

LOST IN THE FOG



THE LAC LA MARTRE READER PROJECT

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Dedicated to the memory of Dennis Beaulieu 1957-1984

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Written by William Nitsiza

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It was the time of year when people from Lac La Martre get to go out for the caribou hunt. They go to the Rae Lakes area.

My dad told me that I was to go to Rae Lakes and hunt for caribou. I was to take some groceries to my cousin there. He told me to follow Pierre Beaverho and his sons.

So that following evening I brought my ski-doo into our house to fix up what I thought would need fixing.

The following morning I got up early so we could go on our way. Pierre was up and he came over to let me know that we would be leaving

at ten-thirty. I went to the store and bought some sweet stuff to carry with me.

At ten-thirty we went on our way. We came to Rabbit Lake and made camp. We had tea, fish, and bannock for lunch. After lunch we went on our way to Mazonod Lake. That's where we shot caribou.

Johnny Nitsiza and Michel Moosenose were there after we set up the tent. Later on Francis Zoe was there with his ski-doo and his brother Maurice and Johnny Mantla were there with dog teams. Francis Moosenose and Francis Simpson were also there.

After hauling the caribou meat back to the tent, we had caribou ribs boiled for supper.

Fred Beaverho and his brother William went out in the bush to cut down some firewood. ✓ I was to head on to Rae Lakes and so I waited for the two boys that were to follow us back to their hometown. Then Jimmy Nitsiza came to the camp and said that the boys went on their way to Faber Lake.

I told the boys to stop by so I could follow them to Rae Lakes. Instead of stopping, they went right on by. I had the headlight burnt out on my ski-doo so I had to drive in the dark. It wasn't

really that dark because the moon was out that night.

I had my toboggan packed so I went on my way chasing the boys. I came to Sarah Lake but the boys were still ahead so I kept on driving to Faber Lake.

When I came to Faber Lake the boys were still out of sight so I kept on going.

It was cold that night so I stopped for awhile to warm my hands. I didn't know my way to Rae Lakes. That's why I told the boys to wait for me.

I went on my way following

their trail in the dark. Half way on the Lake I lost their trail and it was getting foggy. I couldn't see the moon so I stopped my ski-doo and started to see if I could spot the trail.

I didn't find the trail and I said to myself, "I'm lost." I heard that there were some open spots on the lake. I hoped that I wouldn't get into any of them or else I'd be gone forever.

The fog was getting too thick for me to see the land all around me. I had matches in my pockets but my hands were too cold for me to dig in my pockets. I thought back. I had heard people say that if you get down on your knees you can maybe see

the shadow of the moonlight.

So that's what I did and started moving my hands back and forth. I saw the shadow of my hand on the snow so I took my chance following the shadow of my hand.

I came to land but I couldn't tell where I was. I waited for awhile to warm my hands. After warming my hands I drove my ski-doo alongside of the land looking for the road. I didn't find the road and so I stopped for awhile.

I said to myself, "If only I could find the road I'd make it to the camp." I was worried for people had said that the lake wasn't really

that safe for ski-doods.

After parking for a while I drove my ski-doo back where I came from and came back to where I stopped before. I drove past the spot and kept on driving. I came to the road and was so excited to find the main road.

I went back to Mazenrod Lake where the camp was. I came to the camp around four-thirty in the morning. I stopped my ski-doo and went into the tent. William Beaverho was still up so he lighted the candle and put more firewood in the stove.

Pierre got up and asked me what happened. I told him I was

lost on Faber Lake and had a hard time finding my way back because of the fog.

He asked me to look at him so I did. He said that I had frost bites all over my face. He handed me a jar of Vicks which he carried in his packsack. He told me to spread some all over my face so it would be a little better in the morning.

I took my sleeping bag from the sled and crawled into bed. I got up the following morning around ten-thirty. Fred was up and he asked me if I wanted to drink some coffee. I told him yes, so he poured some hot water in a cup for me.

After having morning meals I went out on the ski-doo to hunt for caribou. I shot eleven caribou and came back to the tent.

Pierre and his sons were ready to go back home so I told them to help me skin the caribou. Pierre told his sons to help me so they did.

After cutting up the meat I packed it in the sled. We headed on home around eleven-thirty in the morning. On our way back we saw Jimmy B. Rabesca so we stopped our ski-doods and he said that I didn't get to Rae Lakes, and my parents were worried about me. He said that my cousin from Rae Lakes went out searching for me and he was to

find out if I was safe or not. He said that he would set up the bush radio and relay the message to my parents. We had a camp on our way home.

At ten o'clock in the evening we came back home. As soon as I came into my house my mom came and hugged me. She had tears in her eyes and my dad was crying. There were people waiting at my house. As I came in people were saying, "Thank God."

People told me that they were sad because they thought they would never see me again. My mom told me that my dad didn't sleep all night and he didn't eat for twenty-seven hours because he heard I was lost.

After having something to eat, I said to myself that I would never travel alone again.