

Han Kak Tr'igwindàih

Life On The River



Guuk'iighe' Leslie McCartney ts'at Pierre Benoit
By Leslie McCartney with Pierre Benoit

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Han Kak Tr'igwindàih
River On We Live

Life On The River



Tr'ih kat eenjit nakhwàh gwitaldak yenihthàn.

Boats about you tell stories I want to.

I want to tell you some stories about boats.

Shiiyuughwàn kat da Tsiigehtchic gwits'at digiinch'ù'.

My parents Arctic Red River from they were.

My family was from Tsiigehtchic.

Èjì gwìndòò ah Arctic Red River vàazìh.

Back then Arctic Red River called.

It was called Arctic Red River back then.



Shityè' voozrì' ah Benoit Coyen.

My dad's name Benoit Coyen.

My father's name was
Benoit Coyen.

1926 gùu 1927, shaghàii ihtadh gwinlè'

1926 or 1927, my years five

gùu nihk'ii tyek ihtìh.

or six I was.

In 1926 or 1927, I was
5 or 6 years old.

Èjj khài Tsiìgehnjik jì'

That winter the Red up

shiiyuughwàn kat ah Łiidlajj

my parents the Forks

ts'àt gichùujìt.

to they travelled.

That year my family
travelled way up the
Arctic Red River to
The Forks.

Èjj dahthee ah tr'ih tsal àh nichiidàdàt.

That far canoe with we traveled.

That's how far we
travelled with a canoe.

Lajj kat t'è'n gwits'at t'l'yah àh tr'ih tsal kat geeliṭ.
Dogs shore from rope with canoe they pull.

Our dogs tracked our things.

Tr'ih tsal zhìt da nikhwahgwidàl tthak nìidàlih.
Canoe in our belongings all we put.

We would put everything we had in our canoe.

Shityè' lajj kat tr'ih tsal ts'àt
My dad dogs canoe to
t'l'yah àh dagoonahṭ'ih.
rope with he would tie.

My dad would attach the
canoe with ropes to our dogs.

Jùuts'anh ts'àt ah lajj tr'ih tsal
That's how dogs canoe
t'è'n gwits'at geeliṭ.
shore from they pull.

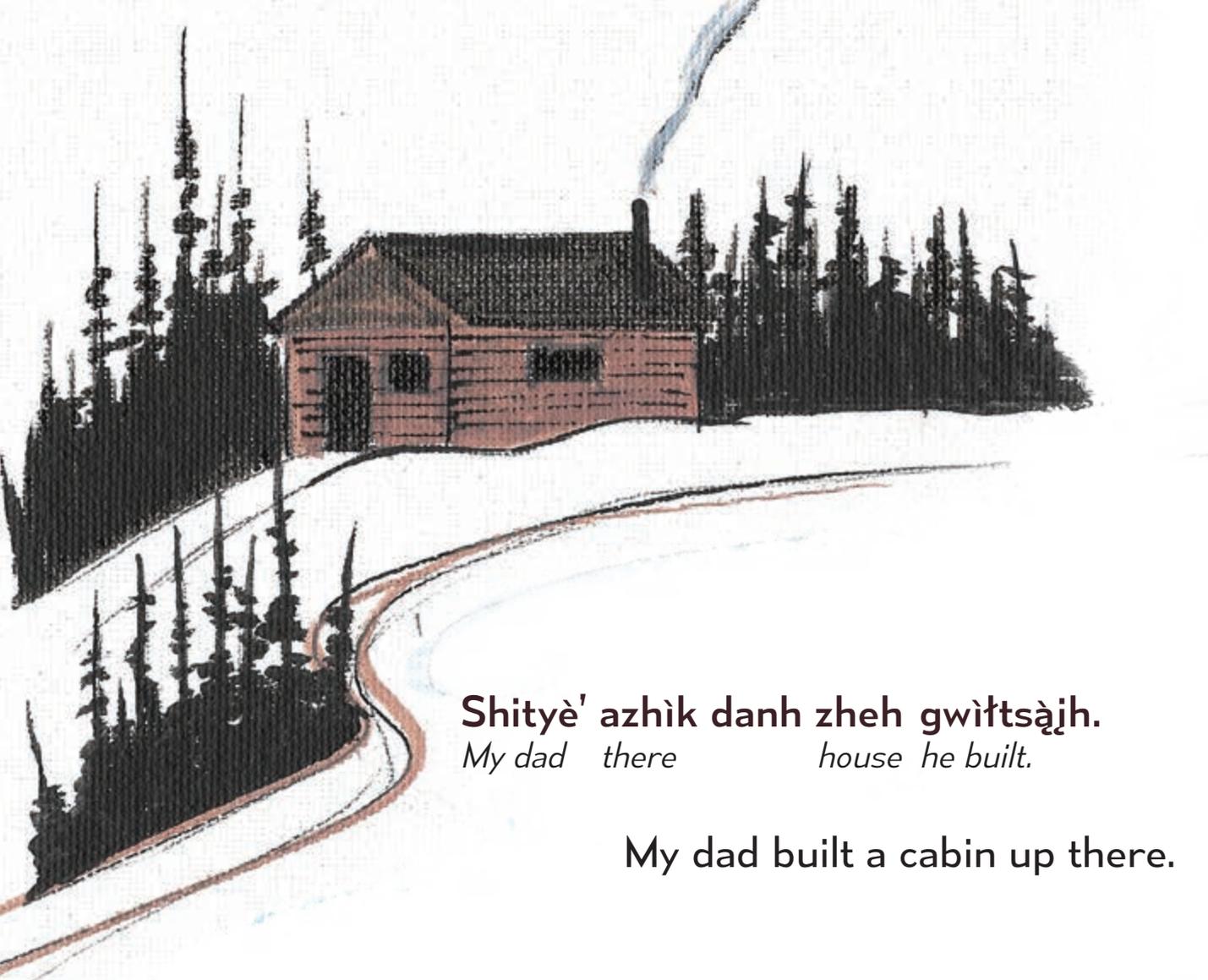
The dogs would run on the
shore and pull our canoe.



Nikhwahgwidàl tthak àh.
Our belongings all with.

That's how the dogs tracked our things.





Shityè' azhìk danh zeh gwiłtsàjh.

My dad there house he built.

My dad built a cabin up there.

Khaii ah shityè' tsuk ka'dì'jh.

Winter my dad martin he trapped.

In the winters, my dad trapped marten.

Shityè' ah natalzree ts'àt

My dad hunting and

khyàh nìtihᑦaa shàgoonìłtyìn.

traps I will set he taught me.

My father taught me how to hunt and trap.

Khaii ih̄ak tsuk

Year one marten

ih̄ak nilee k'it jùutyin ąhdzhìr'.

one hundred he trapped.

One year, my father trapped
one hundred marten.

Sreendyìt ah Arctic Red River

Spring Arctic Red River

In the spring, he brought the
furs back to

Hudson's Bay gwits'at ah

Hudson's Bay to them

nindhòh ùunjìk.

furs he brought.

the Hudson's Bay trader in
Arctic Red River.

Nindhòh ookat ałtsąjì ts'at

Furs he sold and

tr'ih àh kicker ka'gjjikhè'.

boat with motor he ordered.

He sold the furs and ordered
a motorboat.

Nikhwan ah "kicker" jiidìnùh.

Us "kicker" we say.

We called the motor a kicker.

Tr'ih k'eejit nàdhoonà'ih,
Boat new we waited for,
nàdhoonà'ih.
we waited for.

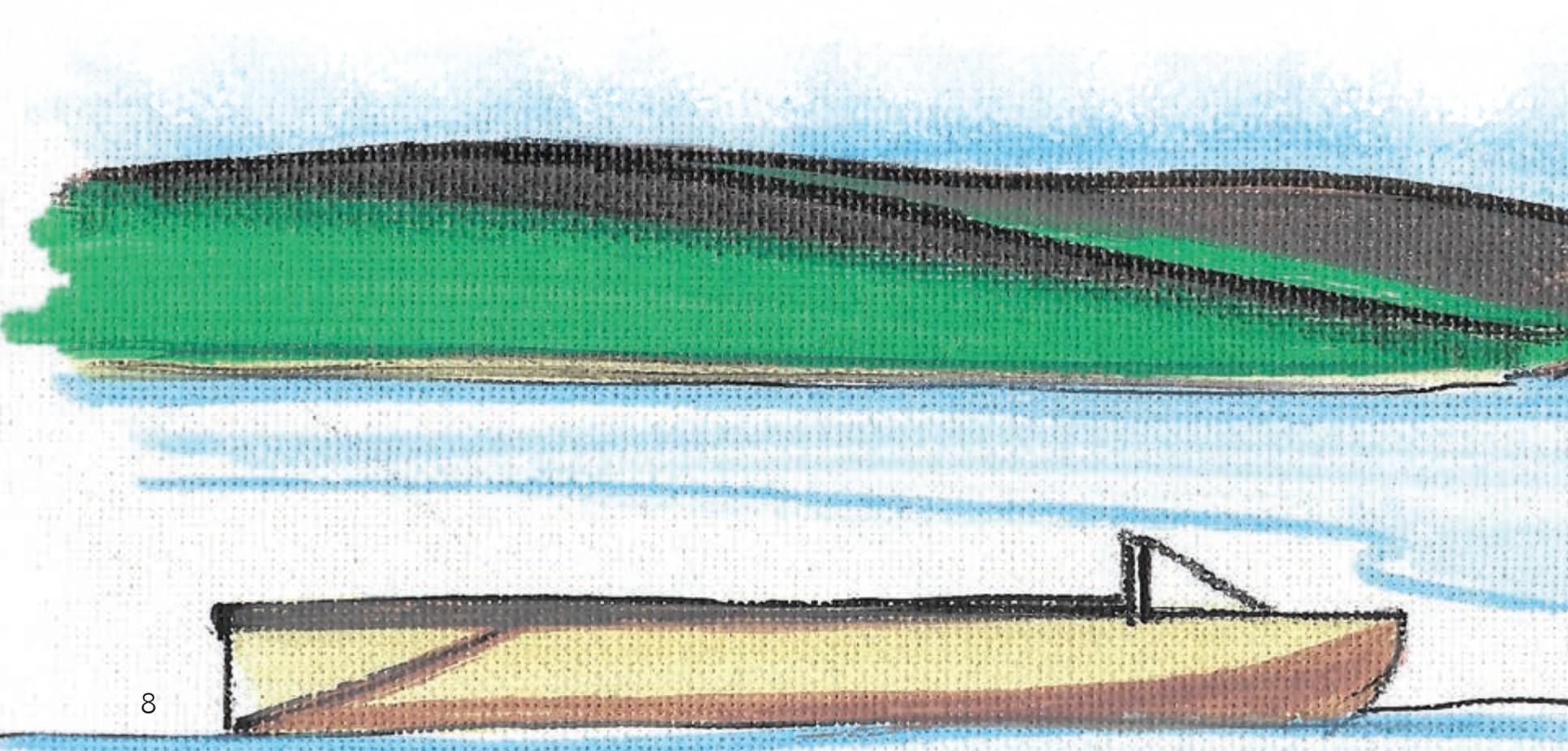
We waited and waited
for that new motorboat.

Ējj gwinoo tǎjj (highway)
Those days road
gòonlih kwàh.
there was no.

In those days, there was
no roads or highways.

Han ah nikhwah highway diinch'ùh.
River our highway it was.

The rivers were
our highways.

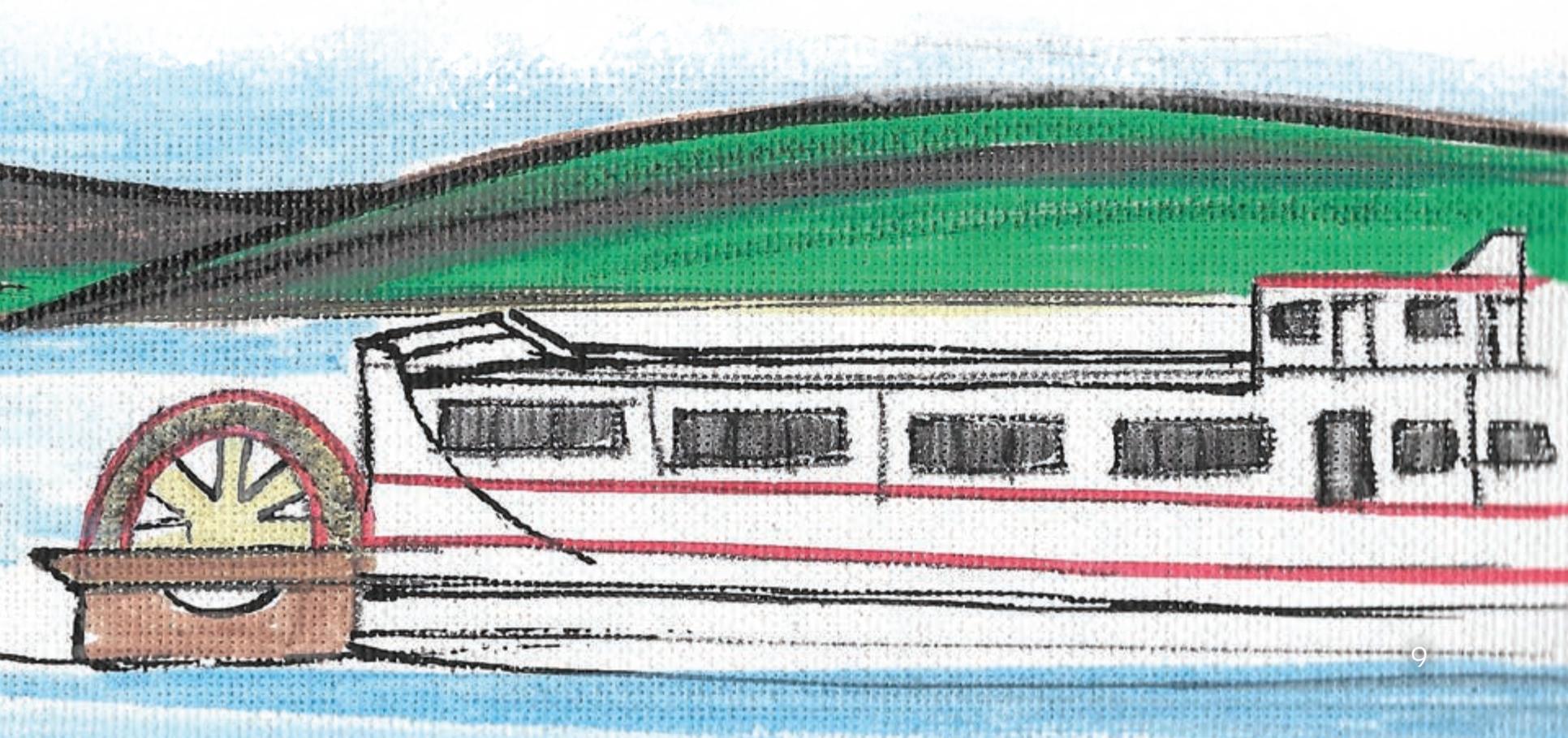


Nagwichoonyik ʔuu chùnyjik tʔee ah,
Mackenzie River ice moved after,
tr'oochit tr'ih choo yeenyu k'adalàk.
first boat big come down it arrives.

When the ice had left
the Mackenzie River, the
first steamboat came
down the river.

Tr'ih nitchee ts'àt vizhit gwidàl
Boat really big and inside supplies
àh dàgwìdìnà'èj'.
with it is full.

It was a big
sternwheeler and it was
full of freight.



Tr'ih choo t'yęę ah tr'ih njuh
Boat big behind boat long
gàthà'chòo thirty-foot njuh.
it was tied thirty-foot long.

Ęjį ah shityè vitr'ii
That my dad his boat new
k'eejit diinch'ùh.
it was.

\$600 tr'ih ts'àt kicker eenjit yoovjikàt.
\$600 boat and kicker for he paid.

Shityè ah tr'oochit zhidah
My dad first one here
akòodèech'ii tr'ih di'ih.
that kind of boat he have.

Tied behind the sternwheeler was a thirty-foot long motorboat (9.14 metres).

That was my dad's new motorboat.

My dad paid \$600 for the boat and motor.

My dad was the first one to own a motorboat here.

Ahh, tr'ih gwjjzii vègwìdeech'inh!

Oh boat good it looked!

Oh, the boat looked so nice!



Ējĵ shin ah tr'ih tsal tthak ditr'ii
That summer canoes all his boat
ts'àt gəlchòh.
to he tied.

Ts'àt Tsiigehnjik nji' guuvàh chùukàj'.
And the Red up with them he travelled.

Hehnjuu Deet'yah Tshik
Bernard Creek
ḡhtthee chùukàj'.
as far as he travelled.

Tsiigehnjik nji'
The Red up
ets'ideech'ii neekàjĵ jùutyin
seventy
ḡhthee gùu'èjh.
that far it is.

Akoo ḡhthee gwizraih gwats'àt ta'kàih
That far only to he travel

That summer my dad
tied canoes to his
motorboat.

He took them up the
Arctic Red River for
other families.

He went as far as
Bernard Creek.

That is about seventy
miles up the Arctic
Red River.

He could not go further
up the river because



ε̣̣j̣ jik ah tij̣əhwadh ts'ət chuỵ niint'əih.

up there shallow and water strong.

the water was shallow and swift.

Zhigwits'at ti'jəhshit kwəh.

From here deep water no.

There was no deep channel after that.

Hehnjuu Deet'yah Tshik

Bernard Creek

danh tà'giinjìt.

here they stopped.

So, he stopped at
Bernard Creek.

Zhidah ah kwàn deek'it tr'ałtsàjh.

Here camp they made.

That's where
everyone camped.

Ējĵ gwits'at àh nihk'ùu khaii

From there different directions winter

tthak khyàh t'igah'ih.

all trapped they did.

They trapped around
there in the winter.

Jùk ah dinjii kat dah nindhòh

Now men fur

ookàt gahtsii ts'àt tr'ih guukàt.

they sell and boat they buy.

After that, more people
started to sell their furs
and buy motorboats.

Guulàt kat ah kaleeluk tr'ih guukàt.

Some of them whale boats they buy.

Others bought
whaleboats.

Tr'ih dachee, duulèh
Boats big, about
neekogwijùutyin dajhùh.
twenty that long.

They were big boats,
about twenty feet long.

Vitchì' ch'ok gònlih.
Its head pointed it has.

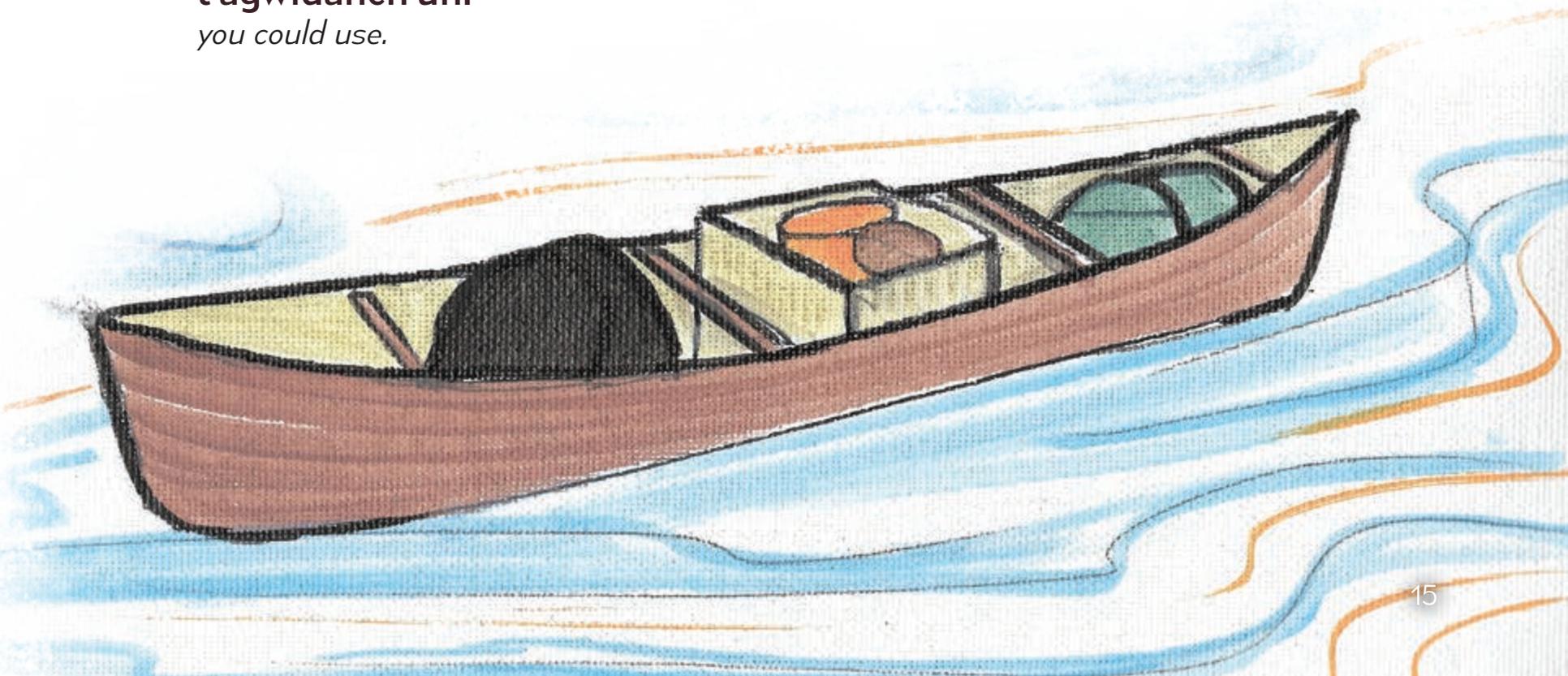
They had a
pointed stern.

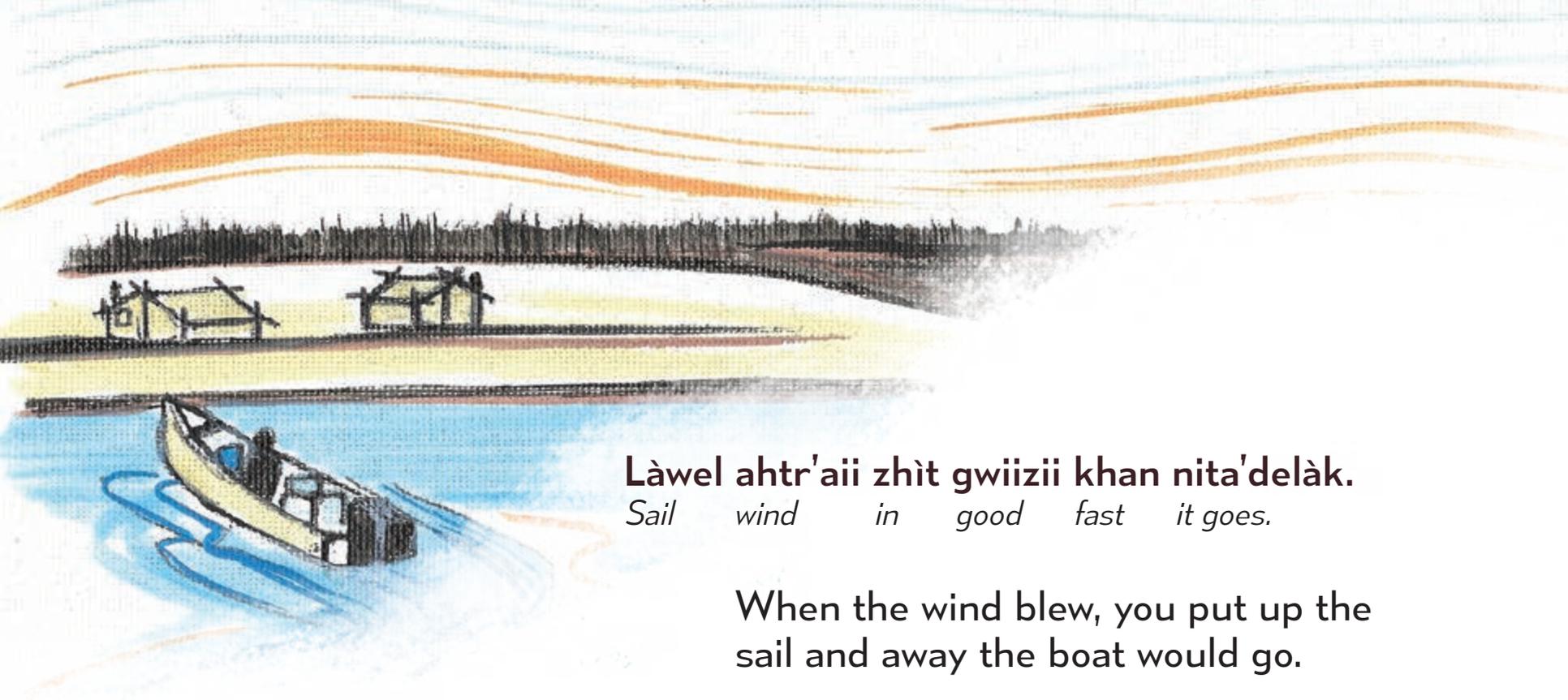
Làwel dèhtyin vakak nì'èih.
Sails pole on top is standing.

There was a sail post in
the boat.

Duulèh kicker gùu làwel
Maybe kicker or sail
t'àgwìdahch'ùh.
you could use.

You could use the motor
or the sail.





Làwel ahtr'aii zhìt gwiizii khan nita'delàk.

Sail wind in good fast it goes.

When the wind blew, you put up the sail and away the boat would go.

Tr'ih ejj ah t'ajj gwiiyendoo

Boat that dogs more

khan t'idi'jh.

faster it goes.

Boats were much faster than tracking dogs on the shore.

Ts'àt gwidàl lejg vizhìt dhidfèh.

And supplies lots inside it carries.

They could carry more than the dogs, too.

1939 shaghàii

1939 my years

ihfogwijùutyin ts'àt nihk'ii daq ihfih.

eighteen

I was.

In 1939, I was 18 years old.

Ējĵ khaii ah Ehdyeetat dechan khyàh
That winter Delta traps
nìtìidìlaa eenjit Aklavik
we will set for Aklavik
gwits'at chidhìidìjìt.
to we moved.

That year we moved to
the Delta and trapped
around Aklavik.

1944 ah ts'ik choo nikwhatat niizheh
1944 sickness big among us it came
dàjh ah shityè' nèniiddhàt.
that time my dad he died.

My father died in the
big flu that came around
our people in 1944.

Aklavik, Teet'it Zheh ts'at
Aklavik, Fort McPherson and
Tsiigehtchic nikwàgwìch'in kat lèjĵ
Arctic Red River our people many
nègèniiddhàt.
they died.

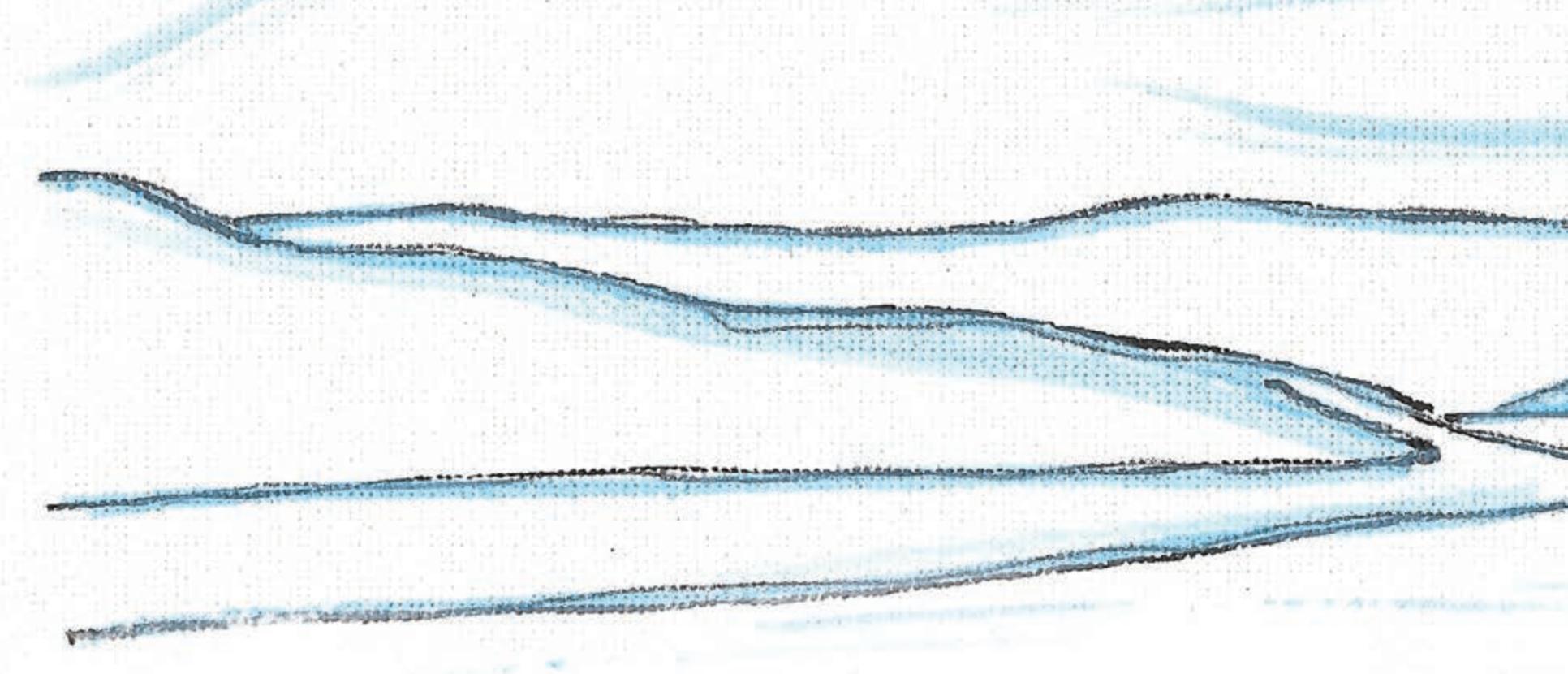
Many of our
people in Aklavik,
Fort McPherson and
Arctic Red River died
during that time.

Nikwàgwìch'in kat tthak tr'òovè' tr'iinlìh.
Our people all sad they were.

It was a very sad time
for our people.

Ts'at nikhweenjit gùgùntrèh.
And for us it was hard.

It was a very hard time
for us all.



Shityè' vikwah t'ee shihanh
My dad he died after my mom
vi'k'ènaŋtyèh.
I cared for.

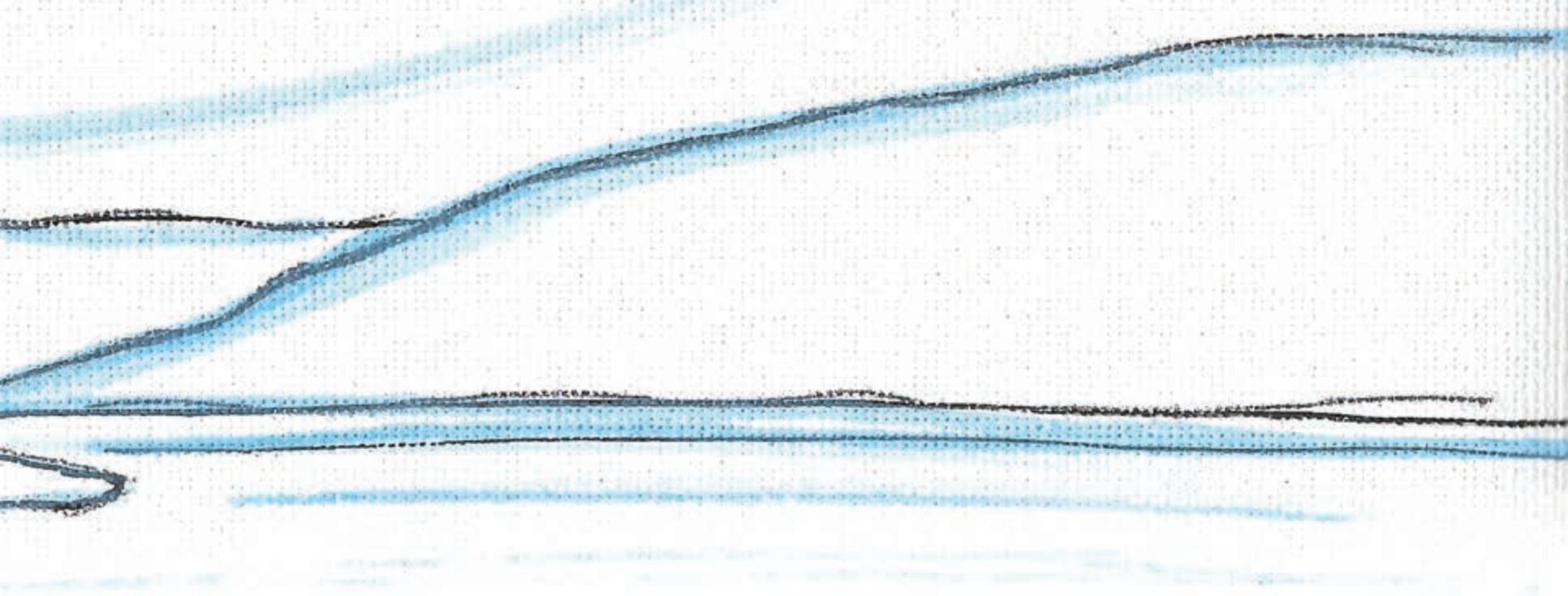
After my father died, I had
to look after my mother.

Delma vâazhìh.
Delma her name.

Her name was Delma.

Shaghàii neekogwijùutyin ts'àt tyek
My years twenty three
ihfii dàì' shityè' nèniiddhàt.
I was when my father died.

I was 23 years old when my
father died.



Khyah t'i'tatya k'iighè'
Trap I will that way
shihanh vik'ètina'tyah.
my mom I will look after.

I wanted to look
after my mother
by trapping.

Shityè' vik'it tsuk katiishiiyaa yenhthàn.
My dad like him marten trap I wanted.

Like my dad, I wanted
to trap marten.

Tsiigehnjik nji' ah tsuk eenjit
The Red up martens for
gwiizih, Nagwichoonjik Tsiigehtchic
it's good, Mackenzie River Arctic Red River
gwà'àn, Teetl'it Gwinjik ts'àt
around, up the Peel River and
Yukon gwà'àn.
Yukon around.

The only place you
get marten is up the
Arctic Red River,
the Mackenzie River
around Arctic Red
River, up the Peel River
and into the Yukon.



Ej̄j gwìnoo Ehdyeatat tsuk kwàh.
That time Delta marten no.

At that time, there was no
marten to trap in the Delta.

Tsiigehtchic gwà'àn ah
Arctic Red River around
shiyàa Amos Niditchie
my friend Amos Niditchie
àh ookatìidì'ìh.
with we trapped.

I went to trap around the
Arctic Red River area with
my friend Amos Niditchie.

Hehnjuu Deet'yah Tshik ts'at Tsèè Tshik Gwichoo

Bernard Creek and Beaver Creek

gwà'àn khyàh t'aa'ih.

around trap we also.

We went up to Bernard Creek and Beaver Creek and trapped around there.

Khài ih'ak Tadh Tr'igjikhii gwitchih tsuk

Year one Christmas season before marten

ets'ideech'ii neekajj jùutyin ts'at ih'adh gwinlè' dhàadzhìr'.

seventy five

we trapped.

We went up to Bernard Creek and Beaver Creek and trapped around there.





Shaghàii neekogwijùutyin ts'at nihk'ii tyek

My years twenty six

dài', tr'ih choo kak gwitr'it'igwił'ì', khaii

when boat big on I was working, years

neekat eenjit.

two for.

When I was 26 years old, I decided to work on a boat for two summers.

Khaii tagwinàach'uu ah Nagwichoonjik

Year every

Mackenzie River

kak tr'ih aachinil'ih.

on boats I watched.

I had seen the boats on the Mackenzie River every year.

Vakak gwitr'it'igwitałyàa yenihthàn.

On it work to

I wanted.

Now I wanted to work on one.

Tr'iinin ihłii gwits'at tr'ih choo aachinil'ih

Child I was since treh big I watched

khaii tagwinàach'uu Nagwichoonjik kak.

year every

Mackenzie River on.

From a young age, I had watched boats every year on the Mackenzie River.

Sreendyt̓ ʔuu chuunjik tʔ'ee ʔuu
Spring ice moved after ice
tsal tat, tr'ih ihʔak yenuu aalàh.
small among, boat one coming down.

In the spring, after the ice broke up, right behind the ice flows, there was a boat that used to come down the Mackenzie River.

Banana Boat v̄àazhìh.
Banana Boat it's called.

It was called the Banana Boat.

Jidìi giiniidhan tthak.
What they want all.

This boat would trade for supplies.

Tsèedhòh gùu nindhòh eenjit
Money or furs for
guuts'an tr'ahtsìh.
they give them.

They would trade fresh fruit they had for anything; cash or fur.

Èjj t'yèe apples, oranges, aghòo,
Trade apples, oranges, eggs,
onions ts'àt potatoes diits'an gahtsìh.
onions, and potatoes they give you.

In return, they would give you apples, oranges, eggs, onions or potatoes.

Shìh tthak nizìh.
Food all good.

These foods were really fresh.



Jii shèk nàguuvìidìlih.
This always we are expecting.

We looked forward to
this every year.

Nikhwahzhuh tr'ahtsìh.
For us treats they make.

It was a big treat.

Èjj tr'ih niizhet gwits'at giinahtsàn.
That boat long ways from they smelt it.

You could even smell
this boat when it was
still some distance away.

Tsiigehtchic gehnjìt ah dhidyeechjì.
Tsiigehtchic further up a bend.

There's a bend in the
Mackenzie River just
before Tsiigehtchic.

Jùk drin ah yeendyìt Tr'ih
Today across boat
Choo Deek'it gwits'at tr'inah'ih.
big place from there you can be seen.

You can see it from
today's ferry landing.

Tr'ih choo tr'itinahyaa gwichih
Boat big see it before
giyahtsàn.
they smell it.

Before the boat came
around the bend, for
miles before, you could
smell the fresh fruit.

Tr'ih vakak gwitr'it'igwi'ii
Boat on it working I was
MS Pelican Rapids v àazh'ih.
MS Pelican Rapids was called.

The boat I worked
on was called the
MS Pelican Rapids.

MS ɛjɔ tr'ih khaii àh
MS steel boat oil with
nitadalak diinch'ùh.
it travel it is.

MS means motor ship.

Tr'ih nichee khaii àh nitr'atalàk.
Boat it's big diesel with it operated.
98 feet gəhjuh.
98 feet that long.

It was a big diesel tug
boat. It was 30 metres
(98 feet) long.

Ts'àt 28 feet gəhchàh.
And 28 feet wide.

The beam, that's how
wide it is, was 8.5 metres
(28 feet).

Chų zhit dhityin 3 feet 6 inches.
Water in it sits 3 feet 6 inches.

Its draft, that's how far
the boat sits in the water
was 1.07 metres (3 feet
6 inches).

Ts'at 929 horsepower kicker
And 929 horsepower kicker
vakak dha'èjh.
on it is put.

It had a 929-horsepower engine.



Hudson's Bay guutr'ii choo giidàhch'ùh
Hudson's Bay their boat big they used

Lower Slave River ts'at Nagwichoonyik nji' tthak gwitr'it'igwàh'ì.
Lower Slave River to Mackenzie River along all it worked.

It was used by the Hudson's Bay Company on the Lower Slave River and Mackenzie River.

Tr'ih nichee diinch'ùh.
Boat real big it was.

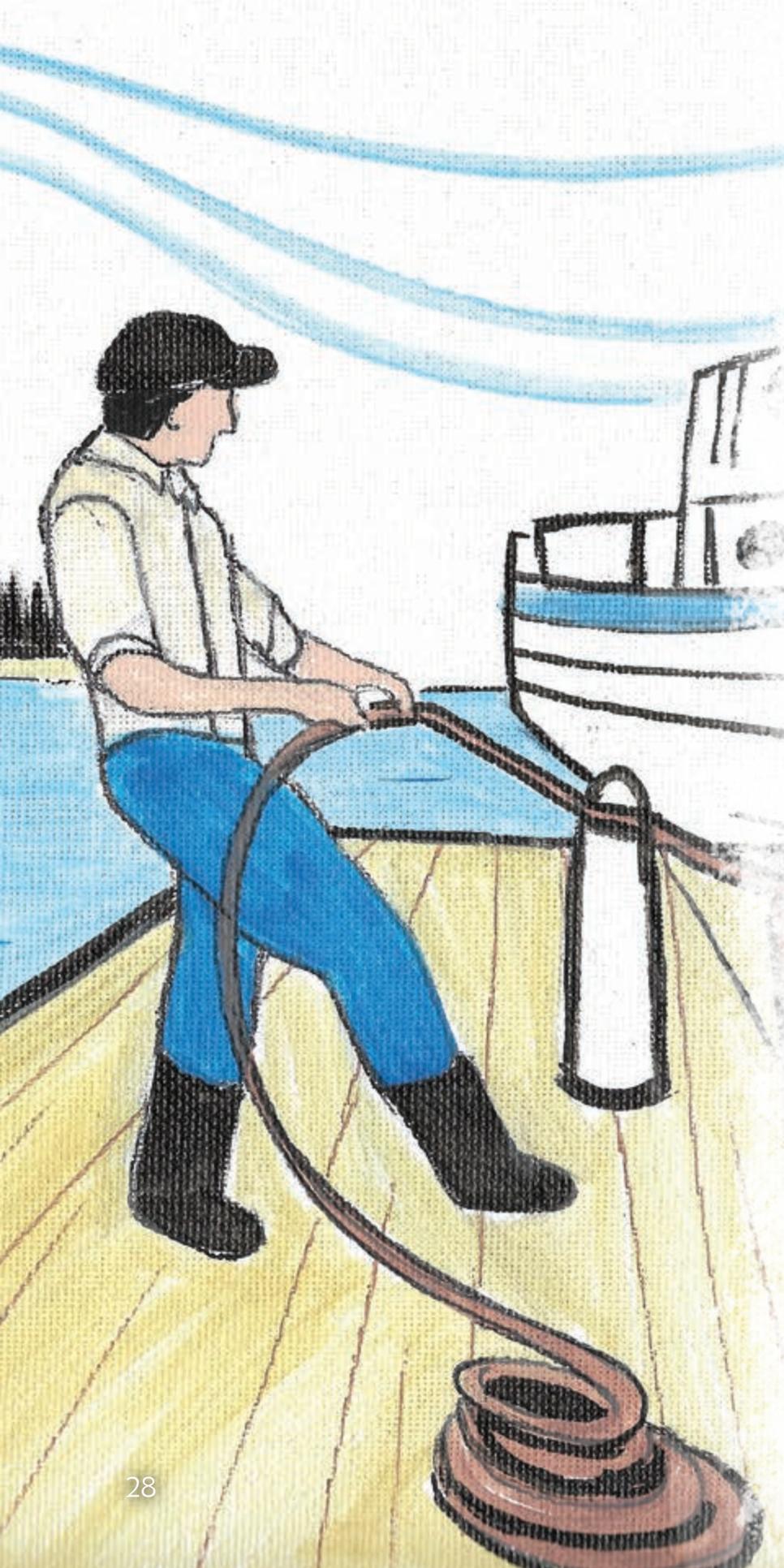
It was such a big tugboat.

Geetàk barge dąą elùh.
Sometimes barge four it pulled.

Sometimes it could pull four barges.

Vakak gwidàl àh dągwìdìnàà'èjh.
On it supplies with full of.

These barges would be full of freight.



Vakak gwitr'it gònlih.

On it work there is lots of.

There was lots to do on
the boat.

Vakak gwidàl k'èndeenaàtyèh

On it supplies we looked out for

tthak gwiizii gàthàchòh.

all good tied.

The crew and I had to
make sure the freight was
safe and all tied down.

Tr'ih jidii kwan' àahtsih.

Boat really clean we make.

We had to clean
the decks.

Nijùudlet dàj' chiichìdhà'ējī chuy
Landed when anchor water
zhìt t'aa'ih.
in we put.

When the boat stopped,
we had to drop
the anchor.

Gwitr'i't'igwah'ii kat guuveenjī
Workers for them
chan vaka'àach'ùh.
too we cook.

We had to cook the
meals for all the crew.

Vakak gwidàl nenìidèlìh, vizhuu
On it supplies we put in, out of it
chan gwidàl oodhiidènjìh.
too supplies we take.

We had to load and
unload the freight.

Tr'ih kaiik'it nèdàlak dàì' gwiizii
Boat town landed when good
gadhachò eenjī vī'k'èndeenàatyèh.
we tied it up for we watch for.

We had to make sure
the boat was tied really
good when you stopped
at towns.

Vagwitr'it gùgùntrèh.
It's work is hard.

It was very hard work.

MS Pelican Rapids vagwitr'it gònlii ts'àt shek
MS Pelican Rapids its work is lots and always
nakhwagwintìh.
we are busy.

You were busy all the time, when working on the
MS Pelican Rapids.

Tr'oochìt shin MS Pelican Rapids vakak gwitr'i't'igwi'i',
First summer MS Pelican Rapids on it I worked
Aklavik gwits'àt iididàh.
Aklavik towards we were going.

The first summer I worked on
the MS Pelican Rapids it was
going to Aklavik.



Shin tthak tr'ih choo kak
Summer all boat big on
Ehdyeetat gwà'àn gwitr'i't'igwiŋ'i'.
Delta around I worked.

All summer I worked on the
boat in the Delta.

Khainjii shin ndòo nàa'ejj ts'àt
Almost summer is finished and
yeenji' han chàdhìidìjìl.
back up river we went.

In the late summer, we
started to come back up
the river.

Norman Wells gwits'at ah.
Norman Wells from.

We stopped in
Norman Wells.

Khaii oodhìidènjìk ts'àt oonuu
Oil we pick up and coming down
Ehdyeetat k'enaìidìdàt.
Delta we arrived again.

We picked up oil there
and then went back to
the Delta.

Jii t'ee ah yè'èenji' han jì'
After this way up river along
Hay River chan gwits'at ìidìdàh.
Hay River again towards we are going.

Then we would come back
up the river and go to
Hay River.

Tadh iididah kwàh.

Night we travel not.

We could not travel at night if it was dark.

Drin gùu'ejj gwizrajh ah

Day time when it was only we

nichiididat.

travelled.

You could only travel when it was light.

Tadh teth t'ir duuyeh tr'inah'ih.

Night sandbar cannot you see.

In the dark, you cannot see the sandbars.

Geetak tadh ihlak kaiik'it niidàhah

Sometimes night one town we camped

ts'àt àadzhòh.

and dance.

Sometimes we would stay in towns for the night and we would go dancing.

Ye'eedye' Tuktoyaktuk gahthee

Further down Tuktoyaktuk that far

chan gwinàa'ih.

too we go.

Sometimes we would go as far as Tuktoyaktuk.

Nikhwagwitr'it ndòo nàa'ejj,

Our work ended it is,

When they unloaded the freight and cargo,

ts'at nakhweenjit adzoh gahtsih.
and for us dance they make.

the town would
put on a dance.

Ahh srigòonch'ùh.
Oh lots of fun.

It was a lot of fun.

Shin tthak drin gùu'èjj.
Summer all daylight it is.

In the height of the
summer, it is light
almost all the time.

Drin ts'at tadh iididàh.
Day and night we travel.

We would travel
day and night.





Chidiidàlet kwàh.

Stops no.

No stops.

Chan Ehdyeeetat Norman Wells

Again Delta Norman Wells

gwits'àt iidìjyàh.

towards we are going.

We would travel from the
Delta all the way back to
Normal Wells.

Jii t'ee ah dachankhyàh àh

After this traps with

gwitr'it'agwi'i.

I worked.

I went back to trapping
after that.

Khaii gwiinlet George (Amos vichj')

Year many George (Amos' son)

vàh ookaashi'jh.

with him I trapped.

I trapped for many,
many years with Amos'
son George.

1970, gwits'at ah ookaashi'jh kwàh.

1970, from I no longer trapped.

In 1970, we decided not to
trap anymore.

Tsiigehtchic chan gwits'àt

Arctic Red River again too

chèdhijàh.

I moved.

I moved back to
Arctic Red River.

Aazhik daj' sawmill tr'aftsàjj,

Right there sawmill they made

guuvàh gwitr'i't'igwi'ih.

with them I worked.

There was a sawmill nearby,
I went to work there.

Sreendyt ihlak azhik

Spring one there

gwitr'i't'igwi'i'.

I worked.

I was working at the
sawmill one spring.

Jùk drin tr'ih choo deek'it

Today boat big (Ferry) place

Teet'it Zheh ts'ajj gwjj'è'.

Fort McPherson side it was.

It was near where the ferry landing is today on the Fort McPherson side of the Mackenzie River.

Tr'ih ihfak barge neekajj

Boat one barge two

àh tèdhìdlèt.

with it landed.

A boat came with two barges.

Barge ihfak èetsii àh tr'altsàjh.

Barge one steel with it was made.

One was a steel barge.

Tr'ih nicheh kwàh.

Boat really big not.

It was not a very big boat.

Jii ah tugboat giyàhnùh.

This is tugboat they say.

It was a tugboat.

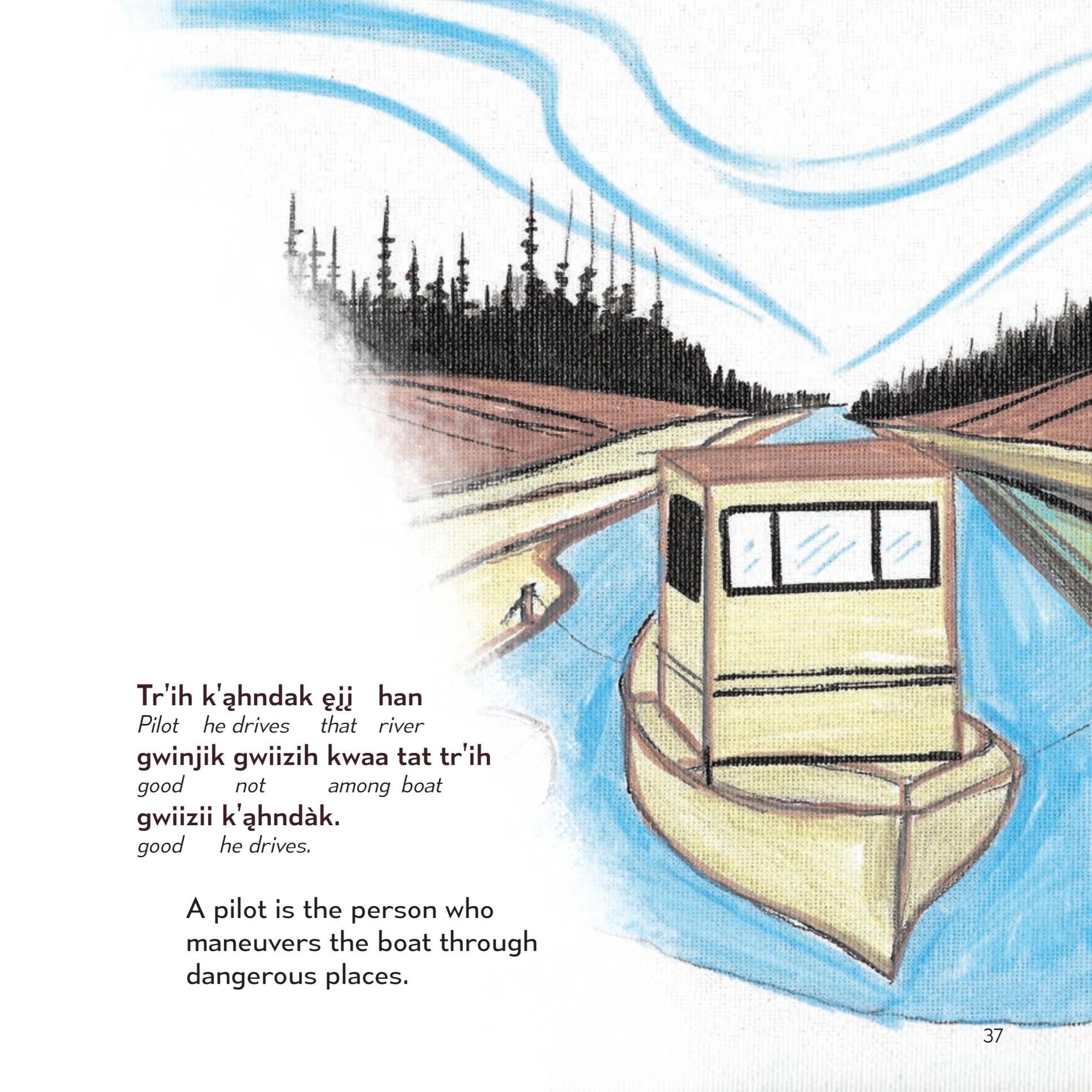
Tr'ih k'ahndak dagwitr'it

Boat pilot his work

ahò'goonùh.

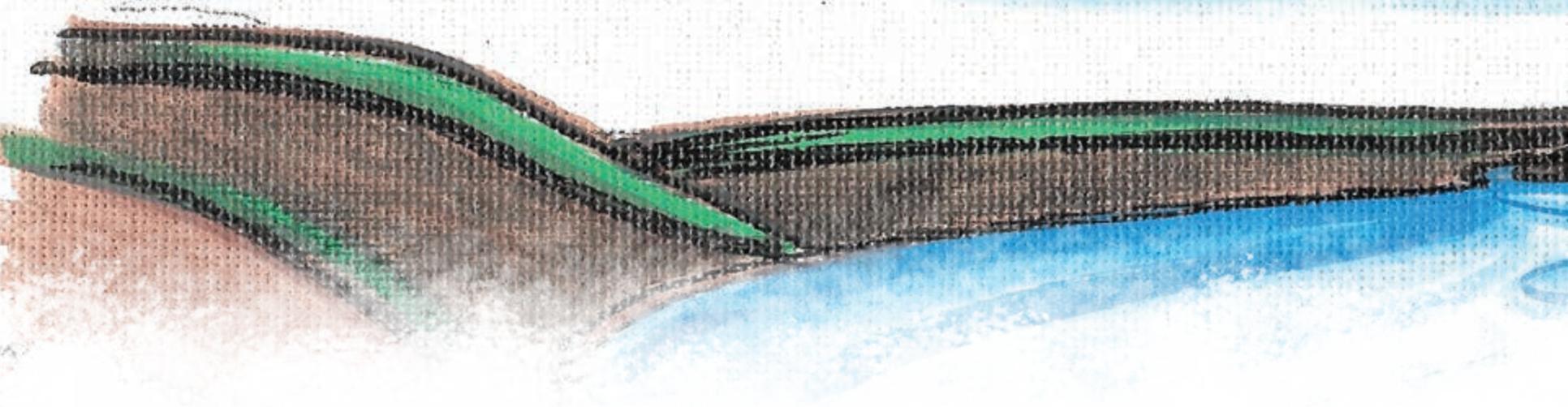
he quit.

The pilot had quit.



Tr'ih k'ąhndak ęjį han
Pilot he drives that river
gwinjik gwiizih kwaa tat tr'ih
good not among boat
gwiizii k'ąhndàk.
good he drives.

A pilot is the person who maneuvers the boat through dangerous places.



Han geetàk gwiizih kwàh,
River sometimes good not
chųy kwàh, teth t'ir gùu chųy
water no, sandbars or water
niint'aih eenjit tr'ih gwiizii gitr'ahdàk.
fast for boat good they handle it.

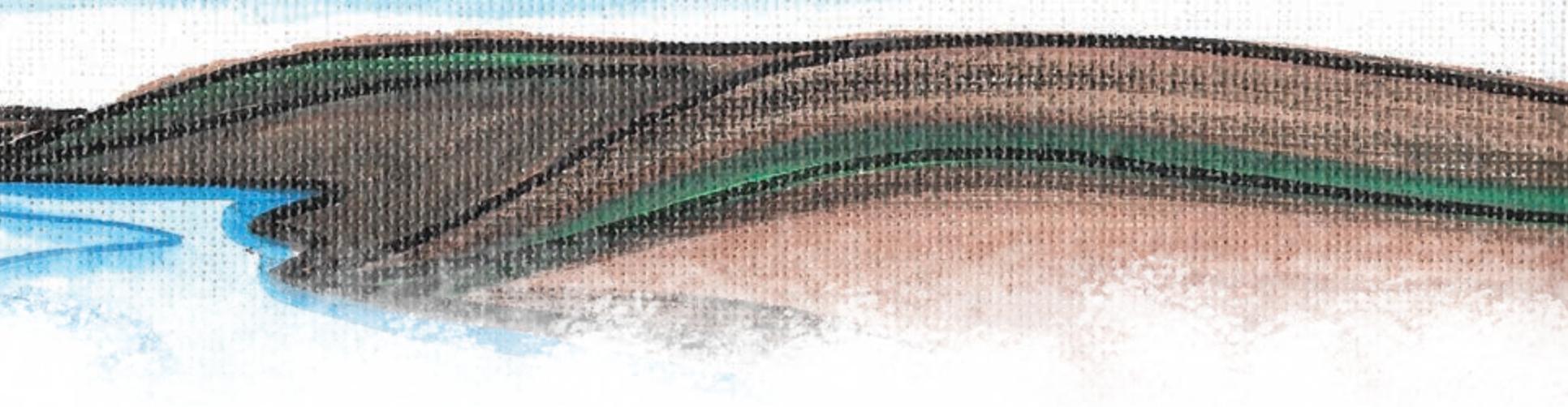
Tr'ih Choo Chit nilii tr'ih k'ahndak
Boat Big Head he is boat he handles
iiid'ih kwaa nùh Ehdyeeetat
we have no he said Delta
gwits'at tiididàh.
towards we will travel.

Yeedyè' chųy gahnidendàii
Down that way water you know
shigahnùh.
they asked me.

Dangerous places might
be low water, sandbars
or fast currents.

The Captain of the barge
said they had no pilot
to go down through the
channel to the Delta.

They asked me if I knew
the channel.



Aḡhà' chuyḡ gwiiizii gàhshìndàih.

Yes water good I know.

I told them I knew that
channel pretty good.

Aazhìk ah tr'ih k'ahndak

Right there boat pilot

shigà'tsàjh.

they made me.

So, they hired me right
there to be the pilot.

Han dyè' tr'ih choo dechan chàh

River down boat big lumber

àh d'ìd'ìnàa'ḡ' chediidijit.

with full of we went.

We went down the river
with big slabs of lumber.

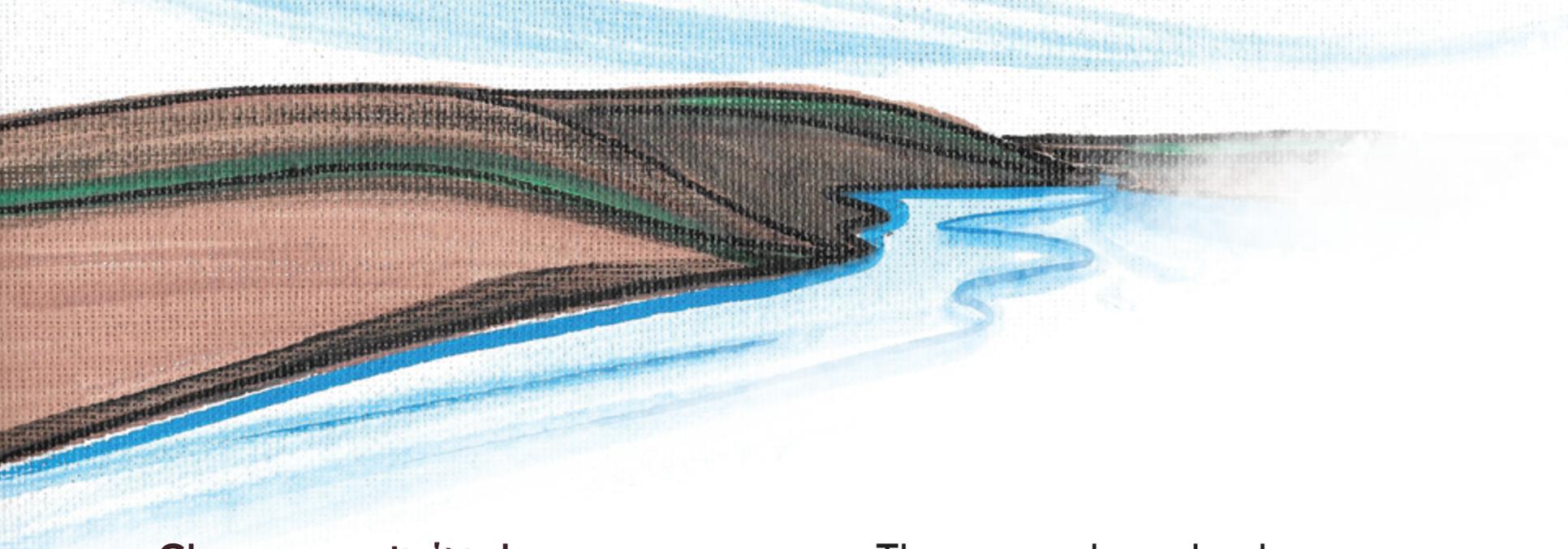
Sawmill ah jùuts'an ts'àt ah

Sawmill like this

giyet'yèh.

they cut them.

The sawmill had cut the
lumber into big slabs.



Chųų vee gwits'at da
Coast to
tr'ooteendal giyaniidhàn.
take it they wanted.

They wanted to take these
slabs down to the coast.

Ejį slabs chųų vee gwits'at
That slabs coast to
oodhìidènjik.
we took.

We took the slabs to
the coast.

Ejį t'ee ah Inuvik k'aiidijit.
After that Inuvik we arrive.

Then we came back
to Inuvik.

Khaii neekat eenjit akòodishì'jh.
Years two for I did that.

I did that for a couple
of years.

Jii tl'ee ah Inuvik ihtèh
After this Inuvik for awhile
gwitihch'aa yenhthàn.
I'll live I wanted to.

Adeenjit tr'ih chan gwit
For myself boat and
kicker ooviikàt.
kicker I bought.

Scow chan dhałtsàjh.
Scow too I built.

Łuk kahshi'ih.
Fishing I went.

Gwiizii gwihdàih.
Good I lived.

Gwit geetàk ah tugboat kak
But sometimes tugboat on
gwitr'i't'igwił'ii ehdanh dihch'ùh.
I was working missing I am.

Then I decided I would live
in Inuvik for a while.

I bought myself a small boat
and kicker.

I also built a scow.

I would go fishing.

I lived a good life.

But I did miss working on
the tugboat.

Jùk ah Aanjòo dihch'ùh.

Now Elder I am.

I am old now.

Drin gwiizih jì' yee'àn tājh kak

Day good if over there hill top

gwits'àt chihhèih.

towards I walk.

When it is a nice day, I walk
to the bluff in Tsiigehtchic.

Aazhìk vakak tr'oodyee dha'èjh.

There a bench is put.

There is a bench there.

Aazhìk dhiidyèh ts'àt Tsiigehnjik jì'

There I sit and Red up

ts'àt Nagwichoonyik jì' gwinił'ih.

and Mackenzie River up I look.

I like to sit on it and look
out at the Arctic Red River
and Mackenzie River.

Ejìn gwihdaih tthak ginìinji'ihthàt

Where I lived all I am thinking of

Tsiigehnjik jì' dechan khyàh

The Red up traps I set

nàniilee eenjit gwihdaih

for I lived

ganadhaldàih.

I remember.

I like to remember the
times in my life when I lived
and trapped up the Arctic
Red River.



Nits'oo shityè' tr'oochit tr'ih choo
How my dad first boat big
di'ii ganadhaldàih.
he have I remember.

I remember when my dad
had the first motorboat.

Tr'ih tsal dinjii kat eenjit Tsiigehtchic nji'

Canoes people for The Red up

chùudlee ganadhaldàih.

he took I remember.

I remember him taking other families'
canoes all the way up the Red.

Nagwichoonjik Tr'ih choo kak

Mackenzie River boat big on

gwitr'it'igwił'i' ganadhaldàih.

I worked I remember.

I remember when I
worked on boats on
the Mackenzie River.

Jii tthak ginaldaii nizih.

This all memories is good.

They are good
memories.



Dlok nìdhii'èjh.
Smiling I am.

They make me smile.

Èjj däj' han kat "nikhwah highway" diinch'ùh.
That time rivers "our highways" they were.

The rivers were our highways then.



Eenjit jùk shòh ihñih
For that now happy I am on it
vakakgwitr'it'igwiñ'ì.
I worked.

It made me happy to
work on the rivers.

GLOSSARY OF ENGLISH - GWICH'IN PLACE NAMES.

Arctic Red River (River) is known as Tsiigehnjik. It means iron river. This place name refers to a river in the Tsiigehtchic area. "Tsiigehnjik," ID 1696, Gwich'in Place Names, <https://atlas.gwichin.ca/index.html#eyJ0IjoieClslmkiOiJnd2ljaGluLnBsYWNIbmFtZS4xNjk2liwicyl6MTcwMjgyNzkwMzg0OH0=>.

Arctic Red River (Town) is known as Tsiigehtshik or Tsiigehtchic which means at the mouth of iron river. The meaning of this name could refer to the taste of iron in the water in the spring, or the sulfur that is burning up the Arctic Red River. "Tsiigehtchic," ID 1697, Gwich'in Place Names, <https://atlas.gwichin.ca/index.html#eyJ0IjoieClslmkiOiJnd2ljaGluLnBsYWNIbmFtZS4xNjk3liwicyl6MTcwMjgyNzkyMTQyNH0=>.

Beaver Creek is known as Tsèe Tshik Gwitsal. It means Beaver-at the mouth of-smaller one. This is a creek that flows into the Arctic Red River. People used to kill beaver coming down the creek in the spring. "Tsèe Tshik Gwitsal," ID 1507, Gwich'in Place Names, <https://atlas.gwichin.ca/index.html#eyJ0IjoieClslmkiOiJnd2ljaGluLnBsYWNIbmFtZS4xNTA3liwicyl6MTcwMjgyNzk0Mzc3NX0=>.

Bernard Creek is known as Hehnjuu Deet'yah Njik. It is also sometimes called Sainville river. This creek empties into the Arctic Red River approximately 70 miles up. The first part of this place name, Hehnjuu deet'yah, is considered a ts'ii dejj word, however, some people suggested that it may refer to, "a line of trees beside the creek" or "the creek is shaped like a piece of string that has been bunched up and then let go". This is known as excellent moose country. The meaning of the Gwich'in name for this place refers to the twisting course of the river. "Hehnjuu Deet'yah Njik," ID 1987, Gwich'in Place Names, <https://atlas.gwichin.ca/index.html#eyJ0IjoieClslmkiOiJnd2ljaGluLnBsYWNIbmFtZS4xOTg3liwicyl6MTcwMjgyODAwNjg2M30=>.

Mackenzie River is known as Nagwichoonyik. It means big country river. This river flows north toward the Beaufort Sea. Nagwichoonyik is the Gwich'in name for the Mackenzie River. The section of the river that runs through Gwich'in lands from the Gwich'in/Sahtu border to Point Separation was designated a National Historic Site in 1997. The part of the Mackenzie River from Thunder River to Point Separation, holds a pre-eminent position within the Gwichya Gwich'in cultural landscape. The oral histories of the people and the names they gave to the geographic features of this transportation corridor reflect their spiritual and physical relationships with the river. Nagwichoonyik is the heart of the homeland of the Gwichya Gwich'in. Its rich resources including numerous fisheries and stone quarries ensured not only the survival but the flourishing of the people through the centuries. "Nagwichoonyik," ID 1063, Gwich'in Place Names, <https://atlas.gwichin.ca/index.html#eyJ0ljoieClslmkiOiJnd2ljaGluLnBsYWNIbmFtZS4xMDYzliwicyl6MTcwMjgyODA1ODQ1NH0=>.

The Forks is called Łiidlǎjǎj. It means where two rivers come together. This name refers to where the Cranswick River and the Arctic Red River meet. It is located approximately 35 miles upstream from Weldon Creek. This is one of the most picturesque and colorful places on the river. There are gravel bar deposits where the two rivers meet. High eroding black shale cliffs with splashes of red, orange, green, purple, and yellow are formed by the Arctic Red River flowing down from the east and the Cranswick River from the west. There is a big difference in the flow of the two rivers with the Arctic Red River having a larger flow of water. "Łiidlǎjǎj," ID 1568, Gwich'in Place Names, <https://atlas.gwichin.ca/index.html#eyJ0ljoieClslmkiOiJnd2ljaGluLnBsYWNIbmFtZS4xNTY4liwicyl6MTcwMjgyODA4ODYxNH0=>.

Jii gwandak tr'oohadhahch'aa geenjit jii
This story it will be listened to for this
thumb drive gwakak diinch'uh.
thumb drive on it it is.

The thumb drive enclosed here will allow you
to listen and read along to this story.

This story talks about the Gwich'in values of:

Yiinjinihṭetr'ichil'eh (Respect)

Chigwijuu'ee Tri'igwindaii (Honesty)

Yiinjitr'ichil'eh (Honour)

Nihk'atr'inaatii (Sharing and Caring)

This story talks about Gwich'in Principles of:

Our Elders play a crucial role as teachers. They are keepers of our knowledge, history, language, protocol and culture.

Our way of life is based on a unique and special economic and spiritual relationship between each other and the land, air and water.

Our family history and linkages to our relatives in the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Alaska is important to our identity.

Cross-cultural understanding and awareness between Gwich'in and non-Gwich'in, is essential in building a new relationship based on respect, reconciliation and cooperation.

