confident of making it through to Sunday.

With photo crime no longer a threat, Murphy also feels better on the matter of George. Since Gladwell Cleer won Adrian’s choker and refused to trade it back, George has renounced the poker table and ceased his trade in *Playboy* magazines as what Esther would call a boycott. This should keep him out of Intermediate Camp

and all the risks that entails. Today he even attended afternoon program—soccer in the athletic field—and asked to make a threesome with Widmark for afternoon swim.

◦ *Frog*

The relaxed hopeful feeling continues next morning as George and Murphy attend tree felling program on the slopes above athletic field overlooking Intermediate Bay. It hasn't rained since Sunday; the sun-- too hot during the hard work-- feels mild and comforting once they are done. George suggests the winding path back to Tent 24. Swim is not for half an hour, so they have a little time to relax, he says. The winding path actually cuts through a small corner of Intermediate Camp, but Murphy can't see the problem with that. It's just a few hundred feet. A technicality.

But once they reach that part of the way, George wants to push on through the bracken meadow to the shoreline where Gisèle landed her father's canoe. Murphy guesses that he wants to think about her and what a fine summer they had. No one has ever seen Murphy cutting through the bracken before, so he is only mildly worried.

“Relax” says George. “No one's going to see us. Promise.”

His English is sure improved. He's become pretty near bilingual. Mr. Saville might hire him one day for the Patriotes front office.

When they have pressed into the thicket of sandbar willow beside the still mouth of Intermediate Bay, George takes out his last two cigarettes and offers one to Murphy. It's hard to argue with self-sacrifice. Besides, George is most reassuring.

“No one will see. *Jusque pour dire au revoir.*”

*Excerpt*

Doused in lake water, the two cigarette butts somersault into the bush. Murphy and George take the trail along shore. About two football fields from Junior Camp, at a point where the trail veers north into the meadow of ferns, George tugs Murphy’s wrist. He gestures south through the thicket. Murphy has smelled wood smoke for some time now. On the beach on the other side of the bushes some boys move about a campfire. They seem to have just taken something from a pot. It has a cord around one hind leg.

Melon Head holds the cord, the boy who looks like he belongs at Harry Floggins rather than Lord Woebeson. Older St. James, very much an an older Murgatroy, sits looking away. Reddy Fox creeps toward the creature and points the aerosole can of bug repellent. Gladwell Cleer is there, too.

“*Écoeurant,*” George mutters under his breath. Murphy can see him reddening. “*Infâme,*” he shouts. He steps through the bushes as Reddy Foxs finishes spraying.

“You’re over the line, Deschamps,” Cleer says. “What’s your problem?”

Melon Head lowers a burning stick, but pauses and glances from George to Cleer.

“It’s just a frog,” Cleer says. He says this with an insinuating wink which makes the other two boys laugh. “It won’t feel anything. I know from science.”

“Okay, then,” George says turning as if to leave. But he whips back around and charges Melon Head. The burning stick drops to the sand as Melon Head struggles to free his right hand holding the cord from George’s left. George’s right hand squeezes into a wedge-shaped fist. He sends it knuckles-first into Melon Head’s solar plexus. Murphy recalls having the wind knocked out of him in football practice. He was dashing through centre when out of nowhere that crazy Marcel Lepin leapt out parallel to the ground. He was over waist high, and Murphy charged right into that armoured hip. You can’t breathe. You expect to die. That must be what happens to Melon Head as he crumples to the sand and flails. Reddy Fox backs up and Older St. James tuns right around on his log and stares off the other way. Cleer stands still with a cold look on his face, as blank as his expression playing poker. George has hold of the cord. George waves at Murphy to join him. The frog is leaping about hysterical.

If you turn and start to run away you won’t be able to stop. Murphy has heard that about battles. It takes all his will power not to turn around. He goes over to George hoping he’ll forget all about the frog. Frogs are slimy, and hysterical things make Murphy jumpy.

George lifts the frog and it settles down.

“Cut the cord. Use your small blade, and be careful. Don’t cut up high. Cut the loop.” George didn’t want the frog’s foot to fall off later from blocked circulation. Murphy realized that. George held the frog so calm and steady, Murphy was able to slip the small blade of his father’s pen knife between leg and cord. He made little sawing actions to get the cut started. Then all it took was a quick flick.

“Get the pot,” George says.

“If that pot goes missing,” Cleer says calmly, as if nothing’s really happening, “you’ll pay for a new one.”

Murphy knows he doesn’t have to worry about these three. Cleer comforts Melon Head as George puts the frog in the pot and traps it under the lid.

“He belongs in the swamp,” says George, meaning the reeds around Intermediate Bay. So Murphy’s going to get a last close look at Chapel sooner than Sunday. He may as well enjoy it.

Next morning George and Murphy are summoned to the Administration Office. Mr. Merritte has had to go back into the city on a family matter.

*Excerpt*

Junior Camp Director squints through the bright morning sun flooding from the south windows. On the wall behind him, workers have laid several coats of paint over the sprayed letters. But a ghostly word still

breaks through: *Couchon*. He drops the file pages onto his desk and shakes his head. George and Murphy look across with long faces.

“So close to the end... what possessed you boys?”

Is that a squeak of floorboards right outside the curtained window overlooking west porch? Someone could be hearing this expulsion, just as Murphy heard the expulsion of Le Gros. He feels like that little wooden boy inside Angéline’s Matryoshka doll. He says those boys were going to burn a frog alive. They thought it was extra funny, because George is French.

Junior Camp Director looks over at the new stainless steel safe. When he looks back, he says that *au contraire* the boys were examining the creature, not hurting it. In any case, he’s sorry but there’s no choice in the matter. Raymond Sacks—aka Melon Head—has a dreadful purple mark across his chest. Dreadful. Camp Kisisokôe is not a place of disorderly conduct. Rules exist for a reason. Junior boys are not permitted in Intermediate Camp. Raymond’s father happens to be senior legal counsel for the nation’s leading airline not to mention two Fortune Five Hundred Companies.

Junior Camp Director says he’ll be calling the boys’ homes shortly. He hands them each a slip of paper. Murphy hears the back steps squeak. The paper has what Director calls a confirmation number. It’s for the boy’s train ticket home.

“Counsellor Colger will meet you Outside Main Lodge, day after tomorrow at 1 p.m sharp. That’s all, boys.”

Director points them to the nearest door. It opens onto the west-side porch at the back of the building. As they go out, someone scuttles away toward the nearby path down the wooded hillside to Parliament Valley. All they can see is his back, but Murphy’s pretty sure he recognizes a familiar springy walk. He’s pretty sure it’s Dramatic Counsellor.

*Excerpt*

After leaving the Administration Building with his confirmation number, Murphy drifts across to ship’s bell overlooking the water front. For whatever reason, OD has left his post. No one else’s nearby. Colours on the water are so bright. The lake really is as lovely as Mr. Lacasse described in his poem after their boat ride. Murphy feels numb and floating, the way he felt when a nurse injected him with something that time he broke his wrist. He hears voices from last night’s Intermediate Camp sing-along, sifting through cedar-redolent darkness as he stretches out on his story. Puff the Magic Dragon. It’s such a sad melody, with a story much like Cristopher Robin leaving his friends on the hill-top. It was hard not to cry after Helena first read that to him, back when he was small.

Like the nurse’s drug, the song numbs him, right down the spine. He realizes something and almost feels like laughing. No one at home is

really going to blame him. Junior Camp Director can't do anything to hurt him. Not at all. He'll only hurt himself. Everyone at home will understand. Even Aunt Hilary, in her own way. They were going to burn that frog alive. George had to do what he did.

But now Murphy won't get to watch *Treasure Island* tomorrow night, and hear Mr. Merritte's belly-laugh, if he's back in time. He won't be able to paddle the birch-bark canoe in its first launch Saturday after the honouring ceremony. And he won't be able to walk under cedars to Sunday Chapel on the shore of Intermediate Bay, amid the chorus of frogs and Mr. Merritte's sad rendition of "Pomp and Circumstance." The others will pack up last things and leave camp after Chapel.

◦ *Holy Shit*

*Excerpt*

Having already done a long-range drawing of the bell, Murphy ponders a close-up study. He'll capture the curves, the mouth, the shadowed inscription. He's reaching for his sketchbook when someone shrieks *whew-ee*, like coyote howling in the dusk. "Would you look at that!" says a passing counsellor. Someone else whispers *holy shit*. From four corners, campers scramble to shrouded Totem Arch.

There's no mistaking: a 1955 Series 75 Black Fleetwood Limousine. Boys spill around like in those shots you see of astounded African villagers greeting Bwana's Safari Jeep. Junior Camp Director stalks out

of the Administration Office, then gapes like someone who's just waked up to find himself on another planet.

Sunlight shoots blindingly from the vast waxed hood, creating patches of white. From this distance, you can't even look at the scintillating silver bumper with its two torpedos. Boys right by the front can no doubt see the Patriotes licence plate with Stanley Cup logo. Dexter's already at the driver's door, talking through the power window to the chauffeur. Through the big wrap-around windscreen, way at the back on the passenger's side, you can make out Warren Saville. Is that Humphrey Straw beside him? And Jimmy?

There's a purring noise. The sun roof slides back and Mr. Saville's head pops up.

"Hey there, Mr. Director."

Junior Camp Director nearly turns his ankle. He recovers with a scowl morphing to a smile, much like the strange grins on the faces of corpses that journalists seem so eager to photograph.

"Warren Saville," says the head over the roof of the car. "I sure appreciate your hospitality."

You can tell Junior Camp Director's more lost than a city poodle in a deep dark woods.

"As Mr. Merritte would have informed you," says Mr. Saville, "we'll set out this afternoon. But first, where's my boys?"

Dexter waves frantically for Murphy to join them. George has already appeared by the limo's back door.

“C’mon fellas. You ‘n’ your buddies. Time for a little spin.”

Murphy has never had so many friends.

Next day in the middle of Quiet Hour, George and Murphy are called back to the Administration Office.

*Excerpt*

A band of blue paint now runs around the wall of the Administration Office, matching nicely with a blue tint on the new steel safe and conveniently covering the spray-painted message from night of the break-in. Junior Camp Director has spoken to Mr. Sacks who insisted on speaking with his son Wayne—aka Melon Head-- who was now feeling sorry about the whole thing. Neither father nor son wanted to see other boys punished. Junior Camp Director can now understand why some troubled feelings arose, though of course violence is always the wrong recourse. As long as George and Murphy really understand they must handle all matters peacefully and respect restricted parts of camp, they may go home at the usual time and there will be no need to talk with their parents.

George nods and stands to leave. Murphy keeps sitting, though, breathing hard. Then he looks up, right at Junior Camp Director. He says

it's too late to change plans. He'll be leaving on the Friday afternoon train. He plants his feet like an offensive lineman before thrusting up from the chair. Again he hears floor boards squeak from the porch outside.

Murphy sits on the bench outside Tuck Shop with a view of the lake as well as comings and goings from the tent line. It's as good a place as any to wait for 4:45 p.m., which is when Nestor will be home from work. The French nurse at the Infirmary has been letting George use the phone to call Gisèle. George has already cleared with her that Murphy can use it to call his dad if he doesn't talk long.

Someone sits on the bench beside Murphy a couple of feet away. He looks out over the lake the same way Murphy is doing. It's as if they are two old men who sit together in parks, not looking at each other much, but talking as they feed the pigeons and wiggle tooth picks in their teeth. The other old man beside Murphy is Dramatic Counsellor.

"Tell me," says Dramatic Counsellor. "What does your father do?"

"He makes the best model ships in the world," says Murphy. "And he survives the war."

"I see," says Dramatic Counsellor, appearing to draw great meaning. "And these boys you had to do with-- were they *really* going to burn a frog?"

Murphy nods.

"That's what Wayne Sacks tells me, too. I know him a little, you see."

Apparently Wayne believed what he was told-- that a frog's slime makes it invulnerable to flame. He thought it was to be a marvellous bit of magic.

“Do you believe that?”

“I guess so.” Murphy clarifies that he guesses *Wayne Sacks* could have believed that.

“Now do I understand correctly that on Wednesday, when the director expelled you, he did *not* realize you were being sponsored by Mr Saville?”

Murphy says yes. He adds that he’s never seen Mr. Saville so impressed as he was by Dramatic Counsellor’s impressions of Freddy Framboise.

Dramatic Counsellor waves the compliment aside. “A mere trick of the trade, son,” he says wearily. “Mere trick of the trade.” He mutters something about infernal camp rules. He’d love a cigarette. “You wouldn’t have one, would you?”

Murphy shakes his head.

“Ah well. Do I also understand that you turned down an offer to retract the expulsion?”

Murphy says he’d made other plans already.

“I see,” says Dramatic Counsellor in a long drawn-out way. “I see.”

Dramatic Counsellor says something about having a script to write. After he heads for the stairway down to the beach that runs to the theatre, the Tuck Shop door opens.

*Excerpt*

Tuck Shop Counsellor stands in the doorway with his white halo hat over his black-shadowed face.

“Mail.”

For him, this is quite the speech. Equally surprising, he holds out a white envelope with red labels. The red labels say “Express/Expres.” It’s from Helena. Inside is a note.

*See you Sunday, Squirt.*

*PS You can give Kris the photo.*

Helena has a mischievous smile in the photo. She’s standing against the rail of Tribal Class Destroyer HMCS Haida (G63) with a big gun beside her pointed up at the sky. Skeeter Colt stands at her other side with his arm lightly around her waist. He looks a little like Rory Calhoun, a model of silence yet bubbling out with all he has done and will do and how you know him but he doesn’t and never will know you, even if he asks your name and misspells it when he signs his autograph.

Esther says Rory Calhoun isn’t the actor’s real name. It was given to him by his manager who runs his life, deciding even whom he marries. Esther says the actor was in jail before age 21 for stealing a gun and a car. His first wife divorced him for being unfaithful with a whole lot of famous actresses. She listed over 70 names and he said, “Heck, she didn’t get the half of them.”

Helena doesn’t like Skeeter and never spoke to him again after that day. Murphy’s surprised she kept the photo.

◦ *Looking Past Jack's Tent*

After a tasteless supper in the dining hall, Murphy has no heart for evening program. He sits on the stump near ship's bell looking out past the peak of Jack's tent over the lake. He'll probably never see Jack or Adrian again. He wonders more about what happened to Jack and others in the residential schools and why it must be such a secret. He wonders about Little Wanaki.

*Excerpt*

It was almost dusk. Murphy sat near the bell alone, staring across the lake, sketchbook momentarily forgotten on his knees. He had no desire to attend evening program.

The limousine episode sure had funny moments, as well as troubling ones.

The troubling part came from Jimmy Straw. For a while he wouldn't speak to Murphy at all, though they sat side by side on the jump seat behind the plexiglass shield. He glanced with shock at the boy next to Murphy—Widmark—but what could Jimmy say. Widmark was Murphy's new friend, and this was Murphy's camp (so to speak), not Jimmy's. As the limo crawled past the hotel porch where Murphy had noticed Le Gros with two older boys, Jimmy started to talk about Aunt Hilary. Nestor hadn't said anything about this .

It seems she'd confronted two teenagers strolling under the old oak trees near the district police station. She demanded the boy come with her. He'd been skulking outside the Beckridge flat the previous night, looking to plant a bomb. Or so she said. The boy happened to be English but he was wearing a Fleurs de Lys on his jeans, a gift from his girlfriend. When the girlfriend tried to protest, Aunt Hilary criticized her imperfect English. When the boy continued to resist being tugged into the station, she stabbed him with the point of her umbrella. The young couple then went into the station with Aunt Hilary and a constable took a report and drove her home. The boy had to get three stitches below his ribs. Mr. Straw said Aunt Hilary had gone deep seven.

Murphy didn't ask his dad anything about this when the boy spoke to him over the Infirmary phone at 4:45. The phone's unusual green colour haunted Murphy along with the smell of antiseptic as he wondered if he'd said things all right. If he'd said what he should.

He explained why they were called into the Administration Office and how a return ticket was already reserved for him for Friday but then Junior Camp Director wanted to change his decision after seeing that Mr. Saville was the boy's sponsor. Junior Camp Director gave another reason that might have some truth, but Murphy still believed the main reason was Mr. Saville.

Nestor said Murphy could make the final decision, but he shouldn't leave if it was because he felt ashamed. Murphy thought about that. He thought about what Miss Carat and Helena might say to help him find another word for how he felt. Nestor was every bit as important as Mr. Saville. More important. If Murphy were Mr. Saville's son, he bet Junior Camp Director wouldn't try to spin him up and down like a yo-yo. *Offended*. That's how Murphy felt.

Junior Camp Director wanted to pay camp money to send Murphy away. Now Junior Camp Director could live by his hasty decision. It was Dexter who pointed out that leaving on Friday would stick Junior Camp Director with the extra fare, and serve him right. But Murphy didn't tell his father about Dexter's advice.

Nestor mentioned forgiveness and how it might make Murphy feel better in the long run. "I'll forgive him later," Murphy said. "I'm too young right now."

Nestor chuckled. But he also talked about not burning bridges. Weren't there things Murphy'd still like to do at camp this year? The boy admitted there were. Wouldn't he like to return next year, if it could be managed? Murphy thought he might. He explained that he didn't tell Junior Camp Director why he had to leave. He just said plans were already in place. That was passive voice. Helena'd explained how it worked and when it could be useful. He said the same thing to a certain counsellor who'd asked about the affair. He just said plans were already in

place. Nestor thought this was very good. He reminded Murphy not to say anything angry or resentful about Junior Camp Director who in a way had acknowledged his mistake. Don't tell people you're leaving because you're bitter. Stay with the passive voice—plans were already in place.

Murphy's new camp runners, a birthday gift from Viola that had to wait almost six months to be used, squeaked on the gleaming linoleum.

In the distance a small gray stroke the size and shape of a thumb rides forward against the east side of the lake, near the landing that takes you to canoe trip circuit. The gray stroke expands. By and by you can tell it's a canoe. Two dark stick figures stroke in steady unison. It's a camp canoe. It's Jack and Adrian.

Jack holds the dish of smoking sweet-grass near the boy's chest and Murphy pulls the smoke, as Adrian just did, washes it over his face, shoulders and heart. Next they go to the overturned birch bark canoe. Adrian holds the smoking dish while Jack uses an eagle feather to wash it with sweet-grass smoke. They close their eyes and Jack speaks in Algonquin to the Creator. As they carry the canoe to the water, Jack says he gave thanks for the gift of the birch bark canoe, to all who have put their spirit in it, and to Murphy who must leave early but who, like all creatures, will return.

While Jack prepared the sweet grass, Adrian told Murphy that Jack knew something about the choker anyway, so Adrian filled him in. They made a ceremony, to pray for the choker-- like all things-- to find its home.

Jack takes the stern of the overturned birch bark canoe; Adrian on one side and Murphy on the other take the bow. They walk the canoe into the lake and lower it like a leaf. Like smoke into dusk, they stroke noiselessly into twilight, ghostly along shore, all the way to Intermediate Bay. Murphy's sure grateful that Jack had a feeling they should come back to camp two days early.

Off port bow sky erupted, a geyser of reds and fading blues. As they murmured toward shore, Jack stretched out his paddle like a pointer. Adrian and Murphy followed it over a beam of red to a spot in the thickets below the green shed housing Mr. Merritte's organ. Murphy thought Jack must be pointing out some bird or animal, maybe some special spot to fish. Then he saw the shadow. Silhouette. Hard to say if it was behind the bush or in front. Dramatic Counsellor might liken it to an image on a scrim. With light behind the actor, himself behind painted, translucent material, a person seems to "manifest" in front of the scrim. Dramatic Counsellor said this was how they would create their ghost. "Could it be a spirit, Murphy wanted to know. An angel, a god or goddess? "I

suppose it could, Master Beckridge,” Dramatic Counsellor had said with something of a twinkle. “But I believe we were discussing ghosts.”

The figure glided across shore, sat on a rock, and looked out at them. A young female. At first Murphy thought it was Gisèle, back for more mischief. He scanned shore to see where she’d hidden her canoe. But he couldn’t find it. He looked back as the red light trembled and changed hue. That was the strangest moment, lighting designer in the clouds changing all the gels at once. The canoe was much closer now, to where the young female was sitting. No, she wasn’t quite Gisèle. She reminded Murphy of someone else he couldn’t place... And now she was gone. In her place a stump with two branches reaching out like arms.

“Wiskedjak ,” said Adrian.

The stump seemed to lean closer.

“Lots of old stories about humans turning into deer, turning into trees,” Jack said low. “Way before Ovid.”

Murphy’d heard William use that name, along with Virgil. Maybe Ovid was a frontiersman, too, like Virgil Earp. Ovid Hitchcock. It was understandable Jack being Indian wouldn’t be too fussy about Western white types-- Tombstone, showdown at OK Corral, that sort of thing. What Esther called the Hollywood slant.

After returning the canoe to its resting place, they broiled some pike.

Adrian came out with an album of photos and clippings.

◦ *Swamp*

Next morning right after breakfast Murphy remembers he was supposed to look for discarded stolen property in the swamp.

*Excerpt*

The first odd thing Murphy found in the swamp between Parliaments and Dining Hall Hill was a pair of yellow-stained gautchies. It seemed like someone must have peed in them too hard to clean, and it would be pretty embarrassing to send your gautchies with your name tag on them to the village laundry. That would really give Gisèle something to publish in *Paroles VK*. You could see a white rectangle on the elastic band where a name tag used to be.

Murphy was at the Parliament edge of the swamp, where the air hung heavy with pee from the big outdoor urinals under their gazebo-style roof. The Parliaments themselves were the wooden buildings lined in a row behind the urinals, each with a toilet seat inside. Under the toilet seat a deep dark shaft echoed down, down, down; it was scary to imagine how far down in it went into a pile of muck. Giovanni, the caretaker/handyman with shoulders of a water buffalo, would pour chemical stuff down the toilets twice a week and mop all the floors. Boys said Giovanni was actually a Native, often seen mysteriously in the company of the town barber who everyone believed had been born without boy

parts even though he was a boy. The Parliament smell sure is pungent, but kind of like earth and a lot better than the nauseating artificial stuff you can't seem to avoid in the city, like Helena's hairspray.

Like Jack advised, Murphy tried to follow his feeling of where the thieves had gone. A toad hopped past him into long grass. He followed it to a tree stump. When the toad leapt down from the stump something crinkled on the other side. That sounded like paper. It was paper. It was the notebook from Mr. Lacasse's bookbag. His volume of poetry and some other books and papers were there, too. These thieves were so disrespectful, the poetry volume lay face down, open, one page stained right into the print: Things fall apart: the centre cannot hold... Everything smelled a little mouldy. Everything was a little damp. But for all it had rained this season, it hadn't rained since Sunday afternoon. And most of the stuff lay on tree roots and higher ground. The notebooks were even shielded by low bush cedar.

Murphy couldn't wait to tell Murgatroy. This sure helped a strange day to feel better.

He'd found the notebooks near Dining Hall Hill. He decided to leave the swamp that way. About 30 yards before the road, however, a spot of white caught his eye. It was half covered in mud. Thinking it might be some

important note from the bookbag, Murphy sacrificed his clean runners to reach it.

It was actually a small patch of cloth, and when he turned it over, he recognized one of those name tags your mother irons onto waistbands or hems of your clothes. The name on this one had been smudged pretty bad, but Murphy could still make out the first letter “D” with an “x” and “t” in the middle of the first name. The last name had nine letters, starting with an “S” and ending “on.”

◦ *Main Lodge Send-off*

Murphy waits with his luggage on Main Lodge porch for (Tuck Shop) Counsellor Colger to drive him to the train station. Jack has predicted hard rain, but it hasn't hit yet. Murgatroy, Dexter, Widmark, and George are there. Murgatroy has his radio back sounding better than ever. Widmark is grinning ear to ear at his father's relief over recovery of his notes. Remembering the name tag from the swamp, Murphy thinks of the guard dog at the corner of Cote St. Antoine who barks at passersby. Nestor says it's his nature and besides he's probably a little scared most of the time. George is grinning as much as Widmark, having been invited to stay over with Gisèle's family on Sunday and then ride back to the city with them on Monday.

Junior Camp Director comes out from the Administration office to shake Murphy's hand for his fine citizenship in recovering stolen property. He says he wishes the boy could stay till Sunday and hopes he comes back next summer. Murphy says he hopes he will. Murgatroy heads back to his tent cradling his radio.

Feeling sick to his stomach, he has received permission to skip the big war-canoe outing that will empty Junior and Intermediate Camps after Quiet Hour.

A sudden stir spreads outwards from those around Main Lodge: Dramatic Counsellor has led a troupe of his finest theatre students up the stairway from the beach and across to a performance space right in front of Main Lodge porch. Word spreads quickly of another guerrilla camp-theatre happening. Boys flock in from all corners.

The performance re-enacts climactic moments from the 1962 film *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*. Representing his reform school in a big competition, hero Colin Smith (Dramatic Counsellor as Tom Courtenay) races toward the finish line far ahead of the other runners, then, in defiance of the Reform Governor, stops just short of the finish line.

During animated mingling after the performance, Dramatic Counsellor places his hand on Murphy's head and says, "Good on you, lad. Good on you" in the manner of Steve McQueen conferring light on a "yung 'un." Murphy, however, is preoccupied by something else. A few minutes earlier he observed an older boy dash into the tentline from the direction of Intermediate Swim and race north up the hill toward the Craft Shop, Nature Cabin, and Infirmary. Now Murphy sees Nurse O'Flaherty darting through the tentline toward lake shore. Presently a counsellor runs up to Junior Camp Director and says something that turns him pale. They push their way into the Administration Office.

A few minutes later Officer of the Day rings the bell and shouts through his megaphone. Afternoon outing will proceed immediately. Everyone flocks down to the war canoes, leaving Murphy alone with his luggage.

He checks the time with Officer of the Day and realizes he still has a few minutes before his planned departure. Having forgotten to give Kris the photo from Helena, he dashes back to Tent 24 to leave it with a note. He wonders if he might get an idea of what has happened.

Murgatroy lies on his cot next door, listening to mournful cello and keyboard, Bach's Sonata 3 in G minor. Murgatroy twists like a lonely scarecrow. He supposes Murphy is looking for Kris. Someone came running up to Kris a few minutes ago and said something. Kris called out Jesse's name and tore off toward Intermediate Swim.

### **2172 Summary**

When Murphy returns to the Ramparts in the early morning of Tuesday January 12, 2172, his note has disappeared from under the rock. He stashes the orthopedic shoe with his small duffel bag in the bushes beside the rent-a-bike stand and sleeps until the sounds (and smells) of a horse patrol officer awake him. Leaving all his things hidden in the bushes, Murphy returns to the alley where he came upon the street boy. He's still there, looking devastated. Murphy says he can get the boy's shoe back, but he wants a working bicycle in exchange. One that will carry him 87 kms a day over the next five days. He's checked on his micro for the distance to la Crique aux Pêcheurs as well as realistic daily mileage if he manages to keep up seven hours a

day. He's also found that the orthopedic shoe has gone out of production, and the replacement model is four times the former cost.

Two hours later the streetboy shows up at the ramparts, awkwardly peddaling a red bicycle. A tussel ensues as neither boy wants to be first to release his trade item. It reminds Murphy of those movies about kidnap or drug exchanges. But he takes over the bike while the boy gets his shoe back, with a \$10 money card included inside.

Murphy has researched where he should go for an array of camping wear and items. The best place seems to be a giant store called Walmart 14 kms north of lower town. The funicular up the steep slope to Upper Town being out of service, Murphy is forced to carry his new bike up a steep, endless set of stairs. A strong odor of hay from the bike combined with his fear of heights causes Murphy to feel faint and sick again. But he manages the climb, mounts "Red Champion" at last, and sets out. He's grateful the bike comes with an ample basket and fenders.

Forty minutes before sundown he makes it back to Lower Town. He has new low-end running shoes, despite a bullying clerk's pressures to spend more. (The clerk forced the sale; he would not let the boy stay in the store barefoot). Murphy also has a new knapsack, pup tent, sleeping bag, plastic fly, wool socks, underwear long and short, flashlight, batteries, ball of cord, and matches in waterproof case. At the Ramparts he retrieves his duffel bag and rides to the circular stairway down to Porte St. Gaston. Again he carries Red Champion, this time down to the parkway leading to Jake's Fields. At times he has the strong sense of being followed, but whenever

he looks around, the land behind appears deserted. Thirty feet into the woods on the eastern perimeter Murphy finds a clearing and makes camp.

As darkness settles in he reads Tarzan comics on his micro. Around seven o'clock he decides to go up to the Ramparts for some Blue Gold and a snack of chips. He's taken a food pill, but misses eating. He decides to take Red Champion rather than leave her unattended, even if hidden in the forest. He bought her a lock at Walmart, so she should be safe enough for a couple of minutes outside the store. He also feels safer being able to ride.

When Murphy leaves the *dépanneur*, however, he barely unlocks the bike before someone grabs his sleeve. It's the owner of the red bicycle: Bowlooster Giroux, whom Sgt. Patch addressed as "Doctor L." As people often do, he underestimates Murphy's strength and quickness. The boy breaks free and makes a run for it.

With his long legs, Dr. L begins to catch up. Murphy sees the beckoning mouth of a drain pipe. He's pretty sure an adult could never fit in there. Murphy ducks into the drain and scambles desperately deep into absolute darkness. He crawls for what feels an eternity terrified of monster rats dead or alive, and at one point where the pipe crushes down he snags and fears being unable either to turn or press on. But at last a mighty push releases him. When he finally sees murky light it feels as if he has crawled five football fields. The drain lets him out well below the *dépanneur*. Railway tracks run between, with tall chain link fences on either side. Dr. L is nowhere in sight.

Nestor wouldn't be too sure about this latest escapade, thinks Murphy as he lies in his pup tent suffused in filtered full moon. He would have recommended staying put, apologizing, and explaining his situation. Dr. L had been really kind only a few hours previous. Without even knowing Murphy, he'd spared the boy from almost certain arrest and military conscription. He assumed the best. But Murphy has assumed the worst, deciding that Dr. L would report him. Now it will look all the more likely that Murphy repaid Dr. L's kindness by deliberately stealing *his* bike. Nestor would understand, of course, that Murphy is only ten-- nine, really, according to normal time. He was scared. He just reacted.

Murphy decides he'll try to locate Dr. L later, apologize, and explain. He can offer him some money, what adults call compensation. In the meantime, he has to get another bike on his own. He'll find a place that sells heavy-duty wire cutters and look for a suitable bike in a wealthy neighbourhood. He doesn't think he could break the thick locks of the rentabikes, and besides, they all look the same and would stand out once he left city limits. Nicking a bike in a rich neighbourhood will make him like Robin Hood, sort of. He'll leave a note with \$20 saying he had to borrow the item. 2172 seems to have done away with sending letters by post, but Murphy can search the address of the house on his micro and maybe get a phone number or call code that way. He can leave the bike for them in La Crique.

Nestor is right: when you do something bad, you notice it more when it's to someone you know who has been kind to you. Nestor recommends thinking of everyone as that person. But Esther points out the trouble you can get into by following that idea blind.

It's a spooky night with the full moon lighting up his campsite. For once Murphy would prefer complete darkness. It's getting colder, too. He pulls on the warm sweater the sisters had picked up for him. He hunts for his red Indians and Settlers bandana to tie around his neck like a scarf, then realizes it must be back at Maude's. This makes him sad. Falling asleep when something important is missing feels wrong. Once he does sleep, it's in the midst of vivid troubled dreams.

In Jake's Fields the Battle for Gaulôre rages. Aunt Hilary wanders into the fray, firing a pistol over and over, even though pistols then weren't repeaters. Murphy merges with General Montcalm, is shot, and watches the blood cascade over the neck of his white horse. Then Murphy merges with General Wolfe and is shot again. At the same time he watches as the general counts his blood drops like coins.

Murphy's pup tent comes down on the battle, muting its uproar, and the foggy gunsmoke blends with moonlight through which a black silhouette watches. The silhouette doesn't appear to be dressed in 18<sup>th</sup> century clothes. It resembles a person in a trench coat, no wig or long curls but short hair. Football coach would approve, Murphy thinks before slipping away again to a different scene.

Murphy sees himself in a canoe on a stream in the Milles Lacs district north of Métropole. At first he can't even tell it's him. His hair is different, longer and reddish. Maybe he's wearing a wig. A great storm erupts with rain and wind everywhere. Murphy merges with the boy in the canoe.

*Excerpt -- Sun on the Sea*

Sun shines so hard and white off the salt water he has to find his peaked hat before he can begin to squint out an image of things. Nothing but water to his right. Nothing but water to his left. And nothing but water behind and ahead. There's the sky, now without a cloud but so bright with sun it's more white than blue. And there's the sun, which you sure don't want to look at directly. And mind looking at the canoe as well. Sunlight screams off its silver surfaces. He should have picked up sun glasses.

Eyes all but shut, Murphy paddles a few strokes, then puts the paddle down. Where is he paddling? And why? With the sun straight overhead, he guesses it's noon. But where is north, and would it matter since he has no idea where the canoe took him overnight.

Instinct says he's pointing north. He's heard about ocean tides. It seems one of them has been pulling him out to sea. There must have been a flood. Waters from Hudson Sea, so strangely close to Métropole, must have swelled over land right into Lac Haut. Tide's taking him where it will.

A speck wings toward the forward leaning stern deck. There's something in the creature's beak. A string. No.

As the bird flies closer, Murphy distinguishes a pigeon. The thing in its beak may be a strip of cloth. Yellow cloth.

Murphy waits for the pigeon to come down and rest, which it does, on the stern thwart, facing the boy. The pigeon lets him take the strip of cloth.

“Parlez-vous Francais ou Anglais,” Murphy asks, now that the bird’s beak is free. The pigeon looks at him as if this human boy’s been in the sun too long. The bird coos and flutters its wings, resting.

The cloth has a touch of orange. Shadows show through the cloth. He turns it over and reads, *Cookie. ring me.* He knows where he’s seen this cloth.

The pigeon takes flight. It circles above the front of the canoe, looking at Murphy as if to be sure of having his attention. Then it turns back from where it came. Murphy paddles for a while to show he gets it, he’s to follow the pigeon.

After a while he puts the paddle down and Pigeon returns to the canoe. It looks out over the water from the stern deck like a captain and figurehead all in one. The tide draws them to where they are going.

Once an object’s in sight, you realize by relationship how fast you’re really traveling. Along the way Murphy saw the occasional treetop poking out of the water, but this is the first substantial thing he’s seen. For a moment, he mistook it for the angel over now sunken Bienfaisance Cathedral. But it’s land. It’s about three or even four feet above the waves and perhaps as wide around as their common back-yard on Cambridge

Avenue, which Nestor once had Murphy pace off, so he knows it's fifteen foot square. Or make that round, in the case of this island.

Pigeon flies ahead, right toward two creatures bestriding the island: Murphy's hot shoes.

On the other side of the scene, someone else is still watching: a black silhouette in a trench coat.

Section 13 Leaving Kisisokôe

*Excerpt-- Leaving Kisisokôe*

*You are leaving Camp Kisisokôe. Please come again.*

Nurse O'Flaherty's Dart skims past the shadowy sign, green background drowned in forest, neat white letters muted to zero. They could be spaces through trees.

Murphy could be zooming to his next football game. But then *he* should be driving. He wouldn't hit any deer. The car's white hood stretches ahead. It makes up half the two-door. If Nurse O'Flaherty hits one—a deer-- the long hood will buffer them.

She still has something of her bubbly manner, but it's like she's stuck in a short-sleeved blouse with the sky overcast. She'd really prefer her lined raincoat. All she'll say about what happened at Intermediate Beach is that someone needs medical supplies from town. Tuck Shop Counsellor has two years of medical school. He stayed with Swim Director and Head Nurse, so Nurse O'Flaherty said she'd drop Murphy since she had to zip into town anyway. Isn't drop what Helena said people did with LSD?

The past hour blurs into a wash of colours quickly turning to brown. Green war canoes glide ahead, each jammed with wriggly junior campers puffed out in orange life vests. He should be with them churning up the southeast shore. Supper cook-out on the big sand dunes will be lean ground beef wrapped in tin-foil, dull side out to bake in deep coals. He tastes red juice and delightful mustard relish. OD yells

through his megaphone. Departure time now moved ahead to 12:20. Hurry to war canoes. Junior camp empties so fast. Why isn't Murphy with them?

It's as if something took him over. Blanked him out. He shouldn't be rattling into town with Nurse O'Flaherty. Something's gone wrong. Even the thought of his family on West-Met platform three hours from now is wrong. Around the next curve the dark sky leans back, cocked by jagged spruce. He braces his city shoes into the mud mat.

*Summary—Train Ride Home*

The hard rain Jack predicted lets loose as the train leaves Kisisokôe Station, passes the village golf course, and follows the shore of Big Lake Kisisokôe. Murphy recalls arriving at camp for the first time in June 1962 in a steady drizzle. He'd never seen such silver patterns ever changing in the shallows. He didn't know anyone. They played bingo in Main Lodge; he was as forlorn as he'd ever been. Murphy reflects on all that has happened since then, including new friends, and feels grateful for Intermediate Bay and Mrs. Castle and Adrian teaching him the names and natures of so many trees, shrubs, flowers, ferns, fish, birds, and animals.

As the train weaves through French town after French town, each with a big church and other interesting things to sketch, Murphy reviews his drawing of Nestor's clipper and worries it won't be good enough for a doctor. Then he thinks about the pictures and stories Jack and Adrian shared after their paddle to Intermediate Bay. They let him make drawings of some of the scenes and people: the bare plywood house of Adrian's Auntie, two young girls on rough wood steps, a

crooked row of communal toilets (not quite the Parliaments, said Jack), the whole extended family—toothless elders and infants still with babies' teeth—all squatted in front of the band office as if they were about to go to the bathroom. Jack sent the photo to Ottawa with a reminder that they had been waiting to hear back on a request for legal recognition since 1906. Their ancestors had lived on this land for thousands of years. But they were considered squatters.

Jack explained that the government wouldn't do a thing for them unless they agreed to become a reserve. This introduced a short history lesson, since Jack could tell Murphy had little idea what it meant to be on a reserve. Going on a reserve back around 1850 to 1910 meant giving up your religion, political rights, and freedom to travel off the assigned property. You needed a pass to leave and a permit to sell anything. All children had to attend residential schools, like the one Jack and his sisters attended. The goal was to rid them of their beliefs, customs and language and prepare them for a vocation, like car mechanic. They couldn't vote in provincial or federal elections until just two years ago. They lacked what white people called "citizenship." In the schools they were sometimes molested and almost always beaten for speaking their own language. In the margin of one of his drawings, Murphy jotted the word molested. He'd be sure to look that up.

Adrian added that with something called "the Scoop," many Indian children were removed from their families and given up for adoption, sometimes to white families as far away as overseas. The goal was to have no more Indians, Jack said, no more "Indian problem." People became ashamed of who they were, and pretended to be someone else if they could. Little Wanaki children had to spend five

nights a week in homes at Val de Fortune since there were no schools in the village. All that would be left if the government had its way, said Adrian, would be totem poles—which belonged only to the West Coast, in fact-- and Indian names at rich camps and tourist sites.

Murphy had drawn Adrian's Auntie. She had a bad scar on her left cheek from residential school, from the time she tried to run away. All this was why Little Wanaki refused reserve status. Consequently there was a provincial hydro dam right near their village, but no electricity in any of the thin-walled houses. They had to burn cords and cords of fire wood and run gas generators, purchasing fuel from the service centre at cut-throat prices. They had to haul pails of water from Health Centre, a good way to spread germs. Anyway, said Jack, he'd been to plenty of reserves no better off than their village. But with all the problems in the village from illness, poverty, and loss, it wasn't exactly paradise like the tourist posters said about Radisson Park. The hunting and fishing guides steered their guests clear of Little Wanaki. Hardly any Canadians had a clue it existed. The fish and animals were starting to get sick from pollution. What would the people eat?

Murphy finds a forgotten copy of *Tarzan the Untamed* and reads a riveting scene in which Tarzan crawls across the desert a mere moment from death. Ska the Vulture can tell. He circles, lower and lower. You'd think Tarzan would seek cover under the cactus, but instead he struggled out into the open and lay perfectly still. Ska knew his chance had come. Down he swooped. But with his last remaining

strength, Tarzan rolled over and seized Ska's throat. He was barely able to kill the bird and thus obtain the meal he needed to survive.

*[The rest of Section 13 appears in its entirety.]*

Nestor's on the platform. Helena's there holding John Fitzsimmons' hand. No William, Viola, or Aunt Hilary though. And they have a girl with them. She's around his age, perhaps a little older, and what Helena would call respectably dressed in beige cloth raincoat. Her short straight hair's carefully cut and combed in a bob. Viola would refer to mothers in "working homes" sacrificing hours to fix their daughters' hair.

"We should have met in Royal Station," says Nestor, waving his *Métropole Mercury*. The city's first-ever underground tunnel's now open between downtown train station and that new skyscraper Place des Pionniers with the warning light that beams every 30 seconds across the night sky, washing out any stars that make it through the smoke of Marie Reine-de-la-Paix. Murphy finds tunnels dark and scary but doesn't let on, especially with the girl watching him so inquisitively.

A red cap comes by with Murphy's trunk on a dolly that skims along in front of the man's ankles. His skin's the same colour as Widmark's and his dad's. Why is it all the red caps have black skin? Murphy and Nestor do a fine job of toting the trunk between them. Thank goodness for its tough leather straps secured by thick metal pins and clasps.

On the bus to NDC, Helena explains in her school-teacher manner that Mathilde called earlier in the day asking for Murphy. She said she had met him in Marie Reine-de-la-Paix last October. Twice in fact. Helena examines Murphy with raised eyebrow, but he just shuffles his feet in their city shoes. Anyway, Mathilde's poor father had been seriously injured and in hospital, so she couldn't think of anything else for a long spell. But with her father now thankfully doing so much better, she hoped to see Murphy again. Nestor being Nestor thought she should come over right away and stay to dinner. The timing, he said, was perfect for a special surprise. Nestor certainly seems tickled that his son is friends with a French-speaker, from such a Gaulorien part of the city.

Murphy gropes to place the girl. Something about her seems vaguely familiar. Perhaps she reminds him of Gisèle... ? Wait, she's that girl he glimpsed in Intermediate Bay. Before she turned into a tree stump. She looks pretty miffed that he doesn't know what to say to her, though perhaps not as much as you might expect. John Fitzsimmons' squeezes Murphy's leg in another bear hug. It turns out William's at McDuff practicing up for this evening. He has a gig playing keyboard. For Denny Blake. Murphy stops himself from laughing when he realizes from Helena's expression that for some reason she doesn't see the humour in this.

Back in the flat, Viola ushers everyone down the bowling alley. They pass the parlour, Freddy Framboise, the Murphy bed. They pass Aunt Hilary's room. The doorknob's different; you can see markings where Nestor reversed the knobs. The

one that's usually inside the room is now outside. It's the one you can push in to lock the door or pull out to unlock it.

Viola seats them all at the big dinner table by the kitchen. When everyone is seated—except Aunt Hilary and William who's still practising at McDuff—Viola appears to have just thought of something. “Oh, you all go ahead and eat,” she says. “Helena can serve.” Viola's unconvincing carefree manner suggests she didn't just think of this now but had it planned all along. You can sense how tense she actually is. “I'll see if Auntie wants her walk,” she says.

She clips down the hall toward the front entry. She opens Aunt Hilary's door, and if you didn't know better, you might even think you hear Viola mutter “damn.” She click-clacks to the entry and down stairs. Murphy and Mathilde have time for just a few sips of pea soup, which they agree is delicious, when Viola returns out of breath.

“I thought you locked her door,” she whippers to Nestor.

“Oh, didn't I?”

“She's downstairs with her coat on. I think you'd better take her.”

He says *oh sure* and leaves the table. Viola gives Mathilde an embarrassed smile.

“You must forgive us. Auntie's a little forgetful.”

Viola had found her pacing up and down at the side of the building, already in her fall coat. In another moment she might have disappeared who knows where. Murphy's pretty sure this walk's been timed to keep Aunt Hilary from hearing French in the house. Everyone seems that much more worried now of setting her off.

After Nestor's footsteps have faded down the front stairway, Mathilde says, "*Ton père parle Français très bien.*" She pauses to blow on a spoonful of soup and pop it in John Fitzsimmons' mouth. "*Et les autres?*" Murphy shakes his head no. He explains that his aunt's a little troubled and has to go into a hospital tomorrow. Mathilde nods sympathetically. Murphy's impressed by how much she seems to understand. She has on a pretty beige dress with cute pleats, puffs, and pockets, and distinctive white stripes in just the right places.

"*Ta robe est joli,*" he says and looks down blushing.

"*Merci,*" she says, also blushing a little.

She plants another spoon of cooled soup perfectly in the four-year-old's mouth. It's like the boy's a lion cub and she a seasoned zoo keeper. She mentioned a flat-full of family, young nieces and nephews to scrub, dress, feed, mend, undress.

The young boy lifts his arms to Viola to be lifted down.

"Oh, you're too heavy for this," she says with a grunt.

Mathilde's face turns serious. She fixes Murphy with a sudden look that demands attention. As if to stress that point, she speaks in an undertone, like a spy delivering a message in code.

"*Après les voleurs tu as attaquer, j'ai vu quelque chose extraordinaire.*"

It comes to him that Mathilde resembles the story girl on the 15 bus. But she got off at the corner of Madeleine de Verchères, a block before Chaussurie SheShe. How would she have seen his story self being robbed 30 minutes later and twelve blocks north?

*“Extraordinaire.”* She wonders if he isn’t curious how she located him when he wouldn’t tell her his full name, even after 3 days, and when he insisted he came from the future, like those people in the drawings he showed her.

She’s just a story girl. Of course she doesn’t make any sense. Of course she thinks things have happened that are all made up. He tells her he doesn’t know what she means. She snorts.

*“Ma-thilde,”* says Viola slowly, the way a beginner plays chopsticks on the piano. *“Voulez-vous un pièce de gateaux au chocolate?”* Mathilde says *“Oui, merci.”*

Over cake and ice cream she mentions to Murphy that it wasn’t very nice of him to tell her he’d meet her back on the bus stop after his trip into the future and then not show up. Oh, and did he still have his little pink TV? Murphy asks her to draw what she means, and she does, on her serviette. It looks like the story micro from Racine all right.

*“Laisse- mois le ‘garder,”* she says. He shakes his head. *“Impossible. C’est jusque une fantasie.”*

They gaze at the slight blush of pink in the clearing western sky over the rooftops above Côte St. Antoine, Métropole north. In a few minutes her brother and their neighbour will come to pick her up. Raymond’s 15 and has his learner’s, so he’ll be driving, like he was when they dropped her off. Gil—“Winky”—their neighbour works at a jazz club in Old Métropole and owns one of the only cars on the block. A fourth-hand 1949 Thunderbird. Purple, with as many dents as decals. It means he

gets to drive all the blues and jazz greats from the USA wherever they need to go. He does it free just to meet them and ask a question or two about syncopation. He doesn't even get paid for gas.

Mathilde found Murphy through Raymond and his political ties with the owner of Chaussurie-SheShe. They belong to the same chapter of "Gaulôre Libre." Mathilde says Murphy told her he was on his way to SheShe, that Saturday on the 15 when he acted like he didn't recognize her. After Murphy never turned up again, Raymond went to the owner and suggested that his youngest sister knew *un gars Anglais* who supported the Gaulorien cause. Having allies among the English youth was no small advantage. The owner had discreetly released the full name of that *gars* from her sales file.

*"Ne parles pas,"* says Murphy. *"Ma tante."*

The children smile tightly as Aunt Hilary shuffles past, elbow hooked under Nestor's arm. Murphy can't tell if she recognizes him at all.

Ten minutes later a purple Thunderbird emblazoned with maroon and pink speed lines roars up. Jimmy Straw would call it a typical Pepsi car, loud in more ways than one. He'd say it had no muffler at all. The car squeals to a stop and Mathilde squeezes through the floppy single passenger-side door into the back seat behind Winky. Under his pompadour he has a nervous face that reminds Murphy of a woman's. He speaks quickly to Raymond and gestures to the instrument panel. Raymond seems to be all Adam's apple, bones, and Elvis hair style. Ignoring Winky, he throws the car into gear. As it screeches away, Mathilde lowers her

forehead on her hands. The air shatters with Raymond's parting cry: "*Vive la Gaulôre Libre!*"

Murphy can stand no more. Much as he'd rather not, he turns and looks up at the second-floor parlour window. Sure enough, it's filled with faces in various shades of shock and disbelief. Helena, Viola, Nestor... No Aunt Hilary. After dinner Murphy'd peeked inside her room. Nestor had fastened a hard rubber plate over the inside door-knob, which used to be the outside knob. The plate covered that little hole where you can insert a straightened paper-clip or other long thin pointy item to pop the knob out on the other side and unlock the door.

He doesn't think about Raymond's slogan. He's too busy pondering Mathilde's last words to him: "*Pourquoi tu ne me reconnais pas?*"

Evening sun caressed Murphy's left cheek as he ambled Métropole east (real north) along Blvd. Notre Dame de Croyance toward Harry Floggins and NDC Park. Nestor was helping Baseball Coach run pee wee practice; now that it was almost 7:30, Murphy was on his way to meet up.

Nestor'd left right after Mathilde. So Murphy had a chance to unpack his trunk and duffel bag—with lots of help from Viola, who sorted out the laundry items—and answer her questions about what he'd learned and what feathers he'd earned. He mentioned being worried about Jesse or whoever had the accident. Viola said she wanted to talk with head nurse Mavis, her friend in the Camp Infirmary. She'd try giving her a call.

One block east (north) is Royal Avenue . If you take it north (west) you pass under the oak trees and reach the district police station. He remembers Aunt Hilary going there to report low-flying airplanes and more recently to hand over the teenager accused of bombing.

As he reaches the corner of Royal, Murphy recalls the dream he had on the train when he dozed a few minutes between Ste. Adelais and Val Michel. *Dallas is over 8 hours from us, said Kris, but it's our state. For this to happen here...*

What happened is that assassins shot President Kennedy. When Murphy started awake, he was sure the president was dead. It took at least a minute for him to sort things out and realize that people would say the president wasn't dead. But he knew he was. Some time in the future. Then he remembered his story. Was he dreaming because of his story? Or was his story because he was dreaming? Esther once explained that according to physics, all time is happening at once on one hand and not really happening at all on the other.

Murphy looked up the street under the arch of oak and elm branches. Shouldn't he tell the police that someone was going to shoot President Kennedy in Dallas Texas? Presidential security officers could be alerted. Organizers could steer the president clear of that city. But Murphy would have to give his full name and address, and the officers there would associate him with Aunt Hilary. Another English fruitcake, Helena would say the police would say. Nobody would believe him. They don't believe you if you're small. And they don't believe you if you don't have what they consider proof. What you *believe* simply from inside isn't proof, though the older brother in the minister's house with the Sheltie dog across

from Marvin Hands sure thinks otherwise. Murphy catches a large stone perfectly with the toe of his shoe. It skips straight ahead and over the sidewalk on the other side of Royal. *Le but de Métropole marquer par le numéro huit Murphy Beckridge.* Despite the English last name, the Colisée erupts in one collective roar of joy.

What a difference it made with night closing in whether you sat on the bench under the big elm halfway down the slope in NDC Park alone or with Nestor. Murphy was sitting with Nestor, and he sure felt safe and happy to be home. Nestor had a piece of smooth-sanded pine across his lap. The smell reminded Murphy of his dad's workshop . It gave him a hopeful, eager feeling.

He felt sad for Aunt Hilary, of course. Having been sent away himself to a place where you never saw your family and everything was the way the authorities said, he felt terrible for her. He felt even worse for his dad, because Nestor had promised to give his father's older sister a proper home. It was pretty clear Nestor didn't consider a mental institution a proper home. What if the hospital decided to zap Aunt Hilary with shock treatments or cut out part of her brain, like Esther said they liked to do?

Even more troubling, Murphy simply had to tell what he and Jimmy Straw got up to in Nestor's office that day before the birthday party for Helena and Viola, how they found the cabinet door unlocked and therefore got the key to the desk drawer. They took out the Luger. When they locked it back up, they returned the key and closed the cabinet door, but only Nestor had the key to lock the file cabinet. That's when Murphy should have told him. Not now, over ten months later.

“What is it?” Nestor wanted to know. He put his hand lightly on Murphy’s shoulder, which the boy could feel trembling. Murphy gasped a few times, wiped his eyes, and tried to explain.

Nestor waved his hand as if dismissing Viola’s concerns when William got an A- instead of A+. Nestor would have forgotten to lock the cabinet again in any case, he said. Truth to tell, he thought he really wanted to be rid of that memory, and he sure felt better now it was gone. The whole thing might have been his own unconscious doing, in which case his will had suppressed Murphy from speaking up, even though the boy—being a good boy—had wanted to. Could that really happen? Nestor seemed to think it could.

If the gun ended up killing a few gang members, well... You never wanted to see any creature die—but those doing such deeds are going to do them one way or another in any case. Most likely no harm would come. Most likely someone would just feel proud strutting around with a war Luger as part of his costume, or showing it off to his friends, like stamp collectors.

The police might seem slow, Nestor added, but remember how much else they had to look after in a big city, murders and all that sort of thing. They had full information on the gun, and one of these days, something just might come of it.

“Like a note in a bottle?”

Exactly like a note in a bottle, Nestor said. So long as it was out there, you knew you’d done what you could. After all, the drawer had been locked, and the gun unloaded. The box of ammunition was still there, too, after the gun went missing.

“It was *two* boxes, Dad.”

“Oh. Probably it was,” said Nestor, sounding as interested as Mr. Merritte when Murphy tried to drop charges against Murgatroy . “Two boxes.”

Nestor knew he found cartridges after the party, and was pretty sure he’d moved them somewhere else “safer”. He chuckled at that and lit a cigarette.

“I could have a word with Humphrey, but I don’t get the feeling Jimmy was involved.”

“No?”

Nestor gently shook his head no. He took another drag. “But we don’t seem to see Humphrey and Jimmy very much these days.” They sat silent. Some teenagers passed holding a radio. *It’s my party and I’ll cry if I want to...* As the music faded, Nestor added quietly that Rocky didn’t seem the type for that sort of thing, either. There were a number of rough characters along with the Patriotes, too. There were. Murphy had never thought before about hockey stars hanging out at bars with shady types.

Murphy wondered if just say it was Rocky—or even if it wasn’t-- would he come looking for revenge at being challenged and offended? First by Denny over Moidra, then by getting asked to leave and later made to by the police. Bike gangs weren’t going to come by and shoot at community folks because of a party spat. They had too much on their minds what with shooting at each other.

What about a shady character? What if he wanted to show off how he’d stolen the Luger, or something like that?

“Return to the scene of the crime?”

Murphy nodded, anxious. Nicking an old gun was hardly going to torment those types, and why would he want to do damage? He had what he wanted. His goal would be keeping out of sight, maybe selling the pistol through a fence. After explaining fence—someone who sells stolen property--Nestor rubbed Murphy's head and said not to worry about it.

“It's not your fault.”

He said it with total assurance.

Murphy leaned into Nestor and gave his waist a tight hug. Then he mentioned his dream on the train and wondered if Nestor agreed about what the police would make of it. Nestor did agree. He said if they wrote about it to the American CIA, the authorities would likely suspect them of some crazy plot.

“Isn't that what they call blaming the messenger,” Murphy wondered, remembering something Esther once said.

“Yeah. It's called life,” said Nestor. Maybe if they heard that the president really was planning to visit Dallas, they could call the CIA or FBI from a pay phone across the line and offer a tip to be extra careful, without saying why. Leave out the explanation and they might take it more seriously. They'd suspect a hoax but still they'd take precautions. You could only do what you could do.

Murphy looked at his dad to try to decide if he seemed serious. He did, so Murphy went on to say that the story he was making up was heading toward discovery of the real Caverne Bonpelier. Nestor thought that was quite something. How did it work? Murphy said certain things in his story seemed to come from dreams and feelings that told him true things about the future. In the future he'd

already found the cavern, and if he could keep the story going—not so easy now he was home—he’d find the secret place.

Nestor assured him he could keep the story going. Just trust that you could, he said, and don’t push too hard. Just believe and be patient. Murphy liked the sound of that. Nestor, too. He knew Murphy would find the spot, and when he did, they could go see it together. They’d pack a tent and stay overnight. That would be the perfect place to discuss some things Nestor wanted Murphy to know. Murphy knew better than to ask what that might be, but it was like Nestor had read his thoughts.

“I can’t say more yet,” he said. “We don’t think it’s quite time.”

Murphy was pretty good at interpreting what Esther would call Nestorese. What his dad probably meant was that *Viola* didn’t think the boy was quite ready, like she’d felt about his paper route and going off to camp at nine.

He considered telling his dad the news *Viola* reported from her friend about the arrest. Outside Ste. Marguerite de Mons police had stopped three young male suspects in a stolen Mustang. They found roughly the amount of cash that had gone missing from Camp Kisisokôe and a spray gun half filled with black paint. Murphy decided to leave that for later. He’d have to confess how he’d suspected Adrian when it was really Le Gros and his older companions, just like he’d suspected Murgatroy when it was really Adrian in cahoots with George and Dexter. Life took too much concentration on things beneath the surface. He was feeling all confessed-out.

“Is that for your shop?”

Nestor stroked the pine. “Quite the lovely piece, eh?” Baseball Coach had brought it along, not knowing Nestor was done working on his clipper. But seeing that piece, all of a sudden Nestor got the bug again. He loved Murphy’s drawing and would mail it to his doctor friend with a note saying that in another few years the model itself would be ready.

Murphy felt really good at that, and even better when Nestor proposed that tomorrow, after taking Aunt Hilary to the hospital, he’d be ready for a good matinée with Murphy at the Crosslands. Murphy felt better still. It so happened they were looking right across at the theatre marquee advertising the main feature, a dumb love story.

“Let’s go and see what’s on the menu for tomorrow afternoon.

Never

Never

Never!

Has the screen presented

A More exciting

A More outstanding

Motion Picture than

Robert Louis

Stevenson’s

Treasure Island

Walt Disney whose artistry marked a new era in motion picture  
entertainment now sets a new milestone with his first all-live action feature  
A book which thrilled 200 million readers throughout the world

The boy who faced a thousand dangers

Daring action

Breathless suspense

The world's greatest adventure story

Colour by Technicolor

Murphy had his bath and put on his pyjamas. As long as he wore slippers and took care not to get sawdust all over his PJs, Viola said he could go down to the basement to say good night to Nestor. He wanted to go the back way, out the kitchen. The veranda and outdoor stairs were solid again, having been rebuilt by Mr. Saville's handymen after what Viola called the party fiasco when Sol Blobinsky came by with something important on his mind but used the back veranda, and sure enough it collapsed just as Malachi was cutting through the alley. Nestor kept pointing out that as a result of Sol landing on Malachi, Sol's fall was cushioned, and after Malachi got out of hospital the brothers made up. Abe boasted to customers how Malachi the famous artist had saved his son's life, more important than any picture you care to

name. Sol was a little loopy for a few weeks from a blow to the head, but Abe said that was nothing new and guffawed.

Viola never relented, though. The party had ended in public disgrace, with Rocky picking a fight with Denny Blake over Moidra and Hooter behaving like a fool to impress Helena. It was all Mr. Saville's fault for showing up with Freddy Framboise, the Torpedo, and the Mini-Torpedo in tow. How word had got round to that folk singer and his manager Viola couldn't say. But she had no doubt Mr. Saville was behind it. Neighbours had called the police. The police! Viola had never been so embarrassed in her life. And yes, the veranda was fixed, but it still hadn't been painted. It was off limits again, because the night lamp bulb had burned out. It was too high up for Nestor to reach safely with his back. William was supposed to replace the bulb, using the neighbour's step ladder, but hadn't got round to it yet.

So Murphy went to see Nestor by the front stairs. The murky stairwell smelled musty as usual, and the boy's echoing footsteps stirred a feeling of dread. He rushed through the entryway, not looking down at the warped linoleum. Outside was thick darkness with no moon. But a finger of light beckoned from the uneven cement path along the side of the house. The light filtered out from the windows in the side door, from the basement where Nestor was at work again on the clipper.

Before turning the old doorknob, Murphy felt himself swept back to the sunny day of William's 16<sup>th</sup> when young Murphy pressed into the dark basement to challenge his fear. All of a sudden he felt how much time had passed, how much older he was. In a few more years he'd be like William, completing school, starting

work, staying out late, looking for a place of his own. He didn't want that. He didn't even want to be a teenager.

"Good to be home?" said Nestor. Murphy nodded. The ship looked well on its way. Nestor had salvaged much of the hull and some of the deck. Two of the original masts were all nicely mended. And the new wood was sure going to blend in great. Nestor had a genius for making odd things match.

"Feeling a little sad?"

Murphy said Viola had reached her friend in the Camp Infirmary. No one was supposed to know yet, but Jesse Brown had hit his head in shallow water and was lucky not to have drowned. A boy saw him floating there face down and thought he was playing. The boy was going to jump on him, but Tuck Shop Counsellor happened to be looking over and he shouted and jumped in and saw what was wrong.

Imagine, a medical student being the first one to notice, said Nestor. Sometimes you just know there's a pattern to things. Even in war, when pretty much everything falls into chaos, you see that to be true.

Viola's friend thought Jesse would have to be in a wheelchair for a long time, maybe forever. Nestor said he and Murphy could work on a sympathy card to send to Jesse and another for Kris. The war had left an ugly lot of lifelong scars and losses, though one of Nestor's friends who ended up in a wheelchair said he never would have discovered books and writing if not for that. It wasn't what he would have chosen, but it had some unexpected rewards.

Murphy supposed Nestor must still have certain injuries because of the war. Nestor said it might have had something to do with his bad memory. The latest example was his small awl gone missing.

“I’ve looked high and low.”

Murphy searched all around, too, grateful to be useful for something, though in the end he couldn’t find the tool, either.

“It’ll turn up,” said Nestor. “Everything always does.”

After leaving his dad, Murphy in pyjamas walked all the way up to NDC Avenue, then on an impulse turned west (south) and continued five blocks through mild, lilac scented darkness to the Church. A generous street lamp at the corner of Old Orchard as well as lamps on the lawn made it easy to see.

He stood in front of the double doors, red with enough blue mixed in to seem respectful, and to harmonize with the orange as well as maroon bricks. Above the simple mortar archway a line of green copper roofing outlined the gentle peak over the entry.

For the first time Murphy felt the building breathe. Maybe it was the lush vines adorning patches on the lower walls, clinging like a baby ape to its mama’s chest. For the first time he felt the Church fanning open: always a wider wall behind the one before it, spreading back, reaching out.

The Church sure rose high, too. Maybe seven birch bark canoes end on end up to the top of the cross. *Founded 1913* said simple engraved letters over the doors. That was one year before the Great War. On his micro, story Murphy read that NDC

ND Church celebrated its one hundredth birthday in 2013. People had home computers then, and there were pictures of congregation young and old, all shades, cutting the cake. A sign outside welcomed you in French as well as English, not like now, 1963, when it was all English, and people hadn't agreed yet to welcome those who William said "swung the other way."

A mother and daughter passed by, giving Murphy an odd look because of his pyjamas. He smiled at them. His feet felt funny without socks inside his Hush Puppy loafers, which Viola said to wear as slippers.

Looking up at the peaked entry, he says his silent evening prayer.

*Thank you God for sending me to camp and home from camp.*

*Thank you for Mr. Saville's kindness, even if he is partly showing off.*

*Thank you for letting me learn about all the plants and trees and animals. Thank you for returning Mr. Lacasse's notes. Please let things work out for Adrian, Jack, Jesse, and Kris.*

*Thank you God for Helena and William and John*

*Fitzsimmons and Viola and Nestor and Aunt Hilary. Please let Aunt Hilary be well again.*

Je vous remercie

Stretching high behind and above the entry, three tall narrow arched windows with their black crisscross diamond lines seem trying to reply. Or have they, and he can't quite hear?

It was silent in the room next door. Nestor was still downstairs working on the clipper. Helena said she'd heard him coming to bed as late as two in the morning when he didn't have work next day. Helena herself had gone to the Denny Blake concert on McDuff campus. William was with the band, on keyboard. Of course, Hooter would be there. Viola was already in bed, reading one of her murder mysteries. Murphy finished his new *Tarzan* comic, which Viola had left by his bed, and felt too sleepy to start *Uncle Scrooge*. He reached up and pulled the string on his reading lamp.

In the dark room a gap of light made a column to his left through the half closed parlour door. Further up and to his right street light leaked in beside Freddy Framboise and cast the hockey hero's outline onto the bed curtain, the usual hooded figure. Murphy was too old to have nightmares about this shadow, but sometimes he still felt watched. He felt that way tonight.

There was nothing to be afraid of. That's what Viola would say. Think happy thoughts. He liked Nestor working on his ship again, still working on it. Nestor would always be working on his ship. Like Murphy telling his story.

He rolled over and watched the street lamp sneak through blinds beside Freddy Framboise. He could pursue his story. Soon he'd find Caverne Bonpelier. Pretty soon. You won't get there if you don't keep going, Viola would say.

But the story didn't want to come into the parlor. Trying for it was as useless as trying for a stiff dink that time back in Grade One when Jimmy slept over. Jimmy was in the Murphy bed and Murphy on his sleeping bag on the floor. They were to tell each other things the other would think when his dink got hard. For Jimmy purple eyes on older girls. For Murphy the German double-agent knocking Tarzan out. But the air smelled sour and they didn't want to do it. The magic of sleep-overs had left and they never did another.

Springs creaked next door. Murphy glanced right, at the wardrobe. He'd better get his Hot Shoes... Hey, he was serious. He'd really believed his story shoes were here and he better hide them in case Aunt Hilary came wandering. But her door was locked from the outside. He kept his eyes on the wardrobe, though, half tempted to look inside... just in case.

He should turn the light back on. He should read *Uncle Scrooge*, do some sketches, keep awake—till Nestor comes upstairs. Like Viola, Murphy wishes his dad would lock the basement door. He should put a phone down there, too. But they never want to spend extra money.

Murphy's not sure he's been sleeping and, if so, for how long. But through the window beside Freddy Framboise a tiny blush of white light trembles, the first stroke of dawn. There's bumping from below, then above. William's ghostly shape silhouettes across the column of light marking the parlor door. Helena's close behind. "You just don't understand him," she mutters under her breath, a little slurred. "Sure I do, "William says, also slurred. "He's a neurasthenic nitwit." That

would be Hooter they're arguing over. "You prig," says Helena. "The least you could do on stage is *pretend* to look interested."

Their stocking feet fade down the bowling alley, doors open and close. Soon profound stillness, as if whoever's watching has pressed a great pillow down on them all. Time dissolves until Murphy realizes he's looking at the column of light again. Does he simply imagine a shadow passing through toward the entryway? He's dreaming in any case, he's pretty sure. He must try to awake.

The pillow crushes down again, blotting last laps of time. Nothingness. Then. Is that the rustling of tree leaves all turned to metal? It wakes him. The merest hint of downstairs door groaning open. Feet on creaky stairs. Through cushioning feathers then, as if from far afar, two pops, the parking lot behind Maude's flat, January 2172, City of Gaulôre.

Stillness shatters. Murphy loses sense of sound and silence, as if some search beam's smacked his eyes of total darkness. Hollow crash. Smothered drum roll. Silence.

Faint bitter smell tickles Murphy's nostrils. Out the parlour door he peeks. Eyes adjusting. Shadows. Someone's sitting two stairs down. Wrist on bony knee. Something dangles. Turn the other way. Light stitches, dappled floor. Hilary's door acrack. Past the silver snake, John Fitzsimmons' slinky, Murphy creeps. Noiseless push of door. Bed's made. No one.

Down the hallway, muffled, John Fitzsimmons gives a restless whine. Then something catches Murphy's eye: sticking out from the doorknob. Nestor's awl.

CANADIAN TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION: SETTLER-INVADER,  
DAMAGE AND TRUST

Tagoona became the first Inuit person ordained as an Anglican priest. A white man said to him, “Now you can help us with [your people’s] problem.”

Tagoona asked, “What is a problem?”

The white man offered an example. “If I held you by your heels from a third-storey window, you would have a problem.”

Tagoona considered this long and carefully. Then he said, “I do not think so. If you saved me, all would be well. If you dropped me, nothing would matter. It is you who would have the problem.”

- *I Heard the Owl Call My*

*Name (78)*

## INTRODUCTION

Responding to a long dark history of colonialism cloaked in much silence, Canada has at last called for an era of truth and reconciliation. In December 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRCC), formed six years previous to deal with injustice and unresolved distress stemming from the residential school program, recommended important steps the country and individual Canadians should take toward resolving a badly damaged relationship with Aboriginal peoples. The TRCC observes that “too many Canadians know little or nothing” about this history or about Aboriginal people (1 16).

With notable exceptions, a lack of knowledge of Aboriginal history and people, or lack of interest or will in the matter, has generally characterized Canadian fiction by settler-descendants. In 1996, the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) said that for change to happen, non-Aboriginal ordinary citizens will have to make a “heartfelt commitment” (RCAP Highlights). “A great cleansing of the wounds of the past” is required (RCAP 1 17). People will have to recognize being part of a damaged relationship and the implications for them of that history. Canadian society must truly “transform” (RCAP 1 8). I believe that my story of Murphy, his relations, and *The Blue Gold*, taken the rest of the way (a process ongoing), engages with all the aforementioned actions and values.

Fiction offers a vicarious opportunity to proceed through the tensions of a process such as truth and reconciliation. With this in mind, it seems reasonable to

anticipate that Canadians—both non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal-- should be well served by new fiction that sees the urgency of engaging with the country's severely damaged relationship as a shared problem requiring much new listening, learning, healing, and acting on the part of us all. Aboriginal writers have been bringing the issues forward now for decades. There have been recent works of essays and creative non-fiction on this concern by settler-descendant writers, such as Mark Abley's *Conversations with a Dead Man*, but little in the way of fiction. It is time for more fully involved works of non-Aboriginal fiction: a conversation in which we all listen. At a time of public focus on truth and reconciliation, there is much value in having new fiction that probes further, deeper, and more comprehensively from a non-Aboriginal standpoint into the country's dark legacy and current circumstances; fiction that raises new questions around reconciliation, that recognizes complexities and renders various distinctive individual experiences of responding to history, past, present and future.

To further explain my intentions with Murphy's story in this respect, the following paper first reviews Canada's colonial history. This should help explain the consequent damage to the first inhabitants and, arguably, to the spirit of the emerging new Westernized societies in Canada. Attention then turns to the country's history of separate literatures and focuses on sample fiction written by those of settler ancestry, looking at representations of the relationship between settler-descended Canadians and Aboriginal people, and the various recourses non-Aboriginal Canadian writers typically adopt in treating this often troubling topic. Seven categories of settler fiction response are defined and evaluated. From this

analysis then flows a rationale for Murphy's story as collaborating in something new and important in Canadian fiction in light of the new era: an effort to use non-Aboriginal accountability as a catalyst and guide for a newly imagined vision of distinct peoples in a shared land.

## COLONIALISM CANADA

Indigenous life on the pre-Columbian North American continent was remarkably diverse and autonomous (RCAP 584; Dickason and Newbigging 31). When Europeans arrived, they "came upon societies with ancient laws and cultures, who shared a language and history, who developed political and social structures beyond the level of kinship, class, or community (RCAP I 584). The various structures were "sovereign, self-governing." Dickason and Newbigging refer to the bemusement that Aboriginal people feel at the term "New World" for a world that was far from new (30) and at the idea of Canada as "a country of much geography and little history" (viii). Recent archeological findings have revealed humans hunting Pleistocene mammals, such as horses and camels, in the region that has become southern Alberta; humans have apparently been in the Americas certainly well before the era associated with Clovis culture. Methods of sustenance and protection, oral traditions, art, stories, dance, song, herbal and medical knowledge, laws, ceremonies, the transmission of family, community, and national histories—all go back thousands

and thousands of years. In the view of translator-poet-cultural historian Robert Bringhurst,

The several hundred oral literatures indigenous to North America—though constantly remade in the mouths of oral poets and new to every listener who comes from somewhere else—are parts of the old-growth forest of the human mind. (17)

The Old World, he says, exists “wherever indigenous traditions are permitted to exist and acknowledged to have meaning” (16). At the time of contact in what has become Canada, there were at least 2,000 different societies and over fifty to seventy languages classified into twelve families (Dickason 11, 45). Dickason writes that besides being complex, Amerindian languages “used a wider variety of sounds and ways of making sounds than did European languages. Consequently, “it was simpler for an Amerindian to learn a European language than for a European to learn an Amerindian one” (Dickason and Newbigging 365). Menzies, Captain Vancouver’s botanist in *Burning Water*, refers to the Indians’ “unusual lingo, especially the voices never dreamed of by the phrasebook makers in Europe” (31). Bringhurst assesses the West Coast Indigenous oral traditions as equalling if not surpassing those of Homer and the author of the *Beowulf*.

## INDIGENOUS WORLDVIEW

The great damage of colonialism can be seen as essentially the clash of enormously different, even opposite world views. Dickason cites anthropologist Robin Ridington making the point that Aboriginal “technology consisted of knowledge” (63).

However simple or rudimentary the Indigenous technologies may have appeared to Europeans, what they used and did was an ingenious adaptation to thriving in their particular ecosystems. This required intimate knowledge and understanding of the worlds where they lived and of humans as part of those worlds, of the whole. It meant living in harmony and maintaining balance. Sustaining themselves through practical knowledge and efficiency (memorialized by the oft repeated allusion to using every part of the buffalo), Indigenous peoples abided by several core values.

The following discussion looks at these values, as described by numerous Aboriginal writers and Elders of various different cultural affiliations.

In 1990 Thomas King commented on the phrase “all my relations” familiar to so many Native people. “All My Relations” expresses the importance of the collectivity in Indigenous cultures. In *Village of the Small Houses*, set primarily in the small rustic if poor northern Alberta town of Fort Vermilion, Ian Ferguson describes a community search for Ian’s closest friend, the seven-year-old Cree boy Lloyd Loonskin who has become lost in the woods. Ian’s father Henry tags along with his Cree friend, the community ferry driver, Bud Peyen. Both men are tall, but Bud “is the only man in the community who can look down on [Henry]. Literally” (6). Six feet eight inches high, Bud eclipses Henry by three inches. Furthermore,

whereas Henry “is so lean that Bud Peyen used to say he’d have to run around in a rainstorm to get wet,” Bud is “broad across the chest and solid throughout.” The searchers agree that the first one to find the lost boy should fire his gun. If the boy is still alive (it has now been five days and hopes are fading), there will be three shots telling the other searchers to hurry. If the boy has not survived, there will be one shot.

Henry has been learning some tracking technique.

My father hated to admit it, even to himself, but he was having a good time. It was a terrible thing with Lloyd Loonskin who knows where, but the whole experience, sleeping out in the bush, eating bannock and lard... well, there was something exhilarating about it. It was fun, was what my father was thinking, and who better to share it with than his friend Bud Peyen. He was about to say something along these lines to Bud when the silence was shattered by a single rifle shot.

There was a moment of indescribable tension as both men waited for the second and third gunshots. Two seconds went by, then three, then four, and still nothing. My father turned to say something to Bud Peyen, but the big man sat down, collapsing onto the ground. He was weeping, the tears pouring out of his eyes. It astonished my father, and he couldn’t think of anything else to do, so he knelt next to Bud Peyen, put his arms around him, and let him cry. It was so sad it made my father feel as if the world had ended. (87)

Ferguson's depiction of Bud as such a large solid man dramatizes the shattering power of loss in a community that can overwhelm the strongest individual. This valuing of the group stands in contrast to the Euro-American privileging of the individual.

"All my relations," says King,

is at first a reminder of who we are and of our relationship with both our family and our relatives. It also reminds us of the extended relationships we share with all human beings. But the relationships that Native people see go further, the web of kinship extending to the animals, to the birds, to the fish, to the plants, to all animate and inanimate forms that can be seen. (ix)

Furthermore, the reminder "is an encouragement for us to accept the responsibilities we have within this universal family by living our lives in a harmonious and moral manner." King explains that "a common admonishment is to say of someone that they act as if they have no relations" (ix). In his fictionalized memoir *Village of the Small Houses* Ian Ferguson describes returning from two summers and one winter away "in the city" to the small northern community of his early childhood. While away, Ian had learned to tell all sorts of stories about himself and his adventures "to impress the white kids" (127). Having heard his fill, Ian's Cree friend from those days, Lloyd Loonskin says, "you're acting pretty cheeky, you" (127). Acting cheeky, the narrator explains, "meant you were full of yourself, cocky, arrogant." He could have said "acting like you had no relations." This describes how many of us

non-Aboriginal people have behaved toward the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit for close to five hundred years.

Elders were and are afforded the utmost respect, yet children are to be respected, too, as well as given first priority for support. In the same way, adults and even chiefs or others of special status can be teased and laughed at (Dickason 27). Dickason notes that Europeans found this odd and wondered how “peaceful relations could prevail” without a strict hierarchical system, without the “threat of force in the background” (27). She writes “how easy it was for whites to miss the subtleties of Amerindian social controls; respect was exceedingly important.

Importance of the collective and egalitarian respect point up another essential principle in Aboriginal belief, the primacy of *balance*. Respect for the chief is to be balanced against that for the child and vice versa. The chief is respected for strength and judgement yet does not make decisions for the group but brings issues and questions to them for a consensual decision (Dickason and Newbigging 16 ). European negotiators had a hard time understanding why the Aboriginal leaders would not make agreements before taking all the proposed terms back to the people. In fact, the individual in Aboriginal society *was* important, but so were all the other individuals. The leaders listened to all ideas and made great efforts to explain recommended courses of action, so that all could finally agree.

Robert Bringhurst describes the ancient oral tradition which centred Indigenous peoples as a balance between the inherited body of shared fabula (the cultural stories in their essential raw parts) and the individual storytellers each of whom, assuming the normal permissions, put their own personal stamp on the

retelling. Bringhurst likens this process to a jazz improviser or a Renaissance painter offering up his own often remarkably original take on the culture's central stories. Discovering and developing one's unique gifts was and is important in Indigenous culture, as the tradition of the vision quest for one's name and future calling makes clear. But there is a confidence that in abiding by the traditional ways and values, through proper diligent effort, the spiritual world and beings will bequeath self-understanding. This knowledge alone is not life's ultimate task, however. Balance reminds individual artists that they are given their personal gifts, such as oral storytelling skill, for a reason beyond the self. The committed oral-tradition artists, Bringhurst suggests, are "far more interested in what they can perceive than in perceptions they create. They ask not *Who am I?* but *What is this?*" (295). The Nootka oral storyteller Johnny Moses hints at this balance when citing the Elders who say that their language has no word for "I" or "me" because the ego is already big enough on its own.

This Indigenous emphasis on the storyteller as someone in a sense licensed by the human and spiritual community, requiring proper mentoring and permissions to pass along certain stories, contrasts strongly at times with the Euro-American preoccupation with free speech and individual entitlement: writers as lone, self-proclaimed pioneers. The two views need not be entirely divorced and utterly irreconcilable, but at times they clash. As Olive Dickason notes, "Amerindian cultural knowledge was a carefully guarded individual [earned] privilege that was selectively passed on through the generations, whereas for Europeans it was generally publicly available" (Dickason and Newbigging 34).

### *Population*

The number of Aboriginal people who were in the lands now called Canada at the time of the first European contact is impossible to say. Given the much colder weather and harsher growing conditions than occur to the south, it's almost certain that there was greater population density below the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel. Estimates for the number of people north of that line at the period of contact have ranged from 500,000 to well over two million (Dickason 45). New findings and theories tend to keep increasing the estimated age of humans in North America as well as their pre-Columbian population densities. In any case, when Europeans arrived above the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel, "most of the people had been in their locations for thousands of years" (Dickason 45) and had begun "experimenting with domesticating plants perhaps as early as 9,000 years ago" (35). The only comparatively recent migrations of Aboriginal peoples had occurred in the Arctic (A.D. 1000) and British Columbia (A.D. 700) (45).

### **FOUR STATES OF RELATIONSHIP: FROM WELL-BEING TO DAMAGE**

The RCAP summarizes the Aboriginal-non-Aboriginal relationship as comprising four phases: separate worlds; contact, alliances and cooperation; displacement and

assimilation; and negotiation and renewal (1 17). Loosely speaking, these have unfolded in chronological historical periods that have repeated as whites pushed west and north. For peoples in certain western and northern locations, contact occurred much later and the phases were more crushed together than for others in the east. In general terms, the successive phases proceeded away from well-being and deeper into damage and violence or the prospect of violence – until the modern fourth phase, which remains an open-ended question. The main concern for this part of our discussion lies in the transition from the second to the third phase: this is where we see the dramatic switch from signs of something symbiotic to the disturbingly parasitic. For the east, the third phase arrived in the early 1800s with decline of the fur trade, infusion of more whites, British supremacy north of the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel, and the last colonial war (the War of 1812 against the United States) ( Dickason and Newbigging 142; RCAP Highlights). For the west, the shift came around 1870 with the colonial government’s purchase of vast tracts of western and northern land from the Hudson Bay Company (lands that Aboriginal peoples had never agreed to give up in the first place) (TRCC 1 50).

Early contact was often characterized by Aboriginals teaching the newcomers how to survive. As an example, in the winter of 1535-6, during Jacques Cartier’s second visit to the St. Lawrence Iroquoians at Stadacona (site of the future Quebec City), the villagers provided the French with *annedda*, a desperately needed remedy for scurvy created from the bark of white cedar. In addition to sharing all manner of survival and adaptation methods such as this, Aboriginal people also guided European visitors and shared valuable information about the various regions.

From a preliminary exchange of gifts, trading relationships soon developed, along with military alliances. In some cases a good deal of respect and even friendship grew between the partners, though in certain other cases hostilities flared up rapidly. Europeans were not always the most gracious of guests, and both sides found the other strange and potentially fearful.

In *The Orenda* Joseph Boyden shows strategic bargaining that took place in this phase when the Wendat finally agree to allow more French missionaries among them in return for trade goods and especially guns to use against the fearful Haudenosaunee in the Mourning Wars between the two Iroquoian confederacies.

For some this period of trade agreements and equality never came at all. Martin Frobisher, who twice voyaged to the eastern Arctic (1576-8), “brought back an Inuk hunter to England and displayed him as a ‘token of possession’, proof that the explorer had found and claimed new lands for the Queen. The Inuk soon died” (Dickason and Newbigging 28, 30). For other entire groups, devastation was almost as swift.

This was no more the case than for the Beothuk of today’s central Newfoundland. *River Thieves* (2001), a powerful first novel by Newfoundland writer Michael Crummey, set on the rocky coastal island between roughly 1811 and 1820, tells the story of a small number of British settlers, but always in the background, as if pushed there but refusing to yield, is the real or central story of the Beothuk, in the words of *Kirkus Review*, “[a] little known historical atrocity.” Cut off from the vital coastal fishing waters, lacking the “mixed-blessing” support of missionaries who did in general attempt to maintain certain basic rights and protections, weakened by

tuberculosis, and useless to the local white fishermen and trappers as trade partners, the Beothuk were truly condemned by circumstances to abandonment. The whites through fear, racial contempt, and desire for full control of the island, nursed a pathological resentment of the Aboriginal inhabitants. Crummey also shows that profound misunderstandings fed this bitterness. The Beothuks became characterized as thieves by people who had no concept of shared lands and possessions. The one white character in Crummey's novel who truly understands and lives compatibly with the Indigenous people is an Irishman who in a life of child poverty was conscripted to be a thief. Caught, branded, and threatened with death, he was banished to the New World. He understands what it means to be branded a thief when the underlying problem is social injustice and indifference.

As Dickason says in summarizing the Beothuk history, "once settlement [in today's Newfoundland] began, the feuding turned into an open hunting season against [them]" (76). Crummey shows the French participating as well by paying Mi'kmaq for Beothuk scalps. The last known Beothuk, Shawnadithit, died in 1829, a mere seventeen years after "disruption and assimilation" is said to have begun, the third phase of relations between Aboriginals and Europeans as outlined by the RCAP.

Thomas King puts it bluntly: "[t]hroughout the history of Indian-White relations in North America, there have always been two impulses afoot. Extermination and assimilation" (101). He notes that particularly in the early years, extermination wasn't considered "genocide" (a term not coined until 1944 by legal scholar Raphael Lemkin) "so much as it was deemed a by-product of 'manifest

destiny.’” Indians, so the newcomers thought, were destined by force of superior civilization to be wiped out. But for as long as the second phase of trade and military alliances, a majority of Indigenous peoples—unlike the unfortunate Beothuk-- remained important players.

This is the relationship phase that produced what the RCAP describes as “the extraordinary document known as the Royal Proclamation of 1763” (Highlights). TRCC further describes the Proclamation as “one of the clearest and earliest expressions of what has been identified as a long-standing element of Canadian Aboriginal policy” (1 51). It recognizes Indigenous title over a large central portion of North America, with rights and protections. It declares that “any future transfer of ‘Indian’ land” must call for a treaty between sovereigns. In their Highlights document, RCAP observes that the Proclamation “walks a fine line between safeguarding the rights of the Aboriginal peoples and establishing a process to allow British settlement.” The two sides, at this point, were still considered separate, distinct, autonomous. The idea of this first confederal bargain with First Peoples was to divide and share land. Britain, for the time, at least, was choosing the path of peace and collaboration. A hundred years later, the U.S. would be spending \$20 million a year on its ‘Indian Wars’ when the entire Canadian budget was \$19 million. Britain and then, as of 1867, Canada would favour the less bloody and costly route of treaties somewhat in the spirit of the first remarkable document of 1763.

By the time of Canadian Confederation (1867), colonial authorities had already negotiated 123 treaties and land surrenders in British North America

(Dickason and Newbigging 188). As they explain, these were of limited legal power. The colonial authorities, still laden with the sixteenth century idea that Amerindians had no land rights at all, did not intend title to reserve lands to include ownership in fee simple or sovereignty, though Indigenous people generally believe that nothing removed their inherent sovereignty. To the colonial authorities, the treaties were more moral than legal commitments. In any case, they guaranteed reserve lands, certain financial and social supports, and various rights, such as hunting and fishing privileges, “not for today and tomorrow only...[but for] as long as the sun shines and yonder river flows” (Treaty Commissioner Alexander Morris, 1876, qtd. by TRCC 153).

With the third phase of “disruption and assimilation,” the colonial authorities ushered in paternalism through another “p” word: “protection.” In case after case as waves of settlers pushed west, they explained to the Indigenous peoples that it would be wise to relocate to reserves for their protection from the land-hungry newcomers. Once the nasty and indecisive War of 1812 concluded, Indigenous people no longer seemed necessary, and past attitudes of respect toward them began to fade.

Various Indigenous leaders, both in the east and the west, did attempt to unite multiple nations in resistance, but by then it was too late. Dickason points out that one of the differences between Aboriginal and European outlook resulted in this downfall:

What was clear to Europeans from the start was that Amerindians did not have the social will to unite to prevent the invasion and takeover of their

lands. The tendency towards fragmentation had been effective for survival before contact. Later, the Europeans would use it as an instrument for their domination. (Dickason and Newbigging 34)

Dickason cites Cree teacher, political activists, and author Joseph F. Dion whose posthumous *My Tribe the Crees* (1979) offers the view that “only a very few of the more adventurous members took part at all in the rebellion” [of 1885] (Dickason “Many Faces” 127). Dion suggests that history might have been very different if sufficient numbers had stood together. Joseph Boyden concurs when, in the voice of a spiritual being of the Aboriginal peoples, he reflects on his story, which “on the surface is the story of our past” (3):

Yes, the crows continued to caw as crows are prone to do, and after a while we got used to their voices even when they berated us for how we chose to live. Some of us allowed them their cackling because we found it entertaining, others because we believed our only choice was to learn how to caw ourselves. And still others kept them close for the worldly treasure their masters promised.

It’s unfair, though, to blame only the crows, yes? It’s our obligation to accept our responsibility in the whole affair.... (153)

Boyden’s novel strongly implicates the failure of large confederacies (the Wendat and Haudenosaunee) to cease their own spiralling feud and recognize common

bonds and causes against the invaders. Ryerson University critic Hayden King (Anishinaabe) objects to this line of analysis as pandering to white readers with a “timeless, classic colonial alibi.” He views the novel as placing the reader’s sympathies and approval with the Jesuit priest Cristophe. Maintaining this view, however, requires overlooking some fairly important parts of the novel that critique the missionaries and build an overall impression expressed by McGill University historian Allan Greer when he writes, “In the face of [a] long tradition of eurocentrism, Joseph Boyden’s *The Orenda* represents a heartening new departure, one that turns the tables on the Jesuits and brings native characters to the fore.” Greer does observe that while he thinks the novel is strong literature, none of the characters represented are believable as seventeenth century figures, and he agrees with Indigenous critics that the female-centred aspect of Iroquoian societies seems underrepresented. Greer looks mainly at the Hurons who are more sympathetically presented than the Haudenosaunee, who, as Hayden King objects, can be said to appear “in black hats” though Boyden wanted to avoid white and black hats. Whether Boyden is actually wanting to blame Indigenous peoples of the time for lack of unity, or to the extent that King declares, his depiction of internal strife certainly recognizes what Dickason calls the tendency toward fragmentation as one reason why the continent’s First Peoples had trouble repeating the success of the earlier St. Lawrence Iroquoians in repelling the Europeans.

It should be remembered that while several outstanding Aboriginal Chiefs valiantly pursued a pan-Aboriginal resistance and numerous members did what they could, sometimes as in the case of the Beothuk, fighting to the death, their resources

were futile compared to the European weapons and supplies. Dickason cites Dion again in his description of the Indians' surrender in 1885: it was "a pathetic sight as ... warriors who had terrorized the country gave up their weapons... a pitiful assortment of firearms of every description, some tied with cord to prevent them from falling to pieces" ("Many Faces" 127).

It should also be noted that throughout the oppressive third phase of history, some white people spoke and acted in support of the Indigenous people. In Newfoundland, William Eppes Cormack, explorer, naturalist, merchant, and philanthropist, tried to locate and help surviving members of the Beothuk. He provided a home to the last known Beothuk Shawnadithit and wrote critically of inhumane European trespassing in their country. He blamed his own community for driving a defenseless group of independent people to extinction. During the residential school years, Dr. Peter Bryce reported deadly conditions in the residential schools and recommended necessary improvements. When relieved of his position with the Department of Indian Affairs due to his inconvenient insights, the doctor spoke publicly against the atrocious circumstances. "Ordinary" settlers as well are on public record with expressions of concern and dismay for the unacceptable treatment of Indigenous people that they witnessed. But none of these protesters nor the resisting Indigenous peoples themselves were able to stop the juggernaut.

When asked by the RCAP to name the government actions and policies they regarded as most "abominable," Aboriginal people chose the following four:

- Relocation of entire Aboriginal communities in the name of development, military need, or administrative efficiency

- The Indian Act (centre-piece of federal policy)
- Residential schools
- Gross mistreatment of Aboriginal veterans of war (1 228)

As mentioned, the first of these was often justified in the name of protection. The real reasons were usually to remove Aboriginal people from prime land, to reduce their land, to isolate them from each other, to hide them away, or, as already stated, to make way for some form of development or military station. In some cases more than one group might be squeezed together with another, expecting to make do with the accommodation provided to one.

While this was happening, Aboriginal people were being further disrupted, micro-regulated and monitored by the Indian Act. Indian agents were assigned to the various reserves ostensibly as facilitators but primarily to ensure that policies in the Act were being met. First instituted in 1876, the Act consolidated past policies into one framework. Initially intended to encourage gradual assimilation, it became especially repressive after the 1885 defiance of the Métis of Red River (in today's Manitoba) and various Indian allies. The Métis considered themselves a new nation of mixed-blood people. Their sense of identity had strengthened amidst the conflicts between opposing fur trade interests and in culture clash with incoming settlers in 1812. The Act contained and added various provisions all aimed at eliminating Indigenous people. For example, Indian women lost status by marrying someone without status; individuals were encouraged to give up status in exchange for a portion of reserve land. Those graduating with a university degree in professions

such as medicine, law, or education could become enfranchised with a 'location ticket' granting inheritance rights while retaining a number of treaty rights despite losing Indian status. Beginning in 1884 and continuing well into the twentieth century, the Act prohibited a range of Indigenous ceremonies. It also banned traditional-style governments and made elected leaders answerable to the Canadian government. The Indian Act remains a complex problem in that while it maintains colonial paternalism and aspirations to assimilate, it also defines and protects a number of treaty and human rights. Indigenous people generally resist the idea of simply removing it without fully entrenching rights and privileges in some other form. Lawyer and former government negotiator Deborah Corber calls the Act "an anachronistic law that has long ceased serving anyone's best interests." She maintains there are "lots of wonderful ideas on how to reform and eliminate it," from both sides of the relationship. Finding consensus is seldom easy.

Residential schools were an especially malign tool of attempted assimilation. The schools in question were those operated in partnership between the federal government and the prominent Christian churches. Asked in 1883 to justify these educational institutions, Canada's first prime minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, told the House of Commons that

Indian children should be withdrawn as much as possible from the parental influence, and the only way to do that [is] to put them in central training industrial schools where they will acquire the habits and modes of thought of white men.

(TRCC V1 2)

Macdonald was voicing a dominant belief. The schools operated from around 1830 until the last ones shut their doors in the late 1990s. These institutions, which separated children as young as six years old from their families, differed significantly from the elite European boarding schools. Modelled after reformatories and industrial schools for the urban poor, which “could be violent and dangerous places,” these schools were intended to convert perceived inferior beings into “civilized Christians” who could farm and perform other labour in the new economy (TRCC 1 57). Much of the children’s time at school was actually spent on various tasks of maintenance. Even when they were in the classroom, though, students were generally not expected to think but to memorize. As Macdonald had explained, they were to conform, and shed their culture.

But no matter how intently the organizers may have believed in their program of dispossession and indoctrination, they did not see fit to support it. The schools were severely underfunded. They lacked adequate standards or the supervision needed to uphold standards such as they were. Nevertheless, some 150,000 Aboriginal children passed through the system; survivor testimony names 139 different schools and residences where severe neglect and abuse occurred (TRCC SFR 3).

Staff members cut the new children’s traditionally long hair and dressed them as little Europeans. They punished the students for speaking their own languages at any time. There are numerous reports of repeated sexual abuse.

Testimony of former students reveals an array of different cruelties inflicted upon the children, including a chair used for electric shock at St. Anne's residential School (Metatawabin). School records reveal 3,200 deaths of students (TRCC V4). Other deaths went unreported; the number of those remains unclear. For one third of the reported deaths, the school gave no name. In almost half the cases, officials reported no cause, though tuberculosis and other diseases were rampant through overcrowding, poor ventilation, unsanitary conditions, and inadequate nutrition. Students often arrived at the schools already weak and susceptible due to similarly unhealthy conditions afflicting the home reserve communities to which Aboriginal people had been relegated and relocated from their traditional lands. Student deaths sometimes occurred through suicide; other children who fled the schools and could not reach home or help sometimes died of exposure. The government would not pay to send the bodies home. They remain in abandoned cemeteries, as the TRCC says, "vulnerable to disturbance". Whatever the medical reasons for these deaths, the underlying reason was clearly a denial of humanity.

As a result of this denial, the schools assaulted culture, disrupted family relationships, and denied parenting skills to seven generations of Indigenous people. Citing the TRCC, Margery Fee notes that 80,000 former students are still alive and dealing with the post-trauma of their experiences, while their children and grandchildren must also deal with the legacy as inter-generational survivors. Echoing the schools program, a similar program of forced adoptions, often called the "Sixties' Scoop" because it gathered particular force in the 1960s, contributed to the work of disruption and assimilation. Citing the RCAP, Fee notes that from 1960 to

1990, over 11,000 Aboriginal children were adopted out of their communities. But rather than winding down as the name may suggest, the Sixties Scoop turned into the Millennial Scoop and continues to this day. By the 2011 census, it appeared that almost half of Canadian children in foster homes are Aboriginal, even though Indigenous people make up less than five per cent of the population (Kielberger “Stemming”). In their article on this problem, Craig and Marc Kielberger report an estimate that from 1989 to 2012, First Nations children spent more than 66 million nights apart from their families in foster or group homes. When Fee wrote on this topic in *Canadian Literature* in 2012, there were more Aboriginal children in foster care than were in residential schools at their height. So these two programs can certainly be thought of as closely related, and as Aboriginal advocates have been pointing out, the root problem of forced adoptions (guardians deemed unfit) is clearly discriminatory poverty, unequal treatment, the legacy of colonialism, and the slow pace of efforts to decolonize. In January 2016, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ruled that the federal government grievously underfunds on-reserve child welfare programs in comparison to its support for child welfare in other parts of Canadian society (just as it underfunds on-reserve education and health care).

Similar neglect occurred for returning Aboriginal veterans of war who were denied the benefits provided to other Canadian veterans. It’s hard not to infer the underlying strategy of these actions, inactions, and policies: to make it so miserable to be Aboriginal that Indigenous peoples will finally cast off status, reserve lands and rights and land claims, and assimilate. While assimilation has not been and will not be accomplished (Aboriginal birthrates have been well above the national

average for years now), the disastrous effects of the disruption and assimilation era are far from passed. The RCAP and TRCC both refer to disproportionately high and disturbing rates of affliction among Aboriginal people related to poverty, disrupted parenting skills, children in foster care, family violence, addictions and other social problems, inadequate education, disaffected youth, incarceration in jails and prisons, physical and mental ill health, early deaths including suicide, and hundreds of murdered and missing women (TRCC Summary Final Report 4, RCAP 5). Corber recently re-stated the “gaps that persist between aboriginal and non-aboriginal life chances on virtually every socio-economic indicator”: two thirds of all First Nations communities in Canada [of which there are about one thousand, including around 614 bands on reserves (Dickason “many Faces” 135) ] have been under at least one drinking water advisory in the past decade; four out of ten young adults living on reserve do not finish high school as opposed to the national rate for non-Aboriginal young Canadians of nine out of ten; and Indigenous children are twice as likely to live in poverty as other Canadian children. These problems go together with all the elements of lost culture, including languages. For many years now, it has been predicted that only three of the original sixty or so Aboriginal languages in Canada show signs of surviving (Language Management Site; Beaver 101).

The United Nations and many others have registered deep dismay over the ongoing conditions and findings related to all of these categories of Aboriginal life in Canada (Angus 238). In such a privileged country—particularly one known for extolling human rights-- as Corber says, “It doesn’t have to be this way.” Until a

majority of non-Aboriginal Canadians grasp their part in the problem and potential to help find solutions, real change is unlikely.

The colonial forces employed two potent weapons in their assault: mythology and death by accounting. Concerning the use of myths, three stand out. First is the notion of empty land “for the taking” (John Payton Sr., *River Thieves*, 69).

*It's Mine: Canada: The Right Land for the Right Man; Western Canada: The New Eldorado: Homes for Everybody, Easy to Reach, Nothing to Fear, Protected by the Government; and Canada Is Your Land for the Asking: Health, Wealth.*

([http://www.russborough.com/antique\\_prints/posters/canada\\_immigration\\_posters.html](http://www.russborough.com/antique_prints/posters/canada_immigration_posters.html))

Immigrants responding to these ads for settlers to Western Canada in the late nineteenth century might well have been spared the fearful sight of the (by then half-starved) Indians as they had mostly been packed off to reserves away from the railroad. Immigrants responding to much earlier calls might also have had the impression of an empty land for another reason as well. As Olive Dickason explains,

The earliest European accounts of the New World all spoke of the ‘great multitudes’ of people. Later, when colonization was gaining momentum, large stretches of territory were found unoccupied, as the spread of disease had preceded the European advance, and the notion of an ‘empty continent’ gained currency. (Dickason and Newbigging 38)

Empty, and yours to do with as you will, provided you are “productive,” as long as you contribute to what today is called progress, “growing the economy.”

A second related myth is that of the vanishing Indian. It, too, worked well through art and literature. In his book *National Visions, National Blindness: Canadian Art and Identities in the 1920s*, fine-art scholar Leslie Dawn argues that Canadian identity-building around the Group of Seven (non-Aboriginal) painters occurred through portraying Indigenous people as “bordering on inevitable and imminent extinction or assimilation” and “essentializing the Indian as a single race [which] ensured that the dualism of indigenous and colonialist remained stable, while at the same time privileging the second term by erasing the first” (2). The “Indian” poems of Duncan Campbell Scott lamented the “dying” Indian. Ostensibly romantic laments, they betrayed elements of racist stereotyping as well. Ironically, Scott was writing these works while overseeing the Indian residential school program, an expression of “death by accounting” discussed below.

Third in the myths is that of heroic adventure and noble fortitude. The empty-land posters were pitched to the Western privileging of the human over nature (a right to land and control, man at the top of the chain) and to individualism—you deserve only the best, because you are the best at being hard-working, industrious, and brave. Even though the ads assure prospective settlers that the Indians are safely out of the way, there is the image of romantic adventure with the individual at the centre. You can shoot bison from the window of a train, a moment in history that so disturbs the Métis character of La Grande Sauterelle in Jacques Poulin’s *Volkswagen*

*Blues*. Noble fortitude takes various forms in Canadian literature, such as the frontier romance novel, historic poetry, and the farm novel (fighting harsh nature at all odds). E.J. Pratt's 1940 long narrative poem "Brébeuf and His Brethren" on the legendary martyrdom of the missionary father is an example of lionizing newcomer individualism and right values while also demonizing the land and Aboriginal people.

Authors Dean Neu and Richard Therrien describe the second main method of domination and control in their book *Accounting for Genocide: Canada's Bureaucratic Assault on Aboriginal People*, 2003: "accounting techniques, economic rationalizations, bureaucratic mechanisms- 'soft techniques'—to deprive native peoples of their lands and natural resources" (89). As mentioned, Duncan Campell Scott oversaw an expression of this strategy while writing his tragic laments for the dying Indian. "Soft" warfare, of course, continues to this day, and the vanishing-Indian notion perseveres, as Leonard Cohen once said of himself, "as stubborn as those garbage bags that time cannot decay."

RACAP sums up the attitude underlying these colonial policies and actions as "ethnocentric triumphalism" in pursuit of "cultural genocide" (and one could add material and cultural theft). In works such as his play *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing* (1988) and his novel *Kiss of the Fur Queen* (1998), celebrated Cree writer Tomson Highway, like various other Aboriginal authors and artists, represents this history through metaphors of rape. Like many contemporary Aboriginal authors, Highway leaves little doubt that the pressures of colonialism remain and that efforts of reconciliation must be ongoing.

Author Charlie Angus, also the Member of Parliament (Canadian House of Commons) for the enormous Ontario riding of Timmins-James Bay, observes that the universities, arts, and book world not only “failed to offer adequate resistance to political bestiality, they often rose to welcome it and to give it ceremony and apologia” (22). For instance, countless literary works promoted the three myths described above. No wonder that Aboriginal people for years have been saying that Canadian institutions don’t feel relevant to them.

For their part, non-Aboriginal Canadians are tempted to associate all the “old” colonial abuses with Scott, and to lay on him responsibility for the damage. Perhaps if we demonize Scott as he once demonized nature....

One can find opportunity. Scott worked for the Department of the Interior’s Indian Affairs Branch from 1879 until 1932, by which point it was the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA). By 1913 he’d worked his way up (helped along by the firing of a corrupt superior) to deputy superintendent of the Department, the highest unelected position in the office. During that time he bitterly fought the Six Nations’ desire to retain traditional government. On a 1905 trip to Hudson Bay, visiting various trading posts as a commissioner of Treaty 9, he stopped at Lac Seul, where he heard drumming from across the water. This drumming celebrated the White Dog Feast. It was a traditional life-affirmation, but Scott heard it as barbaric and in contempt of the Great Father, King Edward VII, having been one of the ceremonies officially banned. Scott went personally with a party of officials and attempted to have the forbidden drumming stopped. He failed on that occasion, but felt undeterred from his official mission. His department disregarded Dr. Peter Bryce’s

recommendations for drastic improvements to the residential schools and, in fact, Scott cut the doctor's research funding, presumably wishing no more demands of the sort. In 1910 Scott dismissed concerns about the high death rates in residential schools, stating that "this alone does not justify a change in the policy of this Department, which is geared towards the final solution of our Indian Problem" (qtd. by King, *Inconvenient* 114).

Angus reports that in 1919 Indian Affairs allocated \$10,000 to control tuberculosis for 300 Aboriginal bands across Canada (approximately 105,000 people). That year the City of Ottawa (Scott's birthplace and home) with around the same population had a medical budget of \$342,000 and spent \$33,000 to fight the spread of the disease. Urban TB deaths dropped by forty percent while soaring in Indigenous communities. When it released a preliminary summary report of its findings in June 2015, the TRCC commented that the number of Indigenous children who died in the residential schools—approximately 32,000—is greater than the number of Canadian soldiers who died in the Second World War. Although this history of tolerated preventable deaths was mostly repressed, Angus discusses a 1967 Ontario government report asking whether Canadian Indian policy may have been guided by "a homegrown Eichmann." Rural sociologist R. Alex Sim, looking at the need to develop Indian-based education (a continuing need to this day), found it hard to accept that "such low levels of income, health, and educational attainment in Aboriginal communities could ... have [just] happened by accident." Sim did not name names but he suggestively quotes George Steiner on the Eichman trial: "We know now that a man can read Goethe or Rilke in the evening, that he can play Bach

or Schubert, and go to his day's work at Auschwitz in the morning" (qtd. by Angus, 22).

Scott not only was an accomplished pianist as well as poet. Whether he was really an entirely different sensitive soul when writing his "Indian" poems, though, as Sandra Campbell suggests, is highly questionable. However, his poem "The Piper of Arll" inspired a seventeen-year-old John Masefield to take up poetry (Adams). So we can at least say that a recognized poet capable of inspiring a future poet Laureate of England could also stand before a parliamentary committee (established to examine his proposals for amending the enfranchisement provisions of The Indian Act) and declare:

I want to get rid of the Indian Problem. I do not think as a matter of fact, that the country ought to continuously protect a class of people who are able to stand alone...

Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department, that is the whole object of this Bill....

(qt. by RCAP 1 ch 13 557)

Serious questioning of Scott in Canada only began to stir in 1976 when John Flood published "The Duplicity of D.C. Scott and the James Bay Treaty" in *Black Moss* (Adams). Brian Titley's *A Narrow Vision* followed in 1986, picturing a capable and

efficient administrator, not corrupt like many others, but without the vision to transcend the account books and narrow inherited strictures. Until recently the plaque at Scott's Ottawa grave site "lionized" him as a great Canadian poet and literary figure. However, since November 2015 a new plaque, while mentioning his recognition as one of the so-called Confederation Poets, now calls Scott "notorious" for having overseen the assimilationist residential school system (CBC News DCS Plaque Now Includes).

Scott's ghost, who appears to Mark Abley in the creative non-fiction work *Conversations with a Dead Man*, feels betrayed by Canadians' view of him today, but he might have agreed with the criticism of narrow inherited strictures. He seemed to offer a similar judgement of himself later in life to his second wife. Dragland quotes his speech to Elise Aylen, what reviewer Sandra Campbell calls a *cri de coeur*:

I know now that I have never fought against anything nor worked for anything but just accepted and drifted from point to point—I have dimly felt that if I worked & protested & resisted I should be wrecked—So maybe you will understand why with some gifts I have done so little.

(Dragland 74)

There is something quintessentially Canadian—at least white settler Canadian-- in this sad confession of never having worked or fought by a man who seemed on the surface to have done little else but. The desire to please, to honour, to oblige, to

never become, heaven forbid, “unemployed” (a loafer like those Indians) resulted in an endless round of administration without protest, and no doubt without emotional attachment, as Titley suggests, from work that is “a mere source of income rather than an abiding passion” (qtd. by Adams). Therefore, can art really be separated from one’s source of employment or other phases of life, can it really stand autonomous as high modernism would suggest? To the Aboriginal worldview, certainly not. In his book on Scott, Dragland cogently agrees: life and art are not isolated from each other

Dragland feels that his poem “Powassan’s Drum” reveals a certain guilty struggle with himself. Yet his demonizing of nature and Indigenous people was hardly unusual then, and it hasn’t disappeared today, either

So should we be blaming one person for Canadian colonialism’s murderous accounting, whether Duncan Campbell Scott or someone else oversaw the program? Is doing so more a matter of psychological responses (more often from non-Aboriginal than Aboriginal people) than justice or logic? Marjory Fee notes that “it’s easy to demonize Scott, but the issues [he pressed] ... were raised in Parliament, well known to the mainstream churches, and, in some cases, reported in the newspapers” (“The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada”). Years before Scott, after the “troubles” of 1885, Aboriginal peoples were kept in a state of starvation, as discussed in greater detail by James Daschuk *Clearing the Plains* and by Joanne Epsikenew in “Living and Dying with the Madness of Colonial Policies.” While acknowledging Scott’s role in the residential schools is certainly important,

the impulse to blame him, as it were for colonialism, seems in keeping with Shirley Jackson's well-known modern parable "The Lottery."

In any case, by 1967 another Demon was after Aboriginal people again. This time the federal government of Pierre Trudeau was presenting its "White Paper" calling for the end of treaties and reserves (in Trudeau's mind a progressive way to democratize by moving beyond two classes of citizens). This came at a time when Aboriginal morale was seemingly at its lowest point. The "White Paper," however, triggered an Indigenous wave of protest and ushered in a new era of Native pride, demands for justice, and the beginning of contemporary Indigenous literature. Convincing the government of the day to withdraw its White Paper and try listening to Indigenous people before drafting future policies on their behalf was the first victory anticipating the new period of negotiation. An important part of the emerging new conversation, even if often spoke first to Indigenous communities, was the rise of Aboriginal literary authors of memoirs, poetry, and fiction.

## SEPARATE LITERATURES

Maria Campbell with *Halfbreed* in Western Canada (1973) and Basil Johnston with *Ojibway Heritage* in Eastern Canada (1976), both published by Jack McClelland, marked the start of a new written literature in Canada, one that continues to grow remarkably in quantity while retaining its initial quality. *Halfbreed* grabbed public

attention with its revelations of racism, poverty and oppression, of community circles shattered by colonialism. A novel by another Métis writer, Bernice Culleton (Mosionier), *In Search of April Raintree*, followed ten years later. Mosionier contrasts the very different attitudes experienced by two sisters based on their different appearances (one has the features of the white parent, one the features of the Aboriginal parent). By the late 1980s fiction, poetry, and plays by the likes of Ruby Slipperjack, Jeanette Armstrong, Daniel David Moses, Tomson Highway, Drew Hayden Taylor, and Thomas King was becoming more and more visible.

To be sure, Aboriginal people had been writing for many years before this, if not in forms that reached mainstream publics. In her essay “The Many Faces of Canada’s History,” Olive Dickason observes that Indians began to publish in their own right in the nineteenth century, often personal chronicles and community histories. She discusses numerous examples from the 1840s to the 1990s. The more recent decades in particular have seen a number of significant academic works by Aboriginal authors. As one of many interesting examples, English professor Rick Montour from Six Nations recently published *We Share Our Matters (Teionkwakhashion Tsi Niionkwariho:ten): Two Centuries of Writing and Resistance at Six Nations of the Grand River*. The significant rise of Indigenous literary critics has enriched the growing presence of Aboriginal literary publications. Aboriginal critics have sparked many lively conversations around Indigenous poetics, the place of nationalism, the place of postcolonial theory, and of course the deeper understanding of Aboriginal writing itself.

Bernie Harder offers the following summation of his evolving knowledge of Aboriginal literature:

As Ruffo shows... the four main themes in Native literature are the connections to the land, to the community and family, to history, and to the mythological or the sacred elements. "Native literature," as he explains," in its oral form was spiritually centred in that it was, and is, informed by an Indigenous worldview that sees humans not at the top of an evolutionary pyramid but rather as a link in a circle of creation in which every entity is endowed with spirit. Contemporary Native writers continue to explore and affirm the experience of this link. They ...are determined "to liberate themselves so they can empower and heal themselves through their own cultural affirmation, as well as to address those in power and give them the real story. (348)

Aboriginal people understand that the tree of Native literature here on Turtle Island goes back over two thousand years. It is an old tree that has taken on some different-looking foliage of late in exchange with two very recent small trees, one speaking English, the other French. This picture seems to accord with actual history, but English speaking settler Canadians grew up learning to call their tree "English Canadian literature" and imaging that Native literature was a new green branch, more ethnographic and sociological, perhaps, than literary. Some pictured a separate

French tree, some even pictured their own tree having French-speaking branches among the other distinctive ones.

English speaking literature in Canada still mainly sees its roots in the accounts and diaries by British and perhaps even French arrivals, then in the novels, poems, plays, and other books that the settlers to this old “new land” began to publish. The greater impression one draws from Canada’s settler literature as a whole is the idea of disappearance of one culture and worldview with the pre-emption by another. The former rich ancient cultures remain in various cultural emblems, stories, and inventions, such as the canoe. And of course in Indigenous names. Critic Rowland Smith has pointed out a standard settler myth that “[t]he land of the noble adventurer is shared—through the use of the ‘Indian’ name—with untroubled aboriginal people” (157). Starting with the name of the country, Canada is replete with place names taken from Indigenous languages. Recent historical and linguistic debate seems to be leaning toward the country’s name coming from St. Lawrence Iroquoian meaning “village.” Many sources still say the name comes from the Huron-Iroquois “kanata,” also meaning “village.” Cree author and political legal activist Harold Cardinal once said that “from the Cree point of view, the word Canada stems from the Cree word *Ka-Kanata*” literally “that which is clean” or, in this case, *the clean land*. “We describe our country as the clean land because it belongs to our Creator, who is a clean being” (214). Any or all these variations do seem right and far preferable to the European dominance impulse Dickason refers to, “the habit of naming the places they visited without regard for native usage,” which was extended to the people themselves, called “Indians” by Columbus because he

thought he had landed in the Indies” (64). But though we have so many reminders of the cultural roots of this land, we tend to keep looking back to Europe or down to the non-Aboriginal identity of the United States. If Shelley was even just partly right that poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world, it seems wise that we bring a critical awareness to the failings of our settler literature insofar as its prospects for a vibrant future collaboration with First Peoples and, perhaps more importantly, rediscover and redirect it as one of many potential forces for change.

Of course, as Thomas King has noted, many non-Aboriginal Canadian writers have been writing sympathetically about Aboriginal people, communities, and issues for many years. The following “break-down” aims to give at least a preliminary sense of some of the different forms this has taken.

Examples are mainly from Canadian fiction in English but with some reference to works in French as well, in an attempt to suggest certain specific telling ways in which the descendants of settlers responded to the Aboriginal presence. The underlying interest in this classification is with how these responses may point to an emergence from truth and exorcision to reconciliation itself, and what that value could mean, in written words and lived life.

### Canadian Settler Fiction: Forms of Response

We have already introduced what we might call the primal instinct of emerging settler writing, which was to treat Aboriginal people as vanishing. RCAP refers to six slots into which the mainstream typically places Indigenous peoples. The most

sinister and unfortunately all-too-common, if not most common, of these slots remains “simply invisible.” When he introduced his anthology of contemporary Canadian Indigenous fiction, Thomas King observed that “most of us [Indigenous authors] have consciously set our literature in the present” (xii). This helps avoid “literary monoliths” (laconic chiefs, dusky-haired maidens, demonic shamans, etc.) and, “more important, allows us the opportunity to create for ourselves... both a present and a future.” King notes that, in contrast, a majority of works about Aboriginal people by non-Aboriginals are set in the past (xi). King feels the nineteenth century is especially prominent, but older periods are certainly common as well. Placing an Indigenous character or story in the past may not necessarily be consciously intended to suggest that the past—taken as a finite, finished entity-- is where Indigenous people exist. But it can create that impression. Duncan Campbell Scott, for instance, while creating emblematic figures suggested by Native people from his own time, almost always portrayed them as bound to a by-gone era and returning to it like a doll tied to a sinking stone in a lake.

Closely related to the problem of historic setting is that of point of view. Underlying these two is the problem of distance, temporal and psychic, both aspects potentially behaving as one, as an instrument of control or even removal. As we might expect, much historical fiction by settler writers looking at Indigenous people uses a fairly distant third person stance and documentarian voice: the Western historian drawing upon [almost entirely written] research and external observation. In such cases, whether using “documentary omniscience” or a tone of “casual intimate knowledge of the characters’ lives,” the careful writer’s goal is never to

“pretend to be other than an outsider” (Ross 427). Ross praises Yves Theriault for achieving this stance in his 1958 novel *Agaguk* (tr. 1963), and Chapman credits Gabrielle Roy for the same care in *La Rivière sans repos* (1970, tr. *Windflower* 1975). Both works focus on Inuit central characters. Ross feels that despite his outsider vantage point, Theriault has “thorough” knowledge. The critic goes so far as to claim “[i]t is hard to imagine a more authentic representation of [Inuit] life than this powerful novel, set in the tundra wilderness of the eastern Arctic during the late 1930s” (426-7). But there are contradictions in these critical assertions. If a writer needs never to pretend to be other than outsider, then presumably that is to own up to a limited understanding of the subject viewed. How, then, could another outsider (the critic in this case) know if the writer has transcended that limitation? In 1988 in Canada it was still hard for many to imagine Indigenous stories being told by Indigenous people. But until that began to happen, the truly authentic stories about them were not being told as the people themselves knew them, despite assurances of knowledge and objectivity conveyed by what Frye once called the “radio announcer voice” (245). While praising *The Windflower* in 1975 for its many strengths, Canadian poet Phyllis Webb acknowledged, with a seeming tone of regret tinged with hope, that it would invariably have been a different story if told by an Inuit (Introduction). Indeed, as Margaret Atwood reminded us in 1972, an “imported” white writer “looks at a form of native life alien to himself and appropriates it for symbolic purposes.” Rarely are Indigenous people considered “of and for themselves” (*Survival* 109). The deceptive third person gaze in such cases often

turns backward on the narrator or at least fails to have the full knowledge needed to make the characters truly “of themselves.”

As we have recognized, placing Indigenous people in historical settings, in the Canadian colonial context at least, comes at the risk of appearing to confine them there. At its worst, historical fiction using outsider third person functions like the fabled neutron bomb: it removes the people but leaves their property and creations for us to inherit gratis. Some further examples and discussion will follow, under this first category “in the past and from afar”

For many readers of this century when every week it seems another animal species and stretch of wilderness is disappearing, the second category of “animal stories and nature writing” may feel closely related to the first category in elegiac mood.

Margaret Atwood noted this mood back in 1972 when, in *Survival*, she cited *The Last of the Curlews* (1955) by Fred Bodsworth and *Never Cry Wolf* (1963) by Farley Mowatt as portraying not just the death of the individual only but the death, or at least threatened death, of one or more species. While work in this category deals with animals and aspects of nature rather than Indigenous people, in many cases by various means of association, Aboriginal people are felt to be mediators in the experience, present in spirit at least if not in represented body. Most of the authors writing in this genre also write about Aboriginal people and or Aboriginal lore.

The third category of “appropriated” refers to the un-authorized use by non-Aboriginal authors of Aboriginal stories, cultural themes, or voices. Fourth is the

category of “marginalized,” matching a slot the RCAP calls [minor] “spectators.” Aboriginal people in this form of fiction appear as background figures with clearly no power or particular interest or bearing on the main story. They function as small portions of setting. They may at the same time be in various other slots noted by RCAP: exotic savage warriors, uniquely spiritual people, protestors, or members of the “Indian problem” (drunks, beaters of spouses or children, panhandlers, drug addicts, self-abusers, gang members, other types of criminals, dangerous or otherwise, etc.). The fifth category of “respectful silence,” avoids problems of the previous four by exercising an authorial restraint that may hint at significant Aboriginal presence but does not go further in explicitly showing or exploring it.

The sixth and penultimate category, “pondered and felt,” is where the settler writers seriously ponder and feel the damaged relationship with Aboriginal people. This category involves settler truth and exorcism, a counterpart to Daniel David Moses’ remarkable play *Almighty Voice and his Wife*, which deals with two plains Cree characters, a husband and wife, responding to residential schools, agricultural laws, and other specific forms of colonial oppression. In settler writing, this category may seem quite self-engrossed in various forms of emotional exorcism, but compared to the other categories it is self-aware in confronting historical lies and silences and ongoing colonial oppression affecting everyone.

The seventh and ultimate category—still much more an ideal than reality—finds the author drawing upon substantial personal relationships with Aboriginal people and communities and knowledge gained through the oral tradition as well as familiarity with Aboriginal writing and possibly language(s). To some extent the

author of this fiction has begun to understand and apply a new way of learning as valued in Aboriginal culture. All of this in turn furthers the most important ingredient: listening. One aim of this category is to create fiction that could seem relevant to Aboriginal readers as well as to non-Aboriginal ones. This in itself should further reconciliation. In some sense, this fiction also develops or explores at least one aspect of experience, healing, or action required for true reconciliation (ideally, without sliding into the overtly didactic or preachy). This does not have to mean a story with a happy ending, but it should provide some sort of achieved, legitimate spiritual uplift. While contributing to important disclosure of truth, this fiction offers a further step in the direction of decolonization.

*In the Past and from Afar*

“Most Canadians,” Thomas King wrote in 1990, “have only seen Natives through the eyes of non-Native writers, and while many of these portraits have been sympathetic, they have also been limited in their variety of characters, themes, structures, and images” (*Relations* xi). Historical fictions by settlers that don’t particularly recognize or listen to real Indigenous people often send the limited patriotic notion that Amerindians simply added a colorful layer in a determined national progress to a great new Dominion. Not *all* historical fiction by settler writers featuring Amerindians, it should be mentioned, can be so easily slotted as exemplifying relegation. Under category six below, “pondered and felt,” we briefly examine the following historical works from a truth and exorcism standpoint:

Howard O'Hagan's *Tay John* (1939), Rudy Wiebe's *The Temptations of Big Bear* (1973), George Bowering's *Burning Water* (1980), and Michael Crummey's *River Thieves* (2002). But returning to Thomas King's point about the limitations non-Aboriginal writers face when attempting to narrate Indigenous stories in general and especially when they are in the past, a fairly typical example is Selwyn Dewdney's 1980 children's book for ages 3 – 8, *The Hungry Time*.

The story, occurring “many years ago” near today's Toronto, seemingly before Europeans arrived, tells the story of a young girl and her family dealing with a crisis of food shortage in the midst of bitter winter. Dewdney's treatment is unquestionably sympathetic, drawing as it does upon many years of meeting and working with Aboriginal people as well as knowledge gained through studying and publishing on Indigenous art and culture. The story unfolds as two episodes. The first sees Morning Sky asking to go along on another hunting attempt after everyone has endured three days with no food. Father, uncle, grandmother, and mother all tell the girl she will have to stay with the women. She is too weak from hunger, they point out, and uncle says she is a girl. The first episode resolves when the older men return with deer meat. The girl's brother Beaver Tail has not yet come in; uncle says he is collecting fire wood. After eating, Morning Sky goes looking for Beaver Tail in order to help with the firewood. The second episode deals with the girl's actions when she sees that a bear is close to her brother but has not yet noticed the boy. While the bear is busy digging under a stump, the girl climbs up a nearby tree to a stout branch. From there she hits the bear's nose with a hammerstone she'd thought to put inside her robe. The bear disappears in the bush. In the denouement, though

Grandma still disapproves, even Uncle appears willing to consider letting Morning Star go out on a hunt.

The writer avoids any condescending view of his characters as “primitives,” yet shows the culture’s trust in dreams and intuitive reading of the future (as when Morning Sky sees the hammerstone near the door and takes it along because it makes her feel safe). There is, however, a quaint simple nobility about the characters that feels idealized. All the characters seem generic, with no touches of individuation. The language includes no elements of Mississauga, such as the names that would be used for grandmother and uncle. There is no verbal rhythm equating to the Native language and ways. Readers may long for the small but powerful specifics that would make this situation feel truly authentic.

Perhaps the most notable departure from what we might expect a traditional Indigenous storyteller (female or male) would do is the development of a separate plotline featuring the girl and a theme of late 1970s female empowerment that was so prominent in non-Aboriginal mainstream society. We sense the author’s idea that Grandmother resists change simply because she is programmed by the past. But if Morningstar joins the hunters, there will be four of them and only two others left to handle all the work of three. This feels like balance lost without an idea of how it will be restored. This also feels like a projection onto another culture of the patriarchy problem in white society, which did become an issue for some Indigenous societies but only after contact. Aboriginal people generally say that in their traditional societies, individual variance in gender roles was usually accepted. It

seems a little surprising that Grandmother resists having the girl hunt simply because she is female.

Two similar examples of white individualism concerns projected onto Indigenous material arise in the previously mentioned *Agaguk* (1967) by Yves Therialut and *The Sparrow's Fall* (1967) by Fred Bodsworth. In both novels, an Indigenous man and wife have separated or been separated from their communities after insisting on marrying each other in defiance of what their group prefers for them. Underlying this trope may be the colonial notion that Indigenous people's traditional way of life did not include the emotion of love. Certainly anthropology texts of last century did not hesitate to state this idea as fact. Stories invented by white writers of Aboriginal lovers defying their groups may in some cases be tied to an idea that exposure to a higher value (similar to learning a "better" religion) has emotionally enlightened certain previously primitive people. They realize love for the first time, leading to an interesting European-style romantic drama.

The Bodsworth story includes an element that Cree writer Shirley Cheecho has also presented in one of her own personal stories told in her autobiographical play *Path with No Moccasins*: a reluctance to kill an animal even though survival calls for it (26). Cheecho does not say or clearly suggest what caused her feeling—whether the influence of white teachers or priests or something within herself. Bodsworth shows the problem for his Indigenous character to have come with adopting the white man's religion. Sympathizing with the disruption the hunter has experienced, Bodsworth suggests that overcoming his hunting reluctance is the best and natural solution. As King says, non-Aboriginal writers are sometimes highly

sympathetic to the mistakes of colonialism, such as presuming that what's right for one culture will be right for another or that difference is a matter of superiority and inferiority.

Theriault appears less sympathetic to what he understood as traditional Inuit patriarchy, as his female Inuit protagonist, a rebel against her repressive community, acts out the role of a "liberated woman" that would not emerge in Quebec mainstream society for several years after the novel. Theriault was likely foreseeing and calling for something new in his own society, but consultation with Inuit elders has suggested the repressive group picture Theriault painted was generally not true of traditional Inuit society where considerable gender equality obtained. If he did witness and feel a need to portray patriarchal oppression of women, he might have then also looked into the colonial contribution to it. For the most part, the disrespectful attitude to women sometimes found in Indigenous societies today was introduced by the Europeans.

In Shirley Cheechoo's personal story, her mother told her not to feel sorry for the animals they killed for food in their land along James Bay in the area of Moose Factory. If the girl felt sorry, the animals they needed would stop coming. But she felt sorry for a small beaver that was especially cute. Sure enough the animals stopped coming. At the same time her father couldn't go out to the trap lines as he was experiencing worse pain from a growth on the back of his neck. The plane that periodically flew in did not arrive, so Cheechoo's mother had to operate on her husband without special medical tools or anesthesia. Her father passed out afterwards for about four days. Cheechoo would turn the radio on to her father's

hockey game or favourite country station hoping he'd wake up. She and her brother had to see what they could find in the traps or otherwise for food. Still nothing. All they had to eat was bannock, until the flour ran out. When at last a muskrat came to the trap, she did not feel sorry for it.

The contrasts to the stately, serene Dewdney re-telling of the similar story representing Native people as regally dressed sprites of nature safe in an imagined past are remarkable.

Cheechoo's hungry time story filmed as an NFB dramatization, *Silent Tears* (1998) is highly suitable for younger classrooms. It's the same archetypal hunter-gatherer story of dealing with hunger that Dewdney re-tells, but set in contemporary times where Indigenous people still hunt and trap with rights to continue doing so into the times when the healing is accomplished. There may be damage, but there is survival, healing, adaptation, and transformation. Contemporary settings and Aboriginal voices telling the stories help make that clear. Replacing or at least counterbalancing now archaic Indigenous stories attempted by outsiders with those by people who have lived the stories is a good thing for all, and is increasingly accepted.

#### *Animal Stories and Nature Writing*

Confederation poet Sir Charles G.D. Roberts and writer Ernest Thompson Seton (1860-1946) are generally credited with having created a Canadian genre, the "realistic" animal story experienced from the animal's point of view. In *Survival*, at the heyday of Canadian nationalism, Atwood proposed that these are "victim" stories as opposed to American animal narratives, which are "hunter stories." As far as the

concerns of this paper, one might speculate if the message of the animal stories (almost certain early death) subtly reinforced the vanishing Indian myth, Indigenous peoples being associated in the mainstream imagination with nature and, of course, with vanishing.

In any case, Seton, who grew up in Toronto, seems to have made his personal contribution to the neutron bomb effect with the narrative “how-to” book of Indian crafts, camping techniques, and other forest lore, *Two Little Savages*. It turns out the two little savages are both white boys pretending to be Indians (soon to be a national and international trope). Spending a summer on a farm, they build a teepee and live in it for a month. They learn how to make a fire without matches and numerous other skills. An associate of Lord Baden Powell, the founder of scouting, Seton was himself founder of The League of Woodcraft Indians for non-Indian boys. (Later the Woodcraft League of America would admit girls, but presumably no actual Aboriginal children attended). Seton really knew his wood lore, and as a talented visual artist, he could convey it in print, drawing, and person.

Another of Seton’s associates was Rudyard Kipling. Kipling encouraged Seton to publish the book, and when he did, in 1903, the *New York Times* review highly recommended *Two Little Savages* for a fabulously fulfilling summer. It became a best seller and still has many readers today. A recent internet reviewer observed that the book suggests the ideas of H.D. Thoreau “played out in the lives of two young boys.” At a time of major misery for many Aboriginal people, white boys were getting to experience the imagined, idyllic Indian life in the arms of nature.

One other early author of animal stories and nature writing, of whom there continue to be a good number in Canada, cannot be overlooked: the archetypal Grey Owl. Born in 1888, in Hastings, Sussex, England, to a fifteen-year-old girl whose alcoholic womanizing husband abandoned her, Archibald Stansfeld Belaney was raised by his two maiden aunts. He topped his grammar school class in English but was a restless boy fascinated by North American Indians. He arrived in Canada in 1906 where he would work for some time as a guide and trapper and pursue what historical writer Peter Unwin has called “a double—and very troubled—life.”

On the troubled side were his personal demons --compulsive drinking, violent episodes, bigamy, abandoning wives and children, extreme restlessness and repelling others through isolation or frenetic travel as he kept “searching for a native place in which to live, and to hide” (Unwin “Fabulations” 19). On the good side were his acts of kindness to animals, children, and sometimes even adult people. His writings and lectures on the wilderness proved enormously inspiring and influential within a rising conservation movement between the wars.

By the time Belaney sent his first book for publishing, he had begun to sign himself Grey Owl. Taking things further, he dyed his hair black and coloured his skin with henna to go along with a created story about being half- Apache.

Grey Owl’s third wife Anahareo (the name he gave her), a genuine Indian (Mohawk), observed that the more Archie wrote and spoke, “the more Indian he became in the eyes of the public” (Unwin 18). Apparently unprompted, one newspaper headline proclaimed him as “full-blooded.” The popular association of Indigenous peoples with nature was already a potent part of the collective

imagination—the belief, however subconscious—that “Indians” had the magic and the history to make things right again with the wild.

Grey Owl had not started out as a conservationist. He’d been trapping for twenty years when Anahareo swayed him to recognize the plight of the animals he was killing. The beaver, in particular, was close to extinction, never having had a chance to recover from the ravenous fur trade. As an example of Grey Owl’s popularity and ferocious lecture activity, in 1935 he lectured three and four times a day to crowds so large that police had to control them (Unwin 18). Between November of that year and February 1936, Grey Owl attended two hundred meetings and addressed over 500,000 people (Dawson 400). His second book *Pilgrims of the Wild* (1935) sold 50,000 copies in the UK alone. His children’s book *The Adventures of Sajo and Her Beaver People* (1935), was translated into eighteen languages. John Moss finds Grey Owl breaking every rule of good narration in this book except one: “he holds the reader’s attention.” Unconventional yet captivating in person, he found a way to replicate that power on the page. Moss believes that by the late 1980s, people recognized that Grey Owl was “not a good writer, nor a particularly astute student of nature,” as he once was thought. Despite which, Moss finds his “ingenuous affectation” and “air of inscrutable authority” quite “mesmerizing” (442). In Moss’s view, Grey Owl is an enchanting “genuine accomplished primitive” (443). Unwin thinks less about the old dichotomy of primitive and civilized and considers instead how Belaney appears to court the oral tradition and certain aspects of Indigenous spoken English in working out his style. In Unwin’s view, Belaney developed a new English “free of European sophistication

and American muscle” and thereby hinted at “an honesty” (16), paradoxically so, one might add, given the highly invented persona through which he spoke.

The style like everything else “dramatically rejected the old world, the “world of Europe hell-bound for war and ... machines and tyranny” (Unwin 19). In its stead Grey Owl offered up “a literature which urges the natural world to ‘flower in a truth’ through ‘direct intercourse and sympathy’” (Thoreau qtd. by Dawson 388). As with Thoreau, people would have to radically change their values and ways of life to enter the promised compassionate peace. Dawson questions how the solitary remote pilgrim model would allow communities to live peacefully in nature (400). Regardless of unanswered points such as this, Grey Owl evoked “a peaceable kingdom,” giving readers “an image of themselves as the benevolent subjects of a beneficent nation state (390).” This image, says Dawson, involved “an appreciation of indigenous culture” of true significance, such that Canadians felt they could live, in the words of Grey Owl’s publisher Lovat Dickson, “in love and trust together” (390). A good guide to appreciating how Grey Owl drew this significance is Anishinaabe writer Armand Ruffo’s *Grey Owl: The Mystery of Archie Belaney*, an interweaving of archival research and Ojibway family memories serving an exploration told in poetry, fiction, reminiscence, letters and news reports. As a child, Ruffo had a photograph hung on the wall beside his bed of Grey Owl and Ruffo’s great-uncle Jimmy drumming together in Biscostasing, northern Ontario. Bernie Harder argues that “Archie Belaney’s inner life is a mystery that has its roots in the Native people and community” (338). In a poem called “Jane Espanial, 1923,” an

Ojibway woman dyes Archie's hair. He looks out and sees "wilderness" and "untouched virgin territory" while she sees "their backyard."

Now, several generations after Grey Owl's death, Dawson points to signs of renewed interest in him, his deception and personal demons long since faded. She recognizes this interest arising hand and hand with the "alarming" state of the environment.

Indeed, one has only to consult any environmental sciences journal over the past ten years to read observations such as the following by Paul J Crutzen of the Max Planck Institute for Chemistry, winner of the 1995 Nobel prize in his discipline: "Because of anthropogenic emissions of carbon dioxide, global climate may depart significantly from natural behaviour for many millennia to come (14). The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPPC) estimates that the earth will warm by 1.4 to 5.8 degrees during this century. (Cruz 14) Cruz believes it is appropriate to assign the term "Anthropocene" to the present, in many ways a human-dominated ... epoch... (14). *Anthropocene*—human dominated: the idea returns us to our earlier observation of European settlers with a human-first outlook in contrast to the Indigenous peoples with their understanding of being equals in a web of relations.

Recent articles by Todd J. Braje (August 2015) and Braje and Jon M. Erlandson (Dec. 2013) simply intensify this picture: rising sea levels, greenhouse gas accumulations in the upper stratosphere, forest clearance, landscape modifications, freshwater diversion, accelerating extinction rates, exploding human populations, global collapse of commercial fisheries and marine ecosystems... the age is under

human assault. A defining characteristic, they suggest, is the appearance of radio-nucleotides from atomic detonations. When exactly to define the beginning of the human-dominated era remains a scientific debate, but there is no doubt that as of AD 2000, the effects of all this domination “were first widely recognized by the geosciences community” (Braje and Erlandson).

Canada has been and remains a major contributor to these effects. In the 2007 Canadian edition of his book *Heat: How to Stop the Planet from Burning*, George Monbiot points out that “there is scarcely a whisker of difference between Canada’s greenhouse gas emissions and those of the US and Australia. Not surprisingly, Thomas King’s latest novel *The Back of the Turtle* drives this point home in exploring the aftermath of a man-made environmental disaster wiping out a Native reserve, the result of corporate and government greed and neglect.

In her review of work by “Indian authors” and the importance of “maintaining contact with traditional beliefs and values,” Olive Dickason refers to scientific writers David Suzuki [also a high profile environmental activist] and Peter Knudson travelling the globe to interview elders “about their views on the relationships between humans, animals, and the environment” (128). The resulting book, *Wisdom of the Elders* (1992) appears to have contributed considerably to a growing mainstream sense that “answers to the world’s ever-more-pressing need for a radically different way of relating to our planet’s support systems are to be found in Aboriginal knowledge, based as it is on profoundly intimate relationships with the land and its many forms of life” (Dickason 128-29).

Finding a “radically different way” –ways we are not conditioned to—helps frame the following remarks by Stephen J. Augustine, Hereditary Chief and Keptin of the Mi’kmaq Grand Council :

Indigenous people do not talk about how they are going to save a certain species or how not to pollute a river. Their concept of the world, Mother Earth, is so imbued with notions of spirituality, dreams and emotions that it is understood that the earth is an entity that it is so powerful that it can take care of Herself. (Preface 4)

### *Appropriation*

Earlier in this paper, in a preliminary comparing of worldviews, we noted that “Amerindian cultural knowledge was a carefully guarded individual [earned] privilege that was selectively circulated through the generations, whereas for Europeans it was generally publicly available” (Dickason and Newbigging 34). Appropriation refers to unauthorized adoption and adaptation by outsiders of proprietary Aboriginal stories, cultural elements, and narrative voices. The term respects Indigenous outlook on the matter, just as Indigenous outlook on land title has finally been seriously considered in the last few decades. There are, however, no official “Canadian” laws on the issue. We are left to our own judgement to respect the viewpoint of another culture as well as to consider that it hardly seems right for the “lucky ones” to benefit personally from the cultural wealth of another society when its people have been assaulted, suppressed, excluded and generally left at

enormous disadvantage. The trade in stories and culture has not been exactly fair to both sides.

The term “cultural appropriation” entered Canadian public conversation in the 1980s after non-Aboriginal Alberta writer W.P. Kinsella chose to use a comic and caricatured Native first-person narrator to tell stories about an almost entirely invented quite light-hearted Aboriginal reserve called Hobbema, the name of a real reserve near Edmonton (the colonial name has recently been replaced by Maskwacis, Cree for Bear Hill). As an Edmonton taxi driver, Kinsella had chatted with people from Hobbema but he never visited the community. Kinsella’s first collection of “Hobbema” stories, *Dance Me Outside* (1977), appeared just four years after the first contemporary Canadian Aboriginal literary publication, Maria Campbell’s *Halfbreed*, issued a preliminary wake-up call to a nation. A dim idea that perhaps Aboriginal peoples should have equal recognition to tell their own stories rather than be spoken for by powerful whites draped in academic and national honours was beginning to stir. Ironically, in one of his stories Kinsella lampoons one such figure, Alberta Mennonite writer professor Ruby Wiebe who garnered acclaim for his historical novel *The Temptations of Big Bear* (1973) about the oppressed Cree leader and his equally oppressed people. While satirizing the ongoing colonialism of the situation, Kinsella himself could not escape the contradiction of his own choice of subject. His persistent individualist attitude, in defiance of protests, implied that giving offense is always just a small byproduct of democracy maintaining freedom. The worldviews, as we see repeatedly, are often miles apart.

When personally confronted with the Kinsella controversy, Ojibway writer Drew Hayden Taylor decided to give peace a chance. In the late 1980s he was invited to a writer's conference which Kinsella was attending. Many people, not least of all the media, were looking forward to some drama. The sure-to-be-offended Indigenous party did not oblige. "I'm sure he's a nice man," writes Taylor. "And I'm sure he's as sick and tired of this whole damn thing as I am" (82). At the same time, Taylor concedes that he had read Kinsella's "Indian" stories and seen a problem. "[H]e doesn't write his Native stories with the same kind of love he puts into his baseball tales.... And if there's no love involved in the stories you tell, why tell them?" (80-81)

Taylor's weariness with "the whole damn thing" became a general weariness; new trends superseded the largely academic focus on appropriation. It helped as well that a number of non-Aboriginal writers began to take heed and find responsible, accountable ways to reflect the country's Indigenous history and presence while taking ownership of their own stories (especially the ones hardest to tell). In fact, some today seem to feel that appropriation belongs entirely to a bygone era. That would be ideal, but we still find unwelcome uses of Aboriginal culture and voices in published work, and a number of non-Aboriginal writing students continue to gravitate toward "Indian" stories. The use of third person by a non-Aboriginal writer to spotlight a central Aboriginal character seems particularly hard to shake, perhaps because, as we discussed under category one, it has a reputation of respectability, of suitably acknowledging an outsider stance. Adopting a Native voice after the Kinsella controversy is a more obvious potential offense, but third person raises the

same basic question: does this outsider have the necessary knowledge and awareness to give this story the attention it deserves? As Taylor would say, is there proper love?

One of Canada's most eminent, forthright, and accomplished novelists, Mordecai Richler can be faulted for certain indiscretions and misses in the area of appropriation. His 1963 satire *The Incomparable Atuk* employs an Inuit central character to comment on the universality of narrow ambition as well as to lampoon the fatuous state of arts nationalism at the time in Canada. (This is the book that provides Richler's oft-repeated witticism "world famous in Canada"). Imported to Toronto from the Arctic, Atuk plays the Duddy Kravitz role of amoral riser to the top, though less through personal drive than exploitation of openings created by a new Canadian enthusiasm for multicultural inclusiveness (in Richler's view at the expense of truth and merit). Though Israel blacklisted Richler as an anti-semitic Jew, and he certainly offended members of his own Jewish community with various unflattering satires, Richler was an "equal-opportunity" critic: anyone could be a target. His work makes abundantly clear the racist attitudes and actions that English Protestants and French Catholics directed against Jews. Richler never hesitates to show prejudice and folly. He would certainly argue that to suggest an Inuit man might not succumb to materialistic seduction and put self-interest ahead of the group would be condescending. In the Western tradition of satire, human faults are universal, and groups of people are equally flawed as well as entitled. To withhold criticism, he might say, would be to deny entitlement, the sort of hypocritical superiority exercised by "progressives."

*Atuk* contains some wonderful character observations involving its non-Aboriginal characters, especially the Jewish ones. But Richler simply doesn't have the direct knowledge of Inuit people to make Atuk or his relations believable. The Arctic setting, briefly included, is a similar cipher merely containing a few basic generic facts. The place, character, and culture are essentially a device to point the lampoon of urban Canadian nationalists. Unfortunately, the character of Atuk is then expected to go on working more seriously. But if corruption of character is to occur believably, an Inuit writer or storyteller is needed to understand and show specifically how that would happen. Atuk may be ultimately human like Duddy Kravitz, but he can't appear as virtually his twin. Richler used to observe how demanding it is to write history, because the past is truly another place. With *Atuk*, he didn't seem to recognize that writing about an Indigenous culture imposes a similar or greater challenge.

This blind spot appeared again in a *National Post* column Richler wrote in the 1990s commenting on the increasing use of the term First Nation to refer to small bedraggled communities of shacks. His point, presumably, was not to ridicule ravaged populations but to chide a pretension. Certainly Attawapiskat is not Paris. Six Nations is not the United States—no armies, no spy agencies, no glass-sided multi-storey shopping malls and so on. Aboriginal people hardly needed someone else to point this out to them. As RCAP suggests, Aboriginal people decided they must employ the Western concept of nation to succeed with legal cases. The strategy has worked, so it persists. The word “first” is in any case a profoundly legitimate reminder of historical facts and agreements. The word “nation” insists on recognition

of the relationship expected by Aboriginal peoples, which is that of nation to nation, not of subjects to a largely foreign state that they had no proper say in shaping. Richler understood the roots of movements such as Zionism and therefore could comment on such things with greater depth than on political imperatives for Indigenous peoples. This in turn led him to miss the problems that Indigenous people might have with certain things in his writing. Again the difficulty arises from wanting to understand others entirely according to one's own worldview supported by a strategic story that omits certain essentials of the larger picture. Richler saw Atuk essentially as another ethnic outsider in the newly announced mosaic of outsider-newcomers hustling to become insiders (styled in a European frame). But as RCAP points out, Aboriginal history in no way fits with the mainstream desire to see and treat Indigenous people as "ethnic immigrants." It took an "ethnic immigrant," Michael Ondaatje, to "get" this important truth ahead of many other people in the older mainstreams and communities of newer arrivals, some of whom do not get it, or do not want to get it, to this day.

Richler has also been critiqued for unsuccessfully importing the raven/trickster figure into his later and much more ambitiously serious novel *Solomon Gursky Was Here* (1989). Various previous critics had chided him for sticking to an overly local vision of Canada as primarily his childhood parts of Montreal and his knowledge of Toronto. With *Gursky* he stretched geographically, temporally, and culturally. Now he created Arctic scenes representing the Inuit and Franklin Expedition. Indigenous images penetrated unexpectedly into non-Indigenous scenes elsewhere. Ephraim Gursky, ancestor of the protagonist, is a

curious blend of elements: Jewish, evangelical Christian, and Inuit (insofar as Richler knew the latter primarily from books). The intention seems clear: to depict something of a Grey Owl figure, a European “gone Indian” but proudly and/or unavoidably holding on to ancestral teachings as well. The European part is naturally drawn from Richler’s specific roots. The intention is appealing—to imagine (another) “something that never existed before,” an unlikely cultural hybrid. Perhaps Ephraim is Richler’s concession to the English nationalists of a Canadian symbol: part East-European immigrant, part Aboriginal, part Christian. And if he doesn’t also speak French, he is, at least, in Quebec and can presumably get by “en Français.” But the hybrid idea doesn’t quite come to fictional life, nor do the other Aboriginal motifs making their various appearances throughout. There is a sense of the unbelievable caused by the energy and sureness of parts Richler knows well as opposed to others he has taken from written sources.

In 2005, while she was dean and associate professor of Indian studies with First Nations University of Canada, Wiona Wheeler wrote a valuable article on the social relations involved in Indigenous oral histories. Her advice in this article offers an antidote to appropriation. Learning about Indigenous histories doesn’t really come from books. It comes from a social relationship favoring oral exchange. As with most learning, “[T]he degree of commitment on the part of the student determines to a very large degree the quality and depth of knowledge the student receives” (200). To form a suitable teacher-student relationship, the would-be learner needs to find out about and follow traditional protocols. “Learning how to learn from

another people's point of view is not a revolutionary concept," she acknowledges, "but it is hard work" (204).

Learning in the oral tradition is not about racing into Indian country with tape recorder in hand and taking data. Neither is it about hiring locals to interview old people and supply transcripts for detached academic reflection in the isolated confines of distant offices. If historians take the time to question their motives and goals in doing historical research on the Indigenous past, great strides will be made. (204)

### *Marginalized*

Given the grip of colonialism, this widespread category of "marginalized" is naturally hard to avoid. It refers to stories by settler descendants in which they and their assumptions are the main interest (E.M. Forester's "round" characters) while "flat" Aboriginal characters subsist as background. They may make very brief appearances (walk-on parts, small speaking roles) or appear throughout but always as essentially figures supporting a concern apart from them. There is no question of a relationship.

An example of the unexpected brief-appearance Aboriginal character occurs in Clark Blaise's story "The Belle of Shediac." The protagonist-narrator, a bilingual Anglophone originally from Winnipeg, has been invited to teach an English class at Bordeaux prison, Montreal, to Canada's worst English-speaking killers. Meanwhile, the FLQ (Front de Libération du Québec) have kidnapped the British trade commissioner James Cross. The separatists having "overstepped," Prime Minister

Trudeau in return has “overplayed his hand by clamping the entire country under martial law.” A suspected FLQ collaborator Gilles Lacroix, also a published novelist whom the narrator regards as “our Proust,” is teaching the French-speaking killers.

The narrator is nervous. He reflects on how his class are “killers on the outside who’d also murdered inside the system. He’d been told if the Indians among the prisoners aren’t able to write, let them tell their stories. Jackie Jack, “an Indian” whom everyone respected, even revered, begins telling a story about two dentists from Chicago who hired him to guide. They caught doré and trout, but at the end of the day, they said they wouldn’t pay because Jackie hadn’t kept his promise about how much fish they’d catch. Jackie asked if bait was the problem, and the first dentist complained that it was. “Must have been the bait,” Jackie says, “’cause soon as we chopped him up, them fish started biting like hell, biggest fish I ever seen” (179). Jackie then tells the narrator, “Now that’s the kind of story you don’t read, professor! How’re you going to improve on that?” Everyone laughs, but while the narrator is still thinking of some follow-up ideas to try “squeezing across,” soldiers arrive, baited by the misinformation that the narrator is the terrorist suspect Lacroix. The narrator is hustled away to three days in confinement while the real Lacroix, gets away to France.

On one level the prisoner’s story, an act of anger against the suspicious, ignorant, and arrogant fishermen, is also an act of aggression against the resented “professor” whom he surely suspects of airs of superiority and lack of understanding of life. Given the narrator’s taut state, when it all turns into a laugh, extreme shock of the situation followed by relief, may have opened things for another possible

interpretation of Jackie's story. Early in his own story, the narrator had received a palm reading. Jackie's story seems to extend that prophecy. In a few moments, the narrator will be snatched by the soldiers as bait. Moreover, he will put aside his own thoughts of a writing career to take on a life commission as Lacroix's translator. His old self will die and be used as bait to hook Canadian Anglophones (who generally don't know or read Quebec francophone writers) to discover the Proustian value of Lacroix. The narrator will die and become bait in that he gives over thoughts of his own writing career to translate "our Proust.

Aside from providing this helpful shock and philosophical prediction for the narrator, Jackie Jack also seems to create an effect that places this story, or this part of it, in the "gap" category. Jackie is unexpected. The narrator had not expected to be teaching at a prison. There is an implication that a prison is where he would have to go to find "Indians," especially in Montreal at that time. While this could be read as an unfortunate oversimplification, a social conscience aspect is questioned as well. The narrator was earlier praised as a writer with a social conscience, but here he seems like a character in Margaret Laurence's *The Fire Dwellers* who is struck by the gap between herself and a "broken-down streetwalker... she can sympathize, but ultimately the spectacle of Indian-as-victim embarrasses her: not only is there nothing she can do to help, she can't even identify completely" (118). The woman who had read the narrator's palm, the Belle in this story, is a Lady Luck figure. The narrator has it. He can translate the new "Proust" for the rest of his career. The prisoners, on the other hand, "need [his] help...otherwise no one will listen to them" (171). Born lucky, lucky to be born... does the narrator turn his back or is this just

the way it would be in any case? The fact that this question troubles the otherwise “happy ending” may suggest that Jackie Jack is not entirely minor to the story after all, that Blaise subverts the minor pattern to call from it a major note.

It is clear, however, that the story concerns itself really with the matter of French-English reconciliation. Inasmuch as the “Indian” is unexpectedly considered, it is as a question of social conscience. His problem in this language-related story is lacking “the finer points of self-expression.” While even the narrator realizes that Jackie may be an oral expert, that isn’t what counts in the ongoing affairs of the city and beyond, which is always a dance of French and English.

The story also imprints again the idea of the solitary genius. Lacroix grows so solitary in his retreat that he even renounces the separatists. “A simple resident of Marseille,” he has “no telephone or computer.” He won’t do interviews. The image brings to mind figures such as Mavis Gallant, a Montrealer who sold to the *New Yorker* and lived most of her adult life in Paris. When she turns her attention to dealing with the legacy of atrocity, it is a European one (*The Peignitz Connection*). It seemed the predictable dream of most Canadian writers to escape the provinces, as predictable as wanting, in childhood, to be Indian.

Whereas Ian Ferguson’s novel alerts us to a primal problem in the gap between Native and white, with Blaise, as with so many others tracing back to Hugh MacLennan’s *Two Solitudes* (1945), like it or not, the gap of import is between English and French.

An example of a work in which Aboriginal characters participate throughout yet, in the eyes of some readers, never rise above flat, often stereotypical figures is Brian Moore's *Black Robe* (1985). Moore (1921-99) concerns himself primarily with the missionary aims and turmoil of his central character Father Paul Laforgue who, in the fall of 1635, travels by canoe to his posting on Lake Huron. At a Toronto tribute two years before his death, Moore called Canada a "huge, empty, beautiful yet frightening land" (Canadian Encyclopedia). This outlook can certainly be felt in the highly evocative spell cast by the Canadian frontier novel. The land is, of course, not entirely empty, as Algonquin people escort him on his journey while the Iroquois play the part of blood-thirsty antagonists. But there is a bleakness and terror in so much of the land appearing empty, other than the especially dark spots that hide the Iroquois.

A number of critics have, indeed, compared Laforgue's gruelling and terrifying journey to Marlow's, into the Conradian "heart of darkness." A significant difference at the end of Moore's dark story, as Hallvard Dahle notes, is that Laforgue's ordeal culminates with triumphant if hesitantly expressed personal affirmation. Laforgue, at the ravaged Huron village, manages a true prayer at last: "Spare them. Spare them, O Lord." Some of the smallpox survivors then approach him. "Do you love us?" they ask. He finally answers, "Yes." (224). The "Heart of

Darkness” connection, however, also has relevance from a political angle. Just as Chinua Achebe protested against perceived racist stereotyping embedded in Conrad’s classic, Indigenous readers and critics – joined more recently by non-Aboriginal ones—immediately faulted Moore’s portrayal of Native characters, especially but not only his portrayal of the Iroquois. McGill University historian Allan Greer touches on how oral reaction within Indigenous communities began to make its way to non-Indigenous ears. In a review of Joseph Boyden’s *The Orenda*, which looks at the same episodes in history, Greer refers to the 1991 film version of *Black Robe* (Bruce Beresford dir.): “the film is a bit more balanced than the book, the result, I’m told, of pressure from indigenous cast members during the course of filming!”

Part of the difficulty is that Moore attempted to stylize his Aboriginal characters, for instance, having them use vulgar, obscene insults followed by laughter. Almost certainly intending no offence, and recognizing the barriers of time and culture, Moore appears to have wanted to suggest to contemporary readers how the “savages” came across to the Europeans. He wanted, perhaps, certain conventions of represented otherness that would seem initially strange, even repulsive, but later begin to become “normal” within the new world. But his general approach in this novel is well within the general lines of realism, making his intentions somewhat ambiguous. To Indigenous people, weary of stereotypes, of “imagined” rather than authentic depictions, the vulgar, often “animalistic” portrayals, including a number of points that oral traditions consider inaccurate, are unwelcome. For example, while Indigenous sources generally agree that certain

groups practiced ritual torture, how late this practice lasted is disputed. More pertinently, Aboriginal readers find that the manner in which Moore represents torture reflects a misunderstanding of its role and misrepresents the people involved. Seeking to determine the “truth” opens up the chasm between written claims of Jesuit missionaries (who were hardly disinterested or suitably educated observers) and Indigenous holders of today’s oral knowledge of the past. The concern for this paper raised by questions such as ritual torture is not with which side is more right or wrong in its historic picture but with the fact of a major divide in assumptions and beliefs.

This gap may not have had to be so large for *Black Robe* if its author had expanded his research into the terrain described earlier (under *Appropriation*) by Wiona Wheeler. In his preface, Moore refers to his sources: the historian Francis Parkman (1823-1893), the Jesuit *Relations* (also consulted by Boyden for *The Orenda*), a visit to the Midland, Ontario, site where the Ontario government has “accurately reconstructed longhouses, a village, and the original Jesuit mission established there, and visits to other places in Canada “where records are kept of Iroquois, Algonquin, and Huron history and customs” (ix). He says he also consulted anthropologists and other historians “who have established many facts about Indian behaviour not known to the early Jesuits.” This is fine preliminary research but incomplete. The records he refers to are entirely written ones, by white writers. No Aboriginal knowledge of Aboriginal people is present except as it may have seeped in through a white filter. As Wheeler explains, knowledge is not simply an end result but the way in which it is gained. Moore’s overlooking of this major point helps

explain why his book has had extremely opposite effects. It's clear that his imagined readers were non-Aboriginal Canadian and international ones and his primary concern was the crisis of the Catholic priest.

Had Moore imagined Canada's Aboriginal communities as potential readers and consulted Indigenous oral sources, he may have revised his notion of an empty country as well as a "strange and gripping tragedy that occurred when the Indian belief in a world of night and in the power of dreams clashed with the Jesuits' preachments of Christianity and a paradise after death" (ix). The word "tragedy" implies a final loss, including, for some definitions, a flaw that invites and enables the loss. What happened was more akin to brutal epic slaughter from which there were nevertheless survivors. "Tragedy" again imports the myth of the vanishing Indian, oxymoronically vanished from an already empty land. The Huron language has sadly been lost, but revitalization work is underway, and while some say the Huron culture is lost, it's not clear if people making such claims have consulted the 3,000 or so Hurons now living in Quebec (and others who are in Oklahoma as well as dispersed elsewhere). The differences in knowledge, traditions, and cultural practices between a Canadian white Anglo Saxon Protestant of 2016 and one of 1650 are certainly enormous to the point of staggering, yet we WASPs don't speak of having lost a culture. Even less convincing is the idea that the Indigenous people universally lost their beliefs through the preachments of a religion that made them "cease to be themselves." The editors of *Mixed Blessings* point to living examples of so many Indigenous people who live most fulfilling lives today through a powerful blend of Christianity and traditional Aboriginal spirituality. The unexamined ideas

underlying *Black Robe* help explain why, for some readers at least, such an accomplished international and Canadian writer, often admiringly compared to Graham Greene, has produced a novel in which three different groups of people never rise much above background to his hero's quest.

*In the Silence of*

In her book on how the West German novel tried in various ways to cope with the legacy of the Holocaust, professor of German literatures Ernestine Schlant defines two kinds of silence: silence *about* the atrocity (refusal to become aware, repression and escape) and silence *of* the atrocity (silence born of too much knowledge, of victims or perpetrators). The second silence proposes that certain events are unspeakable, they defy conceptualization. Schlant also asserts, however, that "silence is not a semantic void... the absence of words is ... simultaneously the presence of their absence" (7). Utter silence cannot be maintained.

In Canada, particularly after the emergence of Indigenous writers and criticism of inappropriate representation of Indigenous people by settler-descendants, something like silence *of* the atrocity can sometimes be a sort of respectful reticence. Writers deeply sympathetic to and supportive of Indigenous concerns, may want to find subtle ways to address the history of stolen lands and continuing political and social injustice while presenting non-Aboriginal settings.

Margaret Atwood's "Death by Landscape" could certainly be interpreted along this line. The main incident of concern in this story begins at Camp Manitou where a canoe trip party of girls, including thirteen-year-old Lois and her friend

Lucy, sets off on a canoe trip into what Cappie the camp director calls the “trackless wilderness” (92). “Cheerfulness was required at all times.” The camp had them dress up as Indians at various times, and the mature Lois who narrates the story is bothered about this now. “She knows ... that they should not even be called Indians, and that they have enough worries without other people taking their names and dressing up as them. It has all been a form of stealing” (99). But back in early ignorance, “She wanted to be an Indian. She wanted to be adventurous and pure, and aboriginal.” (100). The canoe trip sets off in high spirits, but the next day, when they stop for lunch, it goes wrong. Lois and Lucy go together up the side of a cliff to a look-out. Lucy has to pee and asks Lois to wait for her, but Lucy never reappears. Searches cannot find the missing girl, living or dead. Cappie interviews Lois with suspicion, suggesting that Lois might have “done something” she wished she hadn’t.

Lois narrates the story of the canoe trip many years later, after her husband has died and the kids have grown up. She moves into a condominium apartment along the Toronto waterfront. It has a “European look” with her paintings crowded along the wall. The pictures, ones she chose, are all rugged wilderness scenes by the Group of Seven, artists who were promoted as the new definition of Canadian. The pictures give her a sense of “nameless unease,” because “[d]espite that there are no people in them, or even animals, it’s as if there is something, or someone, looking back out” (92).

Association of these painters with the 1920s initiative popularizing the idea of the “empty” wilderness and the myth of the vanishing Indian makes it hard not to read into the “haunted” pictures the history of all the people who were displaced and

robbed. The wilderness behind Lois's paintings seems, in fact, anything but "trackless." In addition to myth of the "empty" land, Atwood evokes the old idea of the fearful wilderness. We think of Duncan Campbell Scott confessing to his young wife how on expeditions into the north on DIA business, he would remain close by the fire, afraid of something Demonic "out there." Atwood seems to be suggesting the demon is ourselves and our own fears. Lucy may be out there, too, victim of all that grew up from our strange relationship with the wilderness. The summer of the fatal canoe trip her parents have divorced and she has lost her boyfriend. Her dreams of the previous summer have vanished, and she is clearly depressed. Whatever exactly "happened to her," she appears to be the victim of a sadly damaged society. Thus a story with no Aboriginal people in it can be read as a story dealing with grief and confusion over a badly damaged political relationship, profoundly hurtful to both sides and the forest in between.

Alice Munro takes reticence even further in her story "Meneseteung" as she describes a town with no Aboriginal people (reflecting southwestern Ontario, second half of the nineteenth century) and only one mention of the word 'Indian' (when Almeda, in a rising tide of menstrual distress, drugged high, disillusionment, regret, guilt, and pent-up erotic frenzy, imagines them "naked" 183).

In this story, a southwestern Ontario town newspaper and the central character Almeda as a young woman both represent Schlant's first kind of silence (*about* the real past). The newspaper writes things like the following from a 1904 obituary: "Mr. Jarvis Poulter [one of the founders of our community], possessed a keen and

lively commercial spirit, which was instrumental in the creation of not one but several local enterprises, bringing the benefits of industry, productivity, and employment to our town” (185). Young Almeda writes poems. One of these, called “Champlain at the Mouth of the Meneseteung,” celebrates the explorer sailing down the eastern shore of Lake Huron and arriving at the mouth of the major river. The unnamed narrator, a member of the town who researches Almeda later in the twentieth century, tells us matter-of-factly that belief in this event is popular and untrue. She also comments wryly on the newspaper: hardly a life in town goes by “unevaluated.” The narrator represents Schlant’s second kind of silence (*of the real past*), or at least evokes it. She seems to have gazed into the mirror of the silence of the past and found various coded ways to say what isn’t said. As critic Rowland Smith points out, Almeda’s poem on Champlain expresses the standard myth that “[t]he land of the noble adventurer is shared—through the use of the ‘Indian’ name—with untroubled aboriginal people” (157). Raising the myth in this manner, Munro simultaneously prompts the reader to realize it isn’t true. In truth, the First Peoples have been moved away. So while Munro’s setting exists the century when King believes many whites like to place their romantic and tragic Indians, in this nineteenth century story the subject is unromantic whites.

In her introduction to the anthology that includes “Meneseteung,” Margaret Atwood comments on the “spiritual dreariness” that Munro “anatomizes” in her fictional southern Ontario. The frontier town where Almeda loses her siblings and parents to various illnesses is, indeed, driven by mercantile imperative. Mr. Poulter, who walks home from church with Almeda, can discuss nothing but his businesses,

one of which is salt mines. When Almeda becomes interested in this evidence that a sea was once there, he expresses indifference. When Almeda asks his help in investigating a woman lying in the back street against her fence, Poulter “nudges the leg with the toe of his boot, just as you’d nudge a dog or a sow” (179). After grabbing the woman’s hair to keep her from hitting her head on the fence and ordering her to get up, Poulter says, “Gwan home.” He tells Almeda there’s no point in a doctor.

The street running by Almeda’s front window is “respectable” but Pearl Street, behind her house, is not. Poulter says she “oughtn’t be living so close to a bad neighbourhood.” As in the “Belle of Shediac” and “Village of Small Houses,” there are two directions, up and down, win and lose. There are two behaviours, depending on who you come upon. The gang of boys who rove through the streets in Munro’s frontier down accost prosperous-looking newcomers, offering to direct them or carry their bags for a five-cent piece. “Strangers who don’t look so prosperous are tormented or taunted” (169). After Almeda declines Poulter’s rather cold courting overture and begins turning into “an eccentric,” the local urchins torment her. The town newspaper speculates that the pneumonia causing her death came about after she was chased into the wet bog at the end of the last block of Pearl Street, a block where “no decent woman ever would [walk]” (170).

Without directly stating it, this story has strong connections to other fiction that looks explicitly at the relationship with Aboriginal people. There is a strong mood of guilt in Almeda’s thoughts about the woman who is beaten unconscious behind her house. As she listened to the beating, Almeda heard a drunken crowd

yelling out as if the spectacle is “something they didn’t quite believe but were powerless to stop” (177). This might perfectly describe the mind of many Canadians over the years when catching some reference to “Native news.” Finally, as Almeda finds herself falling out of the conventional life she expected to live and is expected to live, she thinks to herself that she hadn’t really thought that “tombstones could hurry down the street... and neither does she mistake anything else for reality, and that is how she knows that she is sane” (184). The romantic and conventional ideas that inspired her early poetry have fled, and with them, discreetly, susceptibility to wicked myths about our shared history. While Munro’s story doesn’t anatomize the relationship with Aboriginal people, it shows the *effects* on settler descendants of the choices settler society has made, of the manner in which they “came aboard.” This takes us back to the relationship—what now, and how?

### *Pondered and Felt*

This category designates fiction which deals in some essential, sustained way with the settler-Aboriginal problem (the misnamed ‘Indian’ problem) and in which the writer, recognizing a disturbing gap between received history and truth and an unjust gap between contemporary Indigenous and non-Indigenous lives, reflects the problematic questions raised while trying in some way to come to personal terms. The works here tend to emphasize the past (the wrongs committed) and the present (the distance felt and the settler-descendants’ responses). There is often a strongly felt psychological and even spiritual dimension of exorcising or attempting to

exorcise the emotions of disbelief, denial, devastation, guilt and mourning. Complicating emotional responses may include trying to “write right,” casting or deflecting responsibility (excessive judging), and melancholia (what Daniel David Moses calls “dancing around the wound”). There may be some sort of healing or coming-to-awareness journey. According to response, we can recognize certain tendencies and even distinct subgenres of this category: five examples are historical reassessment, violent confrontation, partners, existential relations, and mythologizing.

Five example novels under this category use historical settings. Two of these, however, will be considered under other subgenres because they depart in significant ways from conventional historical style. The three novels we will now touch upon under “history” are *The Temptations of Big Bear* (1973) by Rudy Wiebe, *The Englishman’s Boy* (1996) by Guy Vanderhaeghe, and *River Thieves* (2001) by Michael Crummey.

Writing about Aboriginal people in Rudy Wiebe’s fiction, Janne Korkka notes that his first novel (*Peace Shall Destroy Many* 1961) concentrates on a prairie Mennonite community, but Aboriginal communities lie nearby (352). Referring to Bakhtin’s ideas about independent voices engaging in a text, Korkka finds that “[i]n Wiebe, meaning arises from interaction, not seclusion” (354). In Wiebe’s first novel, although the self-contained Mennonite community doesn’t seek real outside contact, “the young protagonist finds that as he seeks to understand more about his surroundings, the margin is actually where he needs to look” (352). As with the case of Ian Ferguson’s *A Village of Small Houses*, it seems that an author’s childhood

awareness of real Aboriginal people, far more likely to occur on the frontiers and rural “remote regions” than in Toronto or Montreal, spurred a form of fictional attention. In Wiebe’s case, most of his work over forty years (twelve books and numerous stories, articles, and essays) has involved the First Nations or Métis.

Korkka provides an effective summary of the novel about Big Bear:

*The Temptations of Big Bear* reimagines the story of the Plains Cree chief ... beginning with his refusal to select a reserve as required by treaty and by Canadian expansion in 1876. The story reaches its climax with the defeat of the subsequent Native uprising and Big Bear’s imprisonment in 1885, despite his refusal to take part in the hostilities.

The novel concludes with his death in 1888.

Korkka observes that Anishinaabe author Lenore Keeshig-Tobias, author of a much quoted essay “Stop Stealing Our Stories’ (1997) and firm advocate that non-Aboriginal authors are not capable of assuming an Indigenous voice, believes Wiebe has helped to promote a better understanding of Indigenous culture (365). But Korkka also feels, as do many readers, that despite Wiebe’s research and effort to imagine the Other, his Big Bear seems to think and behave more like a Mennonite than the nineteenth century Cree man we might imagine (365). The general category of fiction we are discussing here, stories concerned to show explicit gaps and ponder their underlying problems, by no means marks the end of representations shaped by non-Indigenous projections. In fact, in this category Indigenous characters become even more the explicit reference points for white issues. In gathering his information, one senses that Wiebe did not extensively apply Winona Wheeler’s

recommended approach. While *Big Bear* contains portions where point of view seems fairly neutral and the Bakhtinian intent comes forward, at other times a very European declamatory voice (somewhat in the individualist mould of Faulkner or Lawrence) erupts and the style shifts radically toward an effort to break some barrier with the sheer force of unexpected rhetoric. At such times, we feel the author's urgent desire to write right. Rather than simply confirm the outsider viewpoint, the declamatory voice distracts from the story. Following is an undeniably rousing example in which Wiebe captures some of the frenzied settler activity paradoxically devoted to building "fixed addresses." Just to see the white men "was to be battered bloody."

They never had rest. Surveyors sticking in poles with wires and government agents sending messages and missionaries talking to stop and settlers ripping up land and knocking down trees and wolfers dashing about scattering poison and killing wolves and buffalo. Even the police were always packed down under things they had to do right now, to go, to make some person do something.... [T]hey built houses that couldn't move and yet they seemed always moving placelessly—many times, and inevitably it ran him into that hemmed in ache. " (101)

As a result of all this littering of houses and digging in the ground, more surveyors push forward, more settlers follow: "Suddenly white madmen poured in like sand and ripped and hacked and rooted the land until everything was dead, not even a worm could live there afterwards" (Wiebe 89).

Other such passages simply seem self-conscious and awkward. One senses at times the goal of exorcising: the lyric and manifesto rant as therapy. A related possible detraction is the apparent anger and judgement directed at Europeans. Wiebe has said that he aimed to “battle ... against all the variegated and clotted ignorance of myself and my people about our past” (qtd by Higginson). Battling can sometimes become carried away and compromise the fairness of fiction. On this question, certain critics have found that Wiebe alters his white historic models to their disparagement. Critic Catherine Higginson also suggests that Wiebe’s works “slip into reification of imperial stereotypes of Native women.” In any case, a number of characters in *Big Bear*, white and Indigenous, seem somewhat lacking in depth and interest. Critical assessments of *Big Bear* as literature have always been quite far apart. Its narrative aims are ambitious and not always concerned with plot or even character in the conventional sense. Some critics have extolled the work as a masterpiece. Without doubt, *Big Bear* significantly widened a conversation in Canadian literary and reading circles concerning the historical path toward contemporary colonialism.

Guy Vanderhaeghe’s *The Englishman’s Boy*, adds to critical reappraisal of colonial behaviour the added dimension of mythologizing through Hollywood dreams. In 1873 in Whoop-up Country [FN Fort Whoop-up] along the Canada/US border, Shorty McAdoo (the Englishman’s boy) participates in a raid in which an Aboriginal girl is taken prisoner. The raiders later burn and rape her. Though McAdoo didn’t participate in the crimes, neither did he try to stop them. He carries his burden of secret guilt into the future, where Hollywood awaits. In the novel’s

second plot, Saskatchewan born and raised Harry Vincent (another sort of drifter) becomes a writer for Mr. Chance, an epitome of the dream-obsessed movie mogul. Mr. Chance wants to make “history written in lightning (101).” Chance has noted down all the Hollywood directors and producers who were born outside America. He wants to take American movies back from them. In a lovely irony, he shares this goal with a Canadian, blind to there being any difference. Nor is he concerned with the ambiguous location of Shorty’s border experiences (did the experiences occur in Canada?). Chance intends to make “the American Odyssey” (109), to knit the country into a powerful whole. He thinks Shorty may be his Odysseus, and will pay for memoirs. Of course, stories about brutal treatment of Indigenous people won’t match Mr. Chance’s needs. As Elizabeth Burstein has pointed out, Chance’s “artistic licence” becomes a raid on American history, “a violent act that figuratively repeats the raid” revealed by Shorty’s [final] confession. Chance, in fact, goes further with his new mythology. He adds a blame-the-victim defense, telling Vincent that “the Indian tribes could not face the facts.” He insists that “they brought [destruction] down upon themselves..... [I]n the world we face at this moment, we must keep strong. Only the strong will survive” (205). Keeping strong, the reader understands, is code for denying truth and replacing it with self-serving lies that transfer blame to victims.

As well as linking colonial abuse with the myth-making function and rising new mercantile empire that presents itself as a nationally spiritual land of lone heroes triumphing over the odds, Vanderhaeghe’s skillfully written novel also exposes the Canadian role of judging Americans as morally inferior while quietly

participating and benefitting thereby. Vincent, like Shorty during the raid, is in the position of tolerating an act of violence. Vincent even begins to assisting with it. After all, he wants to be a success in the film trade, and Chance's name offers an important reminder: born lucky or lucky to be born.

Newfoundland writer Michael Crummey grew up in Buchans, a small mining town near Red Indian Lake in central Newfoundland. In an interview, he discussed his deeply felt tragedy about the extinction of the Beothuk, *River Thieves*:

Many of the pivotal events that shaped relations between the Beothuk Indians and European settlers (including the kidnapping of Mary March and the murder of her husband in 1819) took place on that lake. Some sense of those stories has been a part of my life as long as I can remember, and I expect that the same is true to a greater or lesser degree for most Newfoundlanders.....

As I began doing research, I was drawn more and more to the story of the Peytons, who played a central role in most of the interactions with the Beothuk in the decades leading up to their extinction. I was surprised by the starkly different attitudes father and son displayed towards the Beothuk. And I began writing a story that might account for some of those differences.....

I was hoping the novel would give some sense of the enormity of that loss [the extinction of the Beothuk], and of the surprising (and somehow appalling) intimacy of the interactions between the Beothuk and the

Europeans in those last decades. But I felt it would be wrong to write a novel about the Beothuk — to write as if we know more about them than we do, or to try to give them a voice that is absent from the historical record. Their absence, to my mind, is the point. The Beothuk are a shadowy presence in *River Thieves*, just as they are in what we know of the past....

The European characters in the novel, the settlers, are completely unable to communicate with one another, even when they have the best of intentions. Their interactions are based on false assumptions and bias and half-truths and misunderstandings. And the consequences of this — sometimes unforeseen, sometimes not — are usually heart-breaking.

*River Thieves* presents the settlers as no less contributors to the atrocity that follows them than are the settlers in *Big Bear*; nevertheless, they are complex, often sympathetic people, even those with deep-seated prejudice. The humanity of these figures who are in various ways inter-wound with the Beothuk and their inhumane disappearance adds to the genuine tragedy. The interviewer did not ask Crumme the difficult question, “How did you feel about writing what could be seen as another “the last of...” frontier novels?” “In this case, it would be understandable for the writer to reply, “What else could I have done?” Like Shorty in *The Englishman’s Boy*, John Peyton, Sr. attends a brutal episode, but, in his case, he’s an initiator and crazed participant. Yeas after the episode, his anguished cries from his bedroom

upstairs as the Night Hag visits him in his sleep open the novel and haunt its pages till the end.

Violent confrontation of all sorts—physical, linguistic, emotional, and psychic-- operate in perhaps all the fiction discussed in this paper. The subgenre “violent confrontation” of the present broader category refers to novels in which violent deeds driven by protest, resistance or perhaps desperation, despair, pride, resentment, frustration or vengeance drive the plot.

M.T. Kelly's *A Dream like Mine* (1987) takes place in northern Ontario, near Dryden where in “real life” as well as the novel, the mill has been dumping mercury into the water system. Concerns from the local Indigenous people continue to be ignored. Critic J.A. Wainwright offers a close reading of the story as the education of its journalist-narrator in “the need to remake yourself all your life” (257). At the start of the novel, attending a sweat at the Ojibway reserve, the narrator sneers to himself that the place is not exactly squalid but still a mess. He imagines himself meeting the Natives like Samuel de Champlain and “is comforted by his memories of ... 19<sup>th</sup> century paintings of Indians, canvases by [Canadian artists] George Caitlin or Paul Kane” (257). The narrator needs to shed his superiority complex, romanticizing, and non-involvement. Arthur, a young Métis man with a “long gargoyle face,” is on hand to deliver the necessary brutal shocks. In reaction to the poisoned water system, Arthur kidnaps Mill manager Bud Rickets and the journalist-narrator.

Although Arthur is cast in a brutal role, killing two RCMP officers as well as torturing both prisoners, Wainwright argues that his constant unpredictability works as

a strategy to prevent any easy binary style stereotypes. The narrator knows that ninety percent of Indigenous peoples in the Americas are estimated to have died from disease and genocide between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. American soldiers played catch with the severed breasts of Navajo women, a people “so exhausted and depressed they ceased to procreate in order not to beget slaves” (*Dream* 90). What goes around, comes around, the story seems to be reminding us. Indeed, nine years after this novel was published, the RCAP included with its report a strong caution against continued neglect of treaty agreements, fundamental rights, and dire needs in Aboriginal communities; the result of inaction could be violence, as people were growing tired of endless waiting. But for the narrator, although he is badly injured from his ordeal, it has broken down his knee-jerk reliance on the Western worldview and written history (We are victims of our own mythologies” (*Dream* 102). The novel suggests that he has accepted “the abiding integrity of Arthur’s violence” (257) and has lost his detached, uncaring attitude, as summed up by a past friend who “didn’t want to think anymore about the Indian situation because it was too damn tragic: nobody could do anything for them; it was too late for them to do anything for themselves” (*Dream* 90).

Drawing from Ojibway traditions, certain mysterious or supernatural events occur in this novel, such that it could well be classed with the final grouping of mythical realism. For many readers, however, the work’s violence and suspense are likely to fill the foreground. Wainright’s analysis seems spot on as far as identifying the points the author wished to make. However, these points have the manner of an essay as opposed to the mystery of fiction (despite their sometimes supernatural

expression). There is no humour and the characters may seem more schematic than believable as individuals. During his captivity the narrator thinks only about points clearly related to the theme of the novel and what his “dire predicament” seems to be trying to teach him. He appears to have little or no life outside. A preachy effect may result for some readers. Critic Terry Goldie appears to agree. In a review of the novel the year it appeared, he called it “an interesting example of what happens when a white author obsessed with ‘getting it right’ tries to write right himself.”

#### MURPHY AND *THE BLUE GOLD*: IN THE NAME OF TRUST AND TOMORROW

What would we think, what would we feel, asks the RCAP if the things that have been done to Indigenous people in this country had been done to us. In his review of *Conversations with a Dead Man* on Duncan Campbell Scott, Keith Smith praises the book for reminding us that “while it is easy to blame particular individuals for past and present injustices, we must all assume responsibility for educating ourselves regarding the situations.” Winona Wheeler has talked about one very important form of that education: learning orally from Indigenous people and learning other ways to learn that help bring the Aboriginal worldview somewhat into personal reality. Bernie Harder, a white professor of English who studies and teaches Indigenous literature, which “can create doorways for better understanding,” stresses the importance of recognizing the different worlds of Aboriginal culture. “...[F]reeing

our minds and relationships from stereotypical concepts requires respecting indigenous peoples and experiencing life with them just as they are. This approach might make it possible to challenge the colonization that affects all of us, whether we are aware of it or not” (336). It’s not too late for a second try at the relationship, says RCAP. It’s not too late for a new start.

My hope with Murphy and *The Blue Gold* is to continue educating myself in these ways – experiencing life with Indigenous people, reading Indigenous literature—to complete a story that will have meaning for both sides of the Canadian divide and contribute to a newly emerging body of fiction aspiring to decolonization through a return to relationship building. Most of the writing on this topic by white writers to date—as evidenced by Abley’s book--has been non-fiction, if one accepts the distinction made previously between categories six and seven of settler-descendant writing on the relationship. Perhaps the simplest way to express the distinction is to ask, would this work interest and offer value to Indigenous communities or at least to some of its members? Is it made accessible to them within the process of decolonization? This aspiration trusts that to some extent, as discussed previously, in some way, fiction can cross into life and convey new value for that life, such as an apology, recognition, and attempted reconciliation embodied in a story. “... the very existence of the Holocaust ... imposes a redefinition not only of art but of humanity and of the world that humanity created” (Schlant 9). The same applies surely after the atrocity of removing ninety percent of a peoples’ population across an entire continent.

Murphy's experiences not only begin to acquaint him [and readers lacking the knowledge] with Indigenous history and the often overlooked fact that we are all treaty people; his experiences also give him a taste of various ordeals Aboriginal people have endured and remove any idea that Aboriginal people are vanishing any more than the rest of us. Canada was not settled primarily in a heroic manner. Having a certain dislike for aspects of his own society, Murphy has a natural predisposition toward aspects of Indigenous worldview; his experiences deepen this sympathy, though in conflict with other ideas and aspects of personality.

A certain part of Murphy's story no doubt involves exorcising of the emotions and demons involved in recognizing his lineage with colonizers. As he grows older, will guilt turn forward looking as responsibility and, if so, how? There is a healing and education process involved, yes (for most of the characters, in fact). Rosemary Chapman points out, however that settler descendants are in an "ambivalent position... partly complicit in and partly resistant to the process of assimilation" (*Between Languages and Cultures* 245). In this sense, settler descendants embody both sides of the colonizing process. This duality may be taken as one of several splits alluded to in Murphy's division into the two Murphys, the one who travels to 2172 and the other who remains behind to attend Camp Kisisokôe in the summer.

In any case, the personal journey aspect of this story is meant to be a moderately proportioned part of the whole. Its primary intention is to provide the accountability of context: reveal the teller of the story and his regional history and relationship. Different colonial complexities emerge and must be understood

according to each region (and time period). The Murphy/*Blue Gold* story in its bigger picture is about the clash between historical truths informing contemporary realities with the myths and ongoing politics of self-serving lies, exploitation, and predation. It is time for those on different sides of the historic colonial divide to join hearts and minds against the ongoing divide-and-conquer strategy of self-interest, power-mongering, and exploitation. For that to happen, past injustice must be resolved and relationships renewed.

### MÉTROPOLE (MONTREAL)

Though *Métropole* in my portfolio work is a fictional reconstruction with some important differences from Montreal, it is in ways quite closely based on the actual Canadian city in Quebec, Canada, where I grew up. Over 350 years old (young by European standards, old by North American ones), the city has provided the setting in hundreds of twentieth-century works of poetry and fiction. From 1885 to 1985, around six hundred French-language novels were published (Demchinsky and Kalman) 9. Without claiming to know close to the entirety of this work, I feel confident in my surmise that none presents the story of a boy time-travelling into the Montreal of the future at a time when the former Canada is being returned, at least ostensibly, to Aboriginal peoples and people of other ethnic descents are being repatriated to their home countries.

Montreal was home base for the fur trade, and in 1676 Kanien'keha:ka (Mohawk) converts, originally from New York State, moved from their La Prairie

relocation to a Jesuit Mission on the south shore of the St. Lawrence River at the foot of the Lachine Rapids. This is where the now canonized Kateri (Catherine) Tekakwitha spent the last years of her life. In 1719 the mission re-located for a fourth and final time to its present south-shore site across from Montreal. In 1924, when Saul Bellow was nine-years-old, the future Nobelist in literature left Lachine with his parents for Chicago. The editors of *Storied Streets* reprint this description from Bellow's *Herzog* of the child protagonist in the toilet of a moving train heading west from Montreal:

The train crossed the Saint Lawrence. Moses pressed the pedal and through the stained funnel of the toilet he saw the river frothing. Then he stood at the window. The water shone and curved on the great slabs of rock, spinning into foam at the Lachine rapids where it sucked and rumbled. On the other shore was Caughnawaga, where the Indians lived in shacks raised on stilts. Then came the burnt summer fields. (qtd. by Demchinsky and Kalman Naves 211)

Gabriel Roy referred to the “unknowability” of women from this reserve and described them as “cunning and still deeply mysterious ...hang[ing] around with their “cheap mass-produced goods” (qtd. by Chapman, *Between Languages* 227). Poet A.M. Klein expressed similar ideas and feelings in his poem “Indian Reservation: Caughnawaga”:

Childhood, that wished me Indian, hoped that  
one afterschool I'd leave the classroom chalk,  
The varnished smell, the watered dust of the street,  
to join the clean outdoors and the Iroquois track.

.....

With what strange moccasin stealth that scene is changed!

.....

With French names, without paint, in overalls,

Their bronze, like their nobility expunged,-

In contrast to these expressions of pity and dismay, Joseph Mitchell provided a far more observant and open sketch of the reserve and some of its members in "The Mohawks in High Steel," included in Edmund Wilson's *Apologies to the Iroquois* (1959). For the last pages of his article, Mitchell turns the narration over to high-steel worker from Caughnawaga Mr. Diablo. Mitchell joins Diablo in his booth in the Nevins, "small and snug, plain and old, one of the oldest saloons in Brooklyn" (30). Diablo has had a letter from his wife who is "sick and tired of begging [him] to come home." His problem is that he does and doesn't want to go back. There's so much he prefers in Brooklyn yet so much he misses. Mitchell has surely used a tape recorder, for the very real-sounding individual voice leaps from the page. After describing the complexities and lives of the steel-workers in detail, Diablo says one of the things he looks forward to when he gets back to the reserve is attending a

longhouse festival. If he has to join to do so, he'll join. The he tells a story about the last time he was home:

[T]he longhouses were having a festival. I decided I'd go to the Catholic graveyard that's right below the longhouse and hide in the bushes and listen to the music. So I snuck up there and waded through the thistles and the twitch grass and the Queen Anne's lace, and I sat down on a flat stone on a grave of an uncle of mine, Miles Diablo, who was a warwhooper with the Miller Brothers 101 Ranch Wild West Show and died with the pneumonia in Wheeling, West Virginia in 1916.... (35)

Diablo tells about more relatives in the graveyard, including his father he hardly knew who was killed "when the Quebec bridge went down." The high-steel men buried there don't have stones on their graves but lengths of steel girders made into crosses.

So I was sitting on Uncle Miles's stone, thinking of the way things go in life, and suddenly the people in the longhouses began to sing and dance and drum on their drums. They were singing Mohawk chants that came down from the old, old Red-Indian times. I could hear men's voices and women's voices and children's voices. The Mohwak language, when it's sung, it's beautiful to hear. Oh, it takes your breath away. A feeling ran through me that made me tremble; I had to take a deep breath to quiet

my heart, it was beating so fast. I felt very sad; at the same time, I felt very peaceful. I thought I was all alone in the graveyard, and then who loomed up out of the dark and sat down beside me but an old high-steel man... one of the soreheads, an old man that fights every improvement that's suggested on the reservation, whatever it is, on the grounds it isn't Indian—this isn't Indian, that isn't Indian. So he said to me, "You're not alone up here. Look over there".... (35-6)

Diablo saw a white shirt in among the bushes in one spot, a cigarette gleaming in the dark in another. The old man said, "Every night there's a longhouse festival, they creep up here and listen to the singing. It draws them like flies." Diablo said he might possibly join the longhouse, but the old man said it was out the question for him. He'd be excommunicated and couldn't be buried in holy ground and would burn in Hell. Diablo said to him, "Hell isn't Indian."

It was the wrong thing to say. He didn't reply to me. He sat there awhile—I guess he was thinking it over-and then he got up and walked away. (36)

This passage has added value for us today knowing that Khanawake is now filled with longhouse ceremonies and traditions. Montreal offers this sort of life and history all across the city, and I hope to capture something of the essences though I've reconfigured details. As historian Allan Greer mentions in his review of *The*

*Orenda*, “deep currents of mysticism pervaded the New France missions.” Certain newcomers looked on Montreal as a future City of God, in a profound, non-sectarian sense. Regardless of the church or belief system, a man may change his traditional clothes for overalls with no loss of spirit. Montreal exemplifies this truth, in fact, as it quite famously mixes seventeenth century buildings with contemporary glass towers. Its own spirit is one of considerable adaptability.

Yet despite how successfully the Khanawake community adapted through the high-steel work, as the above descriptions indicate, the community was out of the city’s eye, give or take some literary laments. In the large district where I grew up, *Nôtre Dame de Grace* (*Nôtre Dame de Croyance* in Murphy’s story), no one saw a Native person, or if you did, you didn’t know it. Murphy has seen one without realizing it, as he will later discover that Black Jacket, part of the “Sixties Scoop, has been adopted into Malachi Blobinsky’s household. No one is likely to anticipate a story that starts in a 1961 park in Montreal will concern truth and reconciliation. Montreal is where you set stories about French-English relations, or immigrant experience (some of which do play a part in my story). One of the important concerns I hope to include is how other political involvements, such as French-English politics, complicate truth and reconciliation and threaten to postpone it forever.

The absence of Indigenous people who are really there but not seen is also relevant to the Cold War tension occurring with the Cuban Missile Crisis and its high risk of nuclear war. John Ralston Saul has argued that if we lived more

according to Indigenous worldview than our own, its unlikely we would be facing two grave dangers of nuclear war and environmental catastrophe.

When the story opens Murphy has his sketch-book, which he can carry in the special pouch his mother sewed onto his jacket. Soon to set off on an exotic journey where he will draw pictures of people, including many First Nations people, Murphy is something of a Paul Kane figure. Though Kane set off on his frontier drawing adventures from Toronto, nevertheless it was a large urban centre. Ironically, unlike the girl in “Death by Landscape,” the boy in “Over Here,” or the poet in “Reservation: Caughnawaga,” Murphy doesn’t long to be an Indian. Canadian ideas have been supplanted in his mind by Chicagoan Edgar Rice Burrough’s fantasies of mythical Africa, a country he never wanted to visit as it might destroy the romance.

The time travel shoes would seem to relate to Indigenous culture only by opposition, as they are so European. They are of Montreal in their sense of “sexy fashion” and social positioning. Today especially it seems that the one article of clothing people invest in most heavily is their shoes. This may be tied to the marketing around athletic shoes as propelling the great stars, many of whom come from black communities where poverty is a pulverizing part of life. In the right shoe, the ghetto boy soars right out of the neighbourhood. There is an inside Indigenous joke attached to the shoes, though. In Khanawake, people talk about taking a Nike approach to self-government: just do it. The community has been doing just that, making and implementing its own laws with no thought of seeking Ottawa approvals. The more serious indigenous connection with the shoes is that they operate in conjunction with a form of psychometry—the traveller holds an object

belonging to someone in a place and time the traveller intends as destination. This is a process Ruby Redshirt, a physicist, had been working out with her husband's sister, a biologist.

The real Montreal also suggested the idea of false directions in Métropole. Montreal is said to be the only city in the world where the sun sets in the north. As a child I used to puzzle about this a good deal, without being sure it shouldn't set there. Montreal simply calls the north the east and so on. I decided the reason could be that the city's mythical founder, Maurice Bonpelier (whose wife is as ardent a mystic as he is a money-man) claims he has found the mystic cave of his wife's visions back in France. The vision told her that near the cave would be built a City of God and prosperity. The cave that Maurice finds is in the west. Marie Bonpelier's vision revealed a cave in the north. So the new city officials call the west north and go forward with their money-making ventures as fast as they can. There is a sense in which Montreal resembles Guy Vanderhaeghe's Mr. Chance. The dreams become the realities. Jacques Cartier can be known to have experienced a happy first meeting with the Indians, but his having ignored their request not to sail further up the river or then kidnapped a number of the villagers isn't mentioned. Blundering in this sort of falsehood translates nicely to a bunch of European settlers not knowing where the sun really sets or in which direction they are heading. It might also be reminiscent of mistaking \_\_\_ for India, in short, being lost. One other thing about the cave is story that the local Indians—who may or may not have existed—have put a spell on the true cave, which has yet to be discovered. Local Indians who mysteriously vanished. In the real Montreal, the French and English bicker over where the old village of

Hochelaga, which was apparently present when Jacques Cartier arrived but gone by the time of Champlain, really existed. The English reason that it was in their part of the city. The French wave that idea away. It was in their part of the city. This seems more important than trying to determine what might have happened that the village disappeared. Each side in the endless squabble between French and English wants to lay claim to owning an Indian ghost village while neither seems interested in seeing or tending to a flesh-and-blood one.

### CAMP KISISOKÔE

In the lake district north of Métropole, Camp Kisisokôe for boys from mainly elite homes carries on the legacy of Ernest Thompson Seton. The boys listen repeatedly to the camp motto from Henry David Thoreau: “Rise free from care before the dawn and seek adventure. Let the noon find thee by other lakes and night oe’er take thee everywhere at home.” Founded around the same time as Margaret Atwood’s “Camp Manitou” (“Death by Landscape”), if more “genteel” and lavish, Kisisokôe shares with Manitou the same penchant for “Indian” names and for imitating and gesturing to the “imaginary Indian.” This is the last place one would ever expect to meet a real, live Indigenous boy. Most Indigenous families at the time could not possibly have afforded the camp and most would have seen it as generally ridiculous.

Murphy’s parents could not afford the camp, either. They are barely getting by, and what little they can put aside each month the boy’s mother Viola has earmarked for her dream of moving them up the street to the next more socially

elevated block. In one of his periodic fits of philanthropy, their landlord, who owns the city's legendary National Hockey League team the Patriotes, has insisted on treating Murphy and his neighbour George Deschamps (his first name is spelled English though he is French) to summers at camp. Since neither boy fits in, they end up in a circle of other misfits or iconoclasts, including Widmark, a black boy from New York State who has some Cherokee blood. The real surprise, however, is Adrian, a French-speaking Algonquin boy around Murphy's age. The camp director Mr. Meritte has engaged Adrian's father Jack as a guest expert, to teach a class in building a birchbark canoe. It is to be a way for them to learn a little about actual Aboriginal people. In this plot development, there is a strong element of the "gap" story such as Margaret Laurence's "Loons." The community Jack and Adrian come from, on a lake north of the camp, where the boys go on canoe trips, refused to sign a treaty and are therefore regarded as squatters on their own traditional land. They consider it unceded territory with Indian title. They are far from schools and other services. A nearby military base and dam contribute to water pollution. The community must use expensive gas burning generators for electricity and wood for heat. Jack and his sisters were in residential school, the girls for one year, Jack for longer. He went on to get a teaching degree and gained wider recognition as an athlete. Murphy's tentative, sometimes bumpy but developing friendship with Adrian marks the beginning of his glimpses into Aboriginal lives and history.

The Murphy who attends camp goes on to become the Mr. Letourneau who appears on *The Blue Gold* when he is forty years old. He has completed university, married Angelique Lecoup from up the block, taken a job as commercial artist with

the nationalized electric company, separated from Angelique, and fallen into a major depression before coming into possession of the shoes (plot details explain these seemingly strange and contradictory events) is the Mr. Letourneau. He is experiencing it for the first time at forty years old. In this split-person condition there is an avenue, I think, for the emotional and identity repercussions inherent in facing effects of the colonial program of which one has been a part, for dealing with some of the psychological dynamics seen in the category six fictional examples.

Camp, which the young time traveller Murphy did also experience the summer previous to receiving the strange shoes, has provided at least some preliminary wood lore skills, which will prove essential to the young Murphy's challenges when abandoned on the river in 2172.

## TWENTY-ONE SEVENTY-TWO

Is there is “a new form of the historical novel defined by its relation to future as much as to past?”

- Frederic Jameson, *Antinomies of Realism*, 305

I believe the answer to Frederic Jameson's question is a resounding “yes.” The truth and reconciliation enterprise, for example, must be at one with the future as it sorts out the past. It is essential to foresee ongoing challenges ahead as well as insist on a prevailing presence that colonialism cannot destroy.

Aboriginal people have frequently decried the general neglect of their representation in stories set in the future or else a return of the worst “Indian” stereotypes, such as one finds in a great deal of popular science fiction. It seems that the narrative of vanishing wants to persist by erasing future Aboriginal presence. The Aboriginal population of the former Canada of 2172 in Murphy’s is a significantly higher percent of the overall population than it is today. Several languages have been revised and the prominent ones maintained (Cree, Ojibway, Inuit). Cultural traditions are strong. But the “white man” is still up to certain of his tricks in the person of the Global Garden’s despot ruling family, also the board of the enormous water company Blue Gold. An especially “energetic” and “inventive” if shadowy presence among this group is Mr. J.R. Fish. By returning the land to the “Indians” the Global Garden acquires exclusive rights to its water as well as begins to admit waves of refugees from the drought-wracked south (although they tend to die soon after of viruses, as have large portions of Europe’s population). Large regions of the country are too toxic for most life forms and have been quarantined. Various clean-up efforts putter along here and there, and there are Green corridor here and there of Edenic returns to nature. The floating city of Elusha, engineered to withstand the frequent ferocious storms, circulates around the globe, and epitome of cosmopolitanism and shopping. The world’s nuclear arsenals have been gathered together into an allegedly impregnable fortress in the UK, under sole possession of the Global Garden. Among a number of underground revolutionary groups, one in particular has strategies for entering the fortress and detonating the entire crop of weapons. Letourneau’s presence on ship has to do with a counter-intelligence

operation from quite another point in space and time, intent on neutralizing all such aggressive acts by disarming the weaponry with a powerful dematerialization product

Many of these features are simply intensifications of today's trends and problems, found in much speculative fiction, such as the corporate dominance (*Oryx and Crake*, Atwood) or the water conflicts in Harold Johnson's *Corvus*, where the striking component is a raven suit that allows flight. In Murphy's story, the feature of interest is *The Blue Gold* repatriation of non-Aboriginal citizens of the former Canada, ostensibly or perhaps even partly to enact justice but also to pursue corporate wheeling and dealing on a deadly scale.

2172 actually provides two distinctive settings: the ship itself, first at anchor, then voyaging to Britain and the riverside and surrounding lands where young Murphy is abandoned and must find ways to survive as he tries to recover his special shoes. This breadth involves the histories of several different Indigenous and other peoples and generally accepts that any process toward reconciliation is enormously complex, time-consuming, and demanding of much energy and perseverance. Time opens to more mysterious interpretations. Elements from the 1962 world, the Luger, the note in the bottle, penetrate into 2172 in ways that can be turned to resolution or that stand in its way. Reconciliations within one's own circle need attending to before the next ones can go fully forward. The theme of working toward trust – when there are plenty of things to distrust—persists through all the settings and many of the relationships. Ultimately the story is not about one person, Murphy, but about his relations and their relationships. Aspects of several previously surveyed

subgenres of category six come into play: the gap, partners, existential relations, violent confrontation (though usually not particularly involving Aboriginal characters), and the seventh category of affirming togetherness, offering some moderating humour and philosophical calm, with recognition that while we may all have a problem, the particular concern of this novel is with recognizing and attempting some steps to resolving “mine.”

## LAST THOUGHTS

Researching and writing this paper has been valuable to my ongoing work with the portfolio material. It has helped me to identify things in the story for further development and certain others to cut. It has also helped me to adjust and extend point of view as seems necessary to make clear the underlying complexities of the settings, and especially the machinations of 2172. (Young) Murphy continues to centre the first plot. The third-person distance, however, is now generally less subjective or intimate, and point of view shifts primarily among Murphy, Morgan, Ruby, and Letourneau. This adjusting, which still for the most part does not observe Aboriginal characters without a mediating non-Aboriginal consciousness, has helped keep the story in its proper bowl. I think it helps to contain a certain element of humour and calm as I have seen in *Smith's Quarterhorse* and *I Heard the Owl Call My Name*. Adding a little more distance and breath in the point of view helps to keep as well just a little more distance from the turmoil of the category six experiences, a

little more self-acceptance, while, I think, remaining quite closely aligned with some of the contemporary Indigenous writing with its pursuit of life over death.

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APPENDIX ONE-- MURPHY'S IMPRIMATUR

