Muddy water (is where I'm from)

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Abstract

Muddy water (is where I'm from) engages autoethnographically with the question of what it means to belong to a place. Situated in Winnipeg, Manitoba, where I was born and raised, I have been thinking about why Winnipeg feels like home during the moment of my life when I moved back. In this piece, I refuse to narrowly conceive of making home and belonging through notions of possession, property, borders and boundaries, as imposed by the settler colonial state of Canada. Instead, I understand home and belonging as practices that are necessarily relational and embodied. I look to the liveliness of treaties and everyday relationships for lessons to live respectfully and practice belonging on Indigenous Land.

I begin by describing how moving out of Winnipeg shifted my understanding of myself and my place in the world as a Settler-Michif woman. In 2021, the Manitoba Métis Self-Government Recognition and Implementation Agreement attuned me to treaty relationships and revealed some of what I did not know about Treaty 1.

Next, I write in conversation with literature on settler colonialism, treaty relationships and responsibilities, critical place inquiry and Land-based education, resistance, Indigenous resurgence and desire, and practices of belonging. While it is important to understand the situated context of ongoing settler colonialism, settler colonialism is not inevitable. I prefer to emphasise Indigenous resurgence, desire and life.

Methodologically, I engage with autoethnography, research outings and photo-elicitation interviews with grandparents, collective poetry-writing, and filmmaking.

Both the paper and film portions of this Master in Environmental Studies Portfolio center conversations with my four biological grandparents. I discuss my experience of researching with my family, their memories, and expressions of home. I also discuss the influences of urban Land, Wînipêk and the everyday on how I am coming to know myself, where I come from, and my place in the world.

Keywords

Belonging, treaty relationships, Wînipêk, family

Foreword

This Portfolio completes the requirements for the degree of Master in Environmental Studies (MES) at York University based on my Plan of Study. In this Portfolio, I demonstrate my understanding of the learning components of my areas of concentration: settler colonialism, place and Land, treaty relationships and situated responsibilities, and environmental arts. The first two learning components—settler colonialism, place and Land, and treaty relationships and situated responsibilities—appear throughout my literature review, findings and discussion. These components also motivated my enrollment in the MES program and continue to influence my ongoing research intentions of understanding where I come from as I develop a practice of belonging. Environmental arts comprise much of my methodology and methods, as well as a vehicle for presenting conversations with myself and my grandparents about our expressions and experiences of home.

This Portfolio also aligns with the goals of the Environmental Sustainability Education (ESE) Graduate Diploma. Most clearly in my autoethnographic and family-based engagement with treaty relationships and practices of belonging, this Portfolio prepares me to become a more effective educator by better understanding myself and my relationships with human and more-than-kin. These growing understandings add complexity to my perspective on and everyday actions in Winnipeg: the place that I call home. As I have been discussing with my grandparents, Indigenous legal orders and the Land itself teach us so much about living reciprocally and respectfully in Winnipeg.

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Acknowledgements

I have written this project from the city of Winnipeg, the heart of Treaty 1 Territory. Treaty 1 outlines agreements to make and renew relationships informed primarily by Anishinaabe law (Craft, 2013). As my ancestors gradually moved to this territory, they entered this treaty relationship. My Michif ancestors were directly involved in the Red River Resistance of 1869 and the Manitoba Act of 1870, but they were not a part of Treaty 1 negotiations. Despite this, my Kokum (paternal grandmother) acknowledges her treaty responsibilities, as someone who continues to live within the territory. Moving back to Winnipeg has recentered my relationships through Treaty 1 and the Anishinaabe laws that inform my place on this territory.

Alongside Anishinaabeg Nations, Treaty 1 is also the home and ancestral territory of Anishininewuk, Ininiwak and Očhéthi Šakówiŋ Peoples, and the national homeland of the Michif/Red River Métis. Additionally, Denesuline and Inuit Peoples, from territories directly north, have long called Winnipeg home. Indigenous Peoples have created urban Indigenous communities on this territory long before the city of Winnipeg was incorporated by the settler state. Winnipeg continues to be known as an urban Indigenous hub and home.

Winnipeg gets its name from Wînipêk, a Cree and Anishinaabe word that translates to dirty or muddy water (Sinclair, 2024). However, I do not use Wînipêk to refer to the city because Wînipêk describes the watershed of Lake Winnipeg. The muddy quality of the water comes from algae, some species of which date back to Lake Agassiz, thus considered Manitoba's oldest inhabitant (Sinclair, 2024). Algal blooms, due to industrial agriculture, municipal wastewater treatment, and the draining of wetlands (Lake Winnipeg Foundation, 2024), continue to intensify because of climate change. My commitment to treaty relationships and Indigenous governance illuminates that Land Back is best for the health of Wînipêk and the humans and more-than-humans related to it. As follows, I take seriously everyday moments of education on these topics, both in the position of educator and learner.

In the introduction, I describe how my learning process shifted while living on Kanien'kehá:ka territory in Tio'tià:ke/Montreal, and again on Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee, and Anishinaabe territory in Tkaronto/Aterón:to/Chi-Odena/Toronto. As this portfolio takes up my ongoing question of my place, as a Settler-Michif woman, on Land, this entire project embodies a snapshot of a territorial acknowledgement at this point of my learning.

This MES Portfolio has required collective work, and I would also like to acknowledge the people who helped make it possible. Firstly, thank you to my grandparents, Lorraine, Diane, Ken, and Dave, for entertaining my questions, telling me stories, and helping me understand who I am. Thank you to my

parents, Daina, J, Karl, and Kate for always encouraging me to ask questions, and taking time to listen and to play with me. Thank you to the women in my family who continue to archive family records, especially photographs. Thank you to my siblings for reminding me to have fun, and for showing me alternative perspectives.

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AI disclaimer

As planned in my MES Research Proposal, I used Otter AI (otter.ai) to help transcribe the interviews with my four grandparents. The research participants consented to this use of AI. Not relying on AI alone, I went over the transcripts multiple times and corrected for errors. While Otter AI generates summaries and analyses of the interviews, I ignored this content until after I had finished writing my MES Portfolio.

In the process of writing this paper and creating the film, I did not use other AI technology, including Davinci Resolve's AI features and Microsoft Copilot.

Introduction

Background, project context, and locating myself

Born and raised in the inner city, Winnipeg has always been where I am from. In my research proposal, I wondered if I did not question my belonging until I left Winnipeg because I feel accepted in the urban Indigenous community. While that still says a lot about feeling like I have a right to be in this the place, I considered less is how presenting as fully White has always impacted my sense of belonging. I also wonder if being mixed that afforded me a sense of belonging, too. The liberal multicultural discourse on Canadianness made it feel normal to have grandparents of various origins: Japanese, Michif, Hungarian, Danish, English, Scottish. This multicultural discourse is also very dangerous: it offers Indigenous Peoples incorporation through a politics of recognition (Coulthard, 2014). This obscures how treaties provide a recognition of Settlers, that is, "I recognize you now and this is our relationship" (Alfred, 2023, p. 275). Instead, the settler state claims authority to grant recognition of legitimacy and belonging.

I never thought much about being from this place until I left. When I was 17, I moved to Tio'tià:ke/Montreal for university. There, I first began attempting to answer what it means to be from Winnipeg. I would (and still do) reference the Red and Assiniboine Rivers' clear presence in the city, the smaller population size, and the high urban Indigenous population. Describing moving away for undergrad herself, bell hooks (2019), similarly writes that "it was clear to me that I shared the same tales I thought were significant over and over again" (p. 18). Talking with Prof. Les Sabiston (Michif), he echoed all of these features, especially the urban Indigenous population. I mention Les because he also showed a room of anthropology students that anthropologists can study Whiteness and settler colonialism. Moreover, he introduced me to Indigenous studies and started conversations about how being Michif is taken up quite differently outside of the territory where we are from.

Also during my undergrad, I took Prof. Patrick Owen's (Settler) course on plant medicines. His course provoked a series of one-on-one phone calls with my four biological grandparents, first asking for plant medicine recipes, and then asking about their cultures. Admittedly, I gave them no preparation for the questions that I was about to ask. So, when I called each grandparent to ask how they describe their culture, my maternal grandparents had no answer at first. My maternal grandmother is of Danish, English and Scottish heritage, and my maternal grandfather has Hungarian parents. While all of my grandparents were born as Canadian citizens, my grandparents who are White have rarely been asked about their cultures.

It was these phone calls that illuminated the invisibility of Whiteness. Eve Tuck (Unangax̂) & K. Wayne Yang (Settler) illustrate the relationships between Settlers, Indigenous Peoples, Black Peoples, land, and

property as “the basis of the formation of Whiteness in settler colonial nation-states” (2014, p. 224). However, “this context has been made invisible and natural” (Tuck, 2009, p. 415), and therefore rarely gets examined in everyday life. Tuck (2009) warns that “without the context of racism and colonization, all we’re left with is the damage” (p. 415). Therefore, these phone calls, alongside my involvement in community organizing, motivated me to properly understand colonialism in order to resist it (Grande, 2004), and, as Nicole Ineese-Nash (Mushkego Cree, French-Canadian, Irish) (2020) articulates, to “use my whiteness as a point of leverage to support my Indigenous brothers and sisters” (p. 13). Importantly, this started at a time when I was living away from home on unceded Kanien’kehá:ka lands. In the words of Zoe Todd (Métis) (2016):

> “How do you teach about the layered colonial realities that mould a Canadian city? How do you connect the threads of movement, displacement, stories, erasure, resistance, and kinship that enliven and shape cities across Canada? These questions take on a new meaning for me as a newly arrived guest in Ottawa intent on honouring the unceded Algonquin territories I occupy” (p. 90).

After a single gap year, I began the MES program. Moving to Tkaronto/Aterón:to/Chi-Odena/Toronto, I encountered similar questions about what it means to be from Winnipeg, and very different conversations about Métis identity and political relationships. I acknowledge the very real concerns of Ontario First Nations, who “deny… an approach to the recognition of Métis rights that relies exclusively on *Powley*, violates their rights, and ignores and undermines the relationships that have mediated coexistence between Métis and First Nations since the Métis Nation first emerged” (Mussell, 2023, p. 3). In Treaty 1 territory, inter-Indigenous relationships are also tense.

I became especially aware that I have a lot to learn about treaty relationships during the Manitoba Métis Self-Government Recognition and Implementation Agreement of 2021. A relationship between the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) and the Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada which seeks to “recognize, support, and advance the exercise of the Manitoba Métis’ right to self-determination, and its inherent right to self-government” (Manitoba Métis Self-Government Recognition and Implementation Agreement, 2021, p. 10), as the parties continue negotiations toward a modern treaty. This agreement reflects some contemporary issues emanating from the Manitoba Act of 1870: “Unresolved land claims and ongoing uncertainty of Métis rights” (King & Balaban, 2026, p. 10). This agreement has also illuminated First Nations’ concerns.

Cierra Bettens (Métis) (2024) explains the injunction put in motion by “Dakota Tipi and Canupawakpa Dakota First Nations in Manitoba” (para. 4). Located within Treaty 1 and Treaty 2 territory, respectively,

no Dakota Nations made treaty with the Crown (Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba, 2017). This is not to suggest that First Nations and their members who did sign onto Pre-Confederation, Numbered, or Modern Treaties have not been dispossessed. Rather, that assigning Dakota Nations "refugee" (Bettens, 2024, para.12) status despite having always been caretakers of the land is unjust and confusing. Daniel Voth (Michif) (2018) reminds us that the structure of settler colonialism has positioned Michif and First Nations self-determination in competition, through a fiction of "zero-sum conceptions of land" (p. 388). In Indigenous legal systems that do not view land as property, but rather as kin, it becomes possible for multiple nations to share the same land. Throughout all of these conversations, I began to think more seriously about my own citizenship with the MMF: in relation to what it means to be from Winnipeg, but also in terms of Michif solidarity with local First Nations, diverse urban Indigenous folks, and global Indigenous solidarity.

Additionally, 'Settler' and 'Indigenous' do not exist in binary opposition. As someone with predominantly Settler ancestry, I am part of "the contemporary beneficiaries of the treaties that gave the Crown access to Aboriginal lands and resources" (RCAP, 1996, p. 56 as cited in Mackey, 2016, pp. 129-130). That is, I do not want my Michif heritage and political practices to absolve me of Settler ways of being and knowing to which I am also related. I agree that we must stay cautious of the political consequences of "spatial metaphors, such as 'positionality'" (Smith & Katz, 1993, p. 68, as cited in Tuck & McKenzie, 2015, p. 18), and I wish not to entertain "Settler moves to innocence" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 10). In this ongoing process of understanding who I am and where I come from, Land remains central in every question and relationship.

Research topic

In conversation with my grandparents, I ask, what is my place, as a Settler-Michif woman, on Land: both in my hometown of Wînipêk/Winnipeg and wherever else I am living. While this question guides my research, it requires lifelong engagement and I do not attempt to answer it here. Instead, I describe initial practices of belonging (Feghali, 2024) by learning centered on treaty relationships and responsibilities, Indigenous intelligence, resurgence, and governance, Land, and collective processes of making (art, conversation, relationships, etc.) in everyday life.

Research questions and objectives

Autoethnographic research questions:

- *What are the stories of Wînipêk/Winnipeg that I have inherited from my ancestors? How do these stories inform my historical, future, and present relationships with/on Land?*
- *How can environmental art help me learn about situated responsibilities?*
- *What does it mean to belong to a place? How can I practice belonging in Wînipêk/Winnipeg?*

Grandparent-centered research questions:

- *What can I learn from my relatives' oral and visual narratives about ways to practice belonging in Wînipêk/Winnipeg?*
- *With which more-than-humans do my grandparents maintain a special connection? Why?*

Asking these questions has helped me better understand myself through my relationships with family and more-than-humans. This knowledge contributes to an ongoing practice of belonging committed to Indigenous Land, laws, and life.

Literature review

Settler colonialism

First, it must be said that the histories of this territory do not begin with settler colonialism, and that Indigenous Peoples and Nations are still here and inform the contexts and lived realities of everyone who finds home in so-called Canada. However, contemplating what it means to be from Winnipeg, as a Settler-Michif woman, requires that I also examine settler colonialism. Its structure has shaped conversations with family, my understandings of treaty responsibilities, and questions of place and belonging.

In Settler Colonial Studies, Patrick Wolfe (English) (2006) has offered perhaps the most cited contribution to the field: that "settler colonizers come to stay: invasion is a structure not an event" (p. 388). Additionally, Wolfe (2006) articulates mechanisms by which settler colonialism persists and remakes itself, consequently distinguishing settler colonialism from external and internal colonialism. Understanding this specificity ensures that life in settler states such as Canada do not get misunderstood through a postcolonial framework.

Because Settlers are here to stay, "the process of detaching from British imperial rule—becoming 'postcolonial' as it were—did not structurally alter the colonial relationship between settlers and

Indigenous populations" (Day, 2015, p. 104). This echoes "Indigenous resistance… to the idea that colonialism is over, finished business" (Smith, 1999, p. 27). As settler colonialism "covers its tracks and operates towards its self-supersession" (Veracini, 2011a, p. 3), it is, however, made invisible in settler society. In other words, whereas, "colonialism *reproduces* itself… settler colonialism, by contrast, *extinguishes* itself" (Veracini, 2011a, p. 3, emphasis in original). Equating these colonialisms exemplifies what Tuck and Yang (2012) call "equivocation" (p. 19), comprising one of many "settler moves to innocence" (p. 10). Linda Tuhiwai Smtih (Ngāti Awa and Ngāti Porou, Māori) (1999) cautions that "post-colonialism is viewed as the convenient invention of Western intellectuals which reinscribes their power to define the world" (p. 14). Therefore, lacking a specific understanding of settler colonialism risks supporting settler futurity.

While "there was, in fact, a greater population in these Indian nations in 1492 than in all of Western Europe" (Sakai, 1983, p. 7), genocide has altered these demographics. Eve Tuck and Marcia McKenzie (unmarked) (2015), note that "settler colonialism wants Indigenous land, not Indigenous peoples, so Indigenous peoples are cleared out of the way of colonial expansion, first via genocide and destruction, and later through incorporation and assimilation" (p. 66). Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island have and continue to pose challenges for what settlers want: land.

The settler colonial attitude toward Indigenous Peoples reflects another specific element of settler colonialism: a "logic of elimination" (Wolfe, 2006, p. 402). Relationships between Black people and the settler colonial state were differently characterized by a logic of accumulation, "fully racialized in the 'one-drop rule'" (Wolfe, 2006, p. 387). However, such logics are more complicated than binaries: Afro-Indigenous peoples and enslaved Indigenous peoples quickly complicate being "racialized in opposing ways" (Wolfe, 2006, p. 387). With attention to nuances, Wolfe's (2006) logics inform what Tuck and Yang (2012) call a "triad of relations between settler-native-slave" (p. 17). As follows, "*breaking the settler colonial triad, in direct terms, means repatriating land to sovereign Native tribes and nations, abolition of slavery in its contemporary forms, and the dismantling of the imperial metropole*" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 31, emphasis original). This is why Prof. Muna-Udbi Ali's opening territorial acknowledgement for her class busted myths that "in Canada, many still seem to think there was no enslavement here, believing only that Canada was a shining safe station on a glorious Underground Railroad" (Vowel, 2016, p. 120). This triad also makes clear that "the term *settler* does not, and can never, refer to the descendants of Africans who were kidnapped and sold into chattel slavery" (Vowel, 2016, p. 17). People have diverse histories of coming to this territory called Canada, often impacted by imperialism and other forms of colonialism elsewhere.

Another characteristic of settler colonialism is that it "remakes land into property" (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015, p. 154). Alongside settler colonialism's invisibility, Tuck and McKenzie (2015) argue that these characteristics "help to answer our question 'why do some societies ignore place?'" (p. 154). Indeed, Tuck and McKenzie (2015) argue that "settler societies are designed to not consider place—to do so would require consideration of genocide (Grande, 2004), but also ongoing displacement and dispossession" (p. 154). Attending to place in settler colonial contexts foregrounds that settler colonialism has always been about land and "enduring Indigeneity" (Kauanui, 2016, para. 1) continues to challenge territorial desire.

As outlined in the *Land Back* Red Paper, "in Canada, 89 percent of lands have been roughly divided between the federal and provincial governments" (Pasternak et al., 2019, p. 9) while "reserves occupy 0.02 percent of the national land base" (Pasternak et al., 2019, p. 24). "These so-called 'Crown Lands' are an artefact of the 'doctrine of discovery'" (Pasternak et al., 2019, p. 9) and "the vast majority of natural resource extraction is based on the leasing, permitting, and licensing of Crown Land" (Pasternak et al., 2019, p. 25). Most basically, "land (not money) is actually the basis for U.S. wealth" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 24), as well as other settler colonial states like Canada. As Crown Lands reify the settler colonial idea that land is property and provide key sites for Canadian economic development, it is clear who will be rich and who will be poor according to this "intentional and systematic" (Manuel & Derrickson, 2017, p. 71) distribution.

Because "the horizons of the settler colonial nation-state are total and require a mode of total appropriation of Indigenous life and land" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 5), Indigenous presence reminds the state and its subjects that projects of settler colonialism remain incomplete. Still, Canada's appropriation of Indigenous lands rightfully leads to claims by Indigenous Peoples and allies that all of so-called Canada is stolen land. Engaging with treaty relationships, Asch (Settler) (2014) writes that "while there is considerable truth in describing what we have done as theft, that is not the whole story" (p. 73). Specific treaty relationships have taught me more about ongoing inter-Indigenous and Indigenous-Settler relationships on this territory called Winnipeg.

Treaty relationships and responsibilities

Deeply complex and context-specific, treaties inform one's sense of place and home in so-called Canada. Treaties on these lands predate European settlement: "Indigenous people have been making treaties for thousands of years" (King & Balaban, 2026, p. 7). Hayden King (Anishinaabe) and Kelsi-Leigh Balaban (Métis/Settler) (2026) continue to describe that "the process of treaty-making between Indigenous peoples

and the Crown began formally through the framework established by the Royal Proclamation of 1763" (p. 7). In the pre-Confederation period, treaties "were not about land so much as they were about securing military and economic aid from the eastern First Nations" (Vowel, 2016, p. 244). Still, with the onset of The Royal Proclamation of 1763, scholars like Clifford Atleo (Ts'msyen and Nuu-chah-nulth) and Jonathan Boron (Cayuga, Irish, Polish, German) (2022) describe a "shift from settler and guest to colonizer" (p. 4) in the European role of treaty-making.

The Numbered Treaties shifted the process of treaty-making again, toward an increasingly aggressive stance of dispossessing First Nations of their lands. As Chelsea Vowel (Métis) (2016) explains, "signed between 1871 and 1921, every single one of the 11 Numbered Treaties has a similar clause. *Surrender, cede, release, yield* – give up your land forever and ever, and that land now belongs to Canada; thank you very much" (pp. 254-255). Right before the signing of Treaty 1, the Manitoba Act of 1870 created the province of Manitoba and a political context of "Westward expansion" (King & Balaban, 2026, p. 10). Niigaan Sinclair (Anishinaabe) (2024) argues that it was specifically The Peguis-Selkirk Treaty of 1817 that set the conditions for the making of Treaty 1: "you might even think of these twenty-four square miles as the first legal, agreed-upon shared space between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. The first Manitoba" (p. 278). However, Selkirk broke his promise, "offering tobacco only once. He considered the treaty a 'land sale'" (Sinclair, 2024, p. 277). Come 1871, the first of the Numbered Treaties was signed at Lower Fort Garry, minutes away from land we call Winnipeg today. Sinclair (2024) illustrates how, "for over 150 years, Canada has pursued a violent and draconian relationship with Indigenous Peoples—with Winnipeg being ground zero for every step" (Sinclair, 2024, p. 12).

Part of a constellation of strategies to assert and maintain settler sovereignty, "treaties have been a tool of dispossession" (King & Balaban, 2026, p. 20). Whereas treaties are supposed to be nation-to-nation agreements, "here the 'nation-to-nation' relationship is one in which it is one nation over another" (Asch, 2014, p. 106). Asch (2014) describes that the

> "shared understanding of Treaty 4… put the Indigenous parties in the same jurisdictional relationship with the Crown as other autonomous political entities within the Empire, such as Canada and New Zealand – that is, 'brothers to each other' and 'children of the Queen" (p. 90).

These kinship relationships suggest that while treaty-making in a Canadian settler colonial context has caused irreparable damage, treaties also offer hope. More specifically, Indigenous approaches to treaty-making offer insightful instructions for living together.

Beyond the language of kinship, Indigenous laws have informed much of the treaty negotiations with (and of course beyond) the Crown. Vowel (2016) writes that "renewal of treaty relationships is very much a

core aspect of Indigenous treaty-making" (p. 244), and Asch (2014) asks, "What did we promise in order to gain permission to settle on their lands?" (p. 75). Therefore, not only should these promises be kept, but treaties also require revisiting and renewing the relationship. That is, while treaties "are often framed in the broader discourse as long-ago artifacts or historical documents that affirm the surrender of lands" (King & Balaban, 2026, p. 7), they are not documents of the past, but dynamic agreements in the present and future.

On the topic of documents, the written record of treaties does not most accurately represent what transpired during treaty negotiations. For example, in the Numbered Treaties, "it is only in the written version of treaties where surrender appears" (King, 2020, p. 1). "Treaties have always been more than what was written on paper" (Vowel, 2016, p. 247), but "text is given precedence, which means that the oral is interpreted against what is written" (Asch, 2014, p. 84). Lee Maracle (Stó꞉lō) (2017) asserts that in Western worldviews, "once written, knowledge, story, song, etc., become property, intellectual property" (p. 121). Highlighting "for it to become property, the individual must do something to it" (p. 121), Maracle (2017) connects privileging the written word and "the rationale for stealing the land" (p. 121), where a 'good use of land' turns it into private property. This is to underline that written interpretations of treaty directly prioritize certain 'uses' of land over others and are biased by the worldviews of the colonizing party, which remain legitimized through upholding fictions such as *terra nullius* and 'benevolent' projects of 'civilization'. These myths "actively displace Indigenous place relationships" (Battell Lowman & Barker, 2015, p. 63). Affording more legitimacy to what was written, and/or considering the written version alone, leads to interpretations of treaty that benefit settler sovereignty. Vowel (2016) asks, "How can we possibly learn from the past when this country is so invested in whitewashing it?" (Vowel, 2016, p. 122).

Local Indigenous perspectives on and practices of treaties remain crucial to understanding how to live respectfully and reciprocally on Indigenous lands today. Most importantly, various Indigenous perspectives of treaty explain that First Nations, such as "the Anishinabe agreed to share the land with the settlers" (Craft, 2013, p. 60), because they were assured by the Crown that "that they could continue to use their territory for their traditional activities" (Craft, 2013, p. 61). These "agreements to make relationships" (Craft, 2021, p. 56) are not agreements to cede or surrender land and any jurisdiction over it. As follows, I welcome the "possibility: that the 'sharing' interpretation more closely reflects what transpired than does the written version" (Asch, 2014, p. 80). These sharing interpretations live in oral accounts of treaty-making.

I write from Treaty 1 Territory: I benefit from and am bound by responsibilities connected to this treaty. "Treaty 1 was entered into by Brokenhead [Baaskaandibewi-ziibiing], Sagkeeng, Long Plain [Gaa-

ginooshkodeyaag], Peguis, Roseau River [Okwewanashko-ziibiing], Sandy Bay [Gaa-wiikwedaawangaag], and Swan Lake [Gaa-biskigamaag] First Nations" (Southern Chiefs Organization Inc., 2026; community name translations from Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre, 2015). According to the document itself, Treaty 1 was signed by "the Chippewa and Swampy Cree Tribes of Indians" (Treaty No. 1, 1871). However, Aimée Craft (Anishinaabe-Métis) (2013) explains that it was mostly Anishinaabe peoples in the territory present at Lower Fort Garry for the making of Treaty 1: "although the Swampy Cree are mentioned as parties to the treaty, they essentially consisted of a small group who were living on the St. Peter's reserves with the Anishinabe, under the leadership of Chief Peguis" (pp. 48-49). Additionally, Dakota Nations were never invited into the treaty relationship (Bettens, 2024). Therefore, "these negotiations were largely based on Anishinabe protocols and practices" (Craft, 2013, p. 48). Craft (2013) argues that it is through "Anishinabe *inaakonigewin* (law)" (p. 60) which informs "Anishinabe interpretation of treaty today" (p. 108). Anishinaabe interpretations illuminate the true spirit and intent of Treaty 1.

This is to acknowledge that in the making of Treaty 1 and Modern Treaties on this territory, "Canada's entire 'legal' approach is based on self-interest, and certain core principles will never truly be up for negotiation as far as Canada is concerned" (Vowel, 2016, p. 252). The status quo must remain intact. In contrast, Asch (2014) suggests that "we take the view that we meant what we said" (p. 99): that the Numbered Treaties were negotiated in "good faith" (p. 83). Whether the Crown negotiated (and negotiates) in good or bad faith, Settlers "are all here to stay" (Asch, 2014, p. 3), and are also treaty people. Canada's unjust and entitled legal system and coercive contexts of treaty-making do not excuse anyone from disregarding treaty promises. From a Cree perspective, Harold Johnson (2007) articulates, "I will never suggest that you go back where you came from, for I assure you, *Kiciwamanawak*, that you have a treaty right to be here" (Johnson, 2007, p. 14). Attending to treaties, as living agreements and relationships, gives anyone living on treaty territory a better understanding of their place on that Land. Moreover, Sherry Pictou (Mi'kmaw) (2015) discusses the potential of informal "small 't' treaty relations… for transforming Indigenous-settler (inter-cultural) relations" (p. 457). In the context of Winnipeg, at the heart of Treaty 1 territory, Craft (2013) reminds us that Anishinabe inaakonigewin helps us understand local, everyday treaty relationships.

Critical place inquiry and Land-based education

I am developing my understanding of my relationships with Winnipeg and my 'right to be here' as a Settler-Michif woman, in part, through considering situated treaty relationships and responsibilities.

Scholars such as Megan Bang (Ojibwe and Italian) et al. (2014) illuminate the specificities of places themselves: "places produce and teach particular ways of thinking about and being in the world. They tell us the way things are, even when they operate pedagogically beneath a conscious level" (p. 44). Tuck and McKenzie's (2015) "critical place inquiry" (p. 5) affirms that "it is the specificity, the rootedness of place, that makes it so important in social science and in human imagination" (p. 21). The critical place inquiry that Tuck and McKenzie (2015) propose, refuses settler futurity and invites the discomfort to consider place in settler societies in ways that disrupt "settler normalcy" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 35). Critical place inquiry "extends beyond considerations of the social to more deeply consider the land itself and its nonhuman inhabitants and characteristics as they determine and manifest place" (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015, p. 19). Critical place inquiry is also "accountable to issues of land, sovereignty, and resistance as understood within Indigenous frameworks" (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015, p. 151), and is therefore accountable to Indigenous Peoples and futurity. Critical place inquiry examines settler colonialism, but focuses on supporting Land-based education, which is rooted in Indigenous intelligence.

Land education offers not so much an alternative to place-based education, but rather a model of education that precedes Western powers on this territory. Through Nishnaabeg story, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg) (2014) describes a model of Land-based education which involves Land, community, family and Elders, and a learner. In this story, Kwezens "learned both *from* the land and *with* the land…. She *comes to know* maple sugar with the support of her family and Elders. She comes to know maple sugar in the context of love" (Simpson, 2014, p. 7, emphasis in original). As articulated by John Pierre Craig (Louisiana Creole) et al. (2025), "learning becomes a process of becoming with the world, not solely acquiring knowledge about it" (Craig et al., 2025, p. 2). In this process, learners respect Land as "relative" (Craig et al., 2025, p. 2) and "first teacher" (Bang et al., 2014, p. 49), rather than a resource to extract.

Land in this sense must not be reduced to a noun. Sandra Styres (Haudenosaunee, French, English) (2019) writes Land with a "capital 'L'" (p. 26). This reflects how "Land *is* spiritual, emotional, and relational; Land *is* experiential, (re)membered, and storied; Land *is* consciousness—Land *is* sentient" (p. 27, emphasis in original). Attending to the spiritual and the feminine, Vanessa Watts (Haudenosaunee, Anishnaabe) (2013) activates "Place-Thought" (p. 21), where "land is alive and thinking and that humans and non-humans derive agency through the extensions of these thoughts" (p. 21). Relatedly, as Bang et al. (2014) describe, "the ontology of land-based pedagogies might be summarized as 'Land is, therefore we are'" (Bang et al., 2014, p. 45). Evidently, Land-based education is deeply entwined with Indigenous intelligence. Writing about Indigenous intelligence, Elder Jim Dumont (Anishinaabe) (2006) emphasizes that "the spirit is at the centre of everything that is of this creation…Our relationship to one another is

first of all from spirit to spirit" (Dumont, 2006, p. 7). This is to underline that Land education must center the spirit. Moreover, Land-based education must reflect the diversity of Land and Indigenous intelligences, within and between communities.

Resistance, Indigenous resurgence, and desire

While it is crucial to understand the structure of settler colonialism and the severity of its consequences, settler colonialism is not inevitable, its future is not guaranteed. Responding to Wolfe's (2006) piece, J. Kēhaulani Kauanui (Kānaka Maoli) (2016) adds "that indigeneity itself is enduring… indigenous peoples exist, resist, and persist" (para. 1). Additionally, Warren Bernauer (unmarked) (2024) proposes "that an over-reliance on structural metaphors risks overstating the permanence of settler colonial formations" (p. 452) and encourages "the disavowal of settler responsibility for colonial injustice" (p. 453) by evacuating any sense of hope. Here, "we arrive at a paradox of damage: to refute it, we need to say it aloud" (Tuck, 2009, p. 417). Refuting settler colonialism is "resistance—movements and embodied practices focused on addressing and fighting against settler colonial and state violence" (Tomiak et al., 2019, p. 7). Julie Tomiak (Anishinaabe and European) et al., (2019) distinguish resistance from "resurgence—movements and embodied practices focused on rebuilding nation-specific Indigenous ways of being and actualizing self-determination" (p. 7). Resistance and resurgence have very different focuses, and yet, both resistance and resurgence can be practiced simultaneously.

The complexity of resistance and resurgence illustrates Tuck's (2009) framework of desire: "documenting not only the painful elements of social realities but also the wisdom and hope" (p. 416). Sinclair (2024)—who I previously cited as calling Winnipeg 'ground zero' for another wave of settler colonial violence, as well as "ground zero in the issue of murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls" (p. 164), and apocalypse, upon apocalypse, upon apocalypse—practices this desire. He also calls "this place is ground zero in Canada's future" (Sinclair, 2024, p. 262). Tuck (2009) writes how "desire is about longing, about a present that is enriched by both the past and the future. It is integral to our humanness" (Tuck, 2009, p. 417). Responding to this, Andrew Curley (Diné) and Sara Smith (unmarked) (2024) suggest that "desire is temporal" (p. 181), and "relationships to time are political orientations" (p. 176). Relationships to time are interwoven in practices of resurgence: "this does not mean reifying or fixing ancestors in time but placing their practices and political systems alongside those of today" (Curley & Smith, 2024, p. 176). In this sense, resurgence embodies a "generative refusal" (Simpson, 2021, p. 10) of settler systems, including imposed notions of linear time.

Resurgence's relationships with time are often reflected in practices of visiting. As articulated by Tuck et al. (2023), "visiting enacts futurity and remembrance in the present" (p. 144). Writing about keeoukaywin (the visiting way), Cindy Gaudet (Métis) (2019) reflects on a conversation with Maria Campbell (Métis) in which Campbell said, "'Theory comes from the way you lived. It is inside of you. Go home, visit your relatives, visit the land'" (p. 50). These connections between visiting and theory underline that "knowledge itself is held in the relationships and connections formed with the environment" (Wilson, 2008, p. 87), as well as people, and the cosmos (Wilson, 2008). Indigenous theories are relational, embodied and storied.

Additionally, Dian Million (Tanana Athabascan) (2014) asserts that "story has always been practical, strategic, and restorative. Story *is* Indigenous theory" (p. 35, emphasis in original). Patty Krawec (Anishinaabe, Ukrainian) (2025) emphasizes how "Anishaa dibaajimowinan…the stories we just made up… are powerful" (p. 43). All stories share and generate knowledge, and how we both tell and listen to stories matters.

Activating the wâhkôhtowin imagination, Dwayne Donald (amiskwaciwiyiniwak) (2021) uses story to understand "kinship connectivity of original treaties between human beings and all other forms of life" (p. 56). In Campbell's (2007) call to return to the principles of wâhkôhtowin she writes,

> "There is a word in my language it is 'wahkotowin.' Today it is translated to mean kinship, relationship, family, as in human family. But once, from our place it meant the whole of creation. And our teachings tell us that all of creation is related and inter-connected to all things within it and Wahkootowin means honoring and respecting those relationships" (p. 2).

Indeed, "the idea of a nation did not simply apply to human beings" (Venne, 1998, p. 23, as cited in Watts, 2013, p. 27), and practices of Indigenous resurgence recognize nationhood within "the animal world, plant world, sky world, mineral world and other non-human species" (Watts, 2013, p. 25). John Borrows (Anishinaabe/Ojibway) (2024) also speaks of these nations, and how to learn about treaty from them: "the more-than-human world can provide legal principles and processes. We can reason by way of analogy from them" (29:55). Indigenous resurgence recenters treaty practices beyond the human, "located in specific languages, locales and intellectual traditions of Indigenous peoples" (Wildcat & Voth, 2023, p. 477). As noted by Craig et al. (2025), "this commitment to relational specificity necessitates a refusal of extraction and standardization" (Craig et al., 2025, p. 2). In their own ways and stories, many of these treaties with more-than-human nations emphasise the collective rather than the individual; Land is to be shared and respected, not owned and extracted.

Practices of belonging

The question of belonging, too, is intimately connected to Land. Diverse relationships with land can position belonging as possession, or as "practice" (Feghali, 2024, p. 286). Layla Feghali (Lebanese) (2024) recognizes that "migration is a natural phenomenon" (p. 289) but "what are not natural are nation-states, borders, empire, settler occupation, genocide, and chattel slavery" (p. 289). Therefore, she addresses "the anxiety of settler un-belonging" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 15) but does not alleviate it. For Feghali (2024), "when place anchors habit, relationships of belonging and culture naturally form over time" (p. 289). These practices of belonging that seek reciprocal relations with Land must always foreground that it is Indigenous Land to which I relate. Moreover, because "our places make us. Not just the ones we come from, but the ones we live in every day" (Feghali, 2024, p. 289), I must re-evaluate my belonging as I come to know what living respectfully looks like in each specific place.

Within the context of so-called Canada, to practice belonging can feel like an unsettling proposition. This is because settler colonialism is, in part, "an ongoing fundamental conflict over belonging on the land" (Barker, 2021, p. 13) and practices of belonging involve "recentering Indigenous continuation and the source that makes us all" (Feghali, 2024, p. 291). Practices of belonging highlight the shallowness of settler colonial belonging. In a refusal of settler colonial belonging, Dionne Brand (Trinidadian Canadian) (2001) highlights the "degrees of belonging" (p. 66) through which one might move: "migrants transmogrify into citizens with disappeared origins" (p. 65). These are the "surface notions of belonging to nation" (Feghali, 2024, p. 279). Not only does such a shallow approach to belonging entertain settler futurity, it also does not fully satisfy the "human need" (Feghali, 2024, p. 281) and desire to belong. *Practices* of belonging support the stories, laws, Land, and life Indigenous to a place, a generative practice for everyone.

Methodology and methods

Research design context and overview

In this project, I employ autoethnography to examine myself in relation to historical and ongoing Land-based knowledge systems, settler colonial formations, and practices of belonging in what we know as Winnipeg today. My approach is also in conversation with my grandparents to better understand myself and where I come from.

Inspired by activities that I have done with my grandparents before, I asked each of my grandparents to take me to a place, and to tell me about their relationship with it. More than conversation, we also made

photos and video in these places. These activities took place in/around Winnipeg, as all four of my biological grandparents live in the city, and Winnipeg is where I was born and raised. Our collective research for this project represents only some of our ongoing conversations about notions of home, what it means to be from Winnipeg, and learning to live with respect, reciprocity, and love.

Autoethnographic research questions:

- *What are the stories of Wînipêk/Winnipeg that I have inherited from my ancestors? How do these stories inform my historical, future, and present relationships with/on Land?*
- *How can environmental art help me learn about situated responsibilities?*
- *What does it mean to belong to a place? How can I practice belonging in Wînipêk/Winnipeg?*

Autoethnography

Autoethnography combines "autobiographical description" (Chang, 2008, p. 46) and "ethnographic analysis and interpretation" (Chang, 2008, p. 46). Ethnographies in general "can offer a sense of showing versus telling" (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015, p. 87), revealing situated political, environmental, historical relations of a place. Shelley Hannigan (unmarked) (2014) describes how "multiple dimensions of place inform our sense of self, and conversely, our sense of self informs our experience of place" (p. 3). Autoethnographies center the experiences of the author, but seek to study the author's contexts and relationships. Rather than chasing generalizability, "for autoethnographers, validity means that a work seeks verisimilitude" (Ellis, 2011, para. 33). That is, those listening to the story can imagine it happening.

To study his place within settler colonialism and decolonization, Adam Barker (Settler) (2021) takes "phenomenological and autoethnographic approaches… because the intellectual, the personal, and the political are very deeply intertwined" (p. 24). Moreover, Sonja Boon (mixed-race Settler) et al. (2018) use autoethnography to examine their relationships with place and Land. For example, the authors ask, "if roots represent our family histories—and our bodily stories—then we must also consider how roots help us navigate our sense of place" (p. 32). Indeed, autoethnographers often inquire about "space and place" (Ellis, 2011, para. 7), and how place becomes entangled with power relations, hope and collective action.

These characteristics of autoethnography have informed my filmmaking and daily life. Embracing walking as a way to process information (L. Myers, personal communication, February, 2026), questions and conclusions often arose while in movement. As recommended by Prof. Stiegman and echoed in

Grant's (2025) autoethnography, "voice memos served to record my thoughts and feelings *in motion*" (pp. 107-108, emphasis in original).

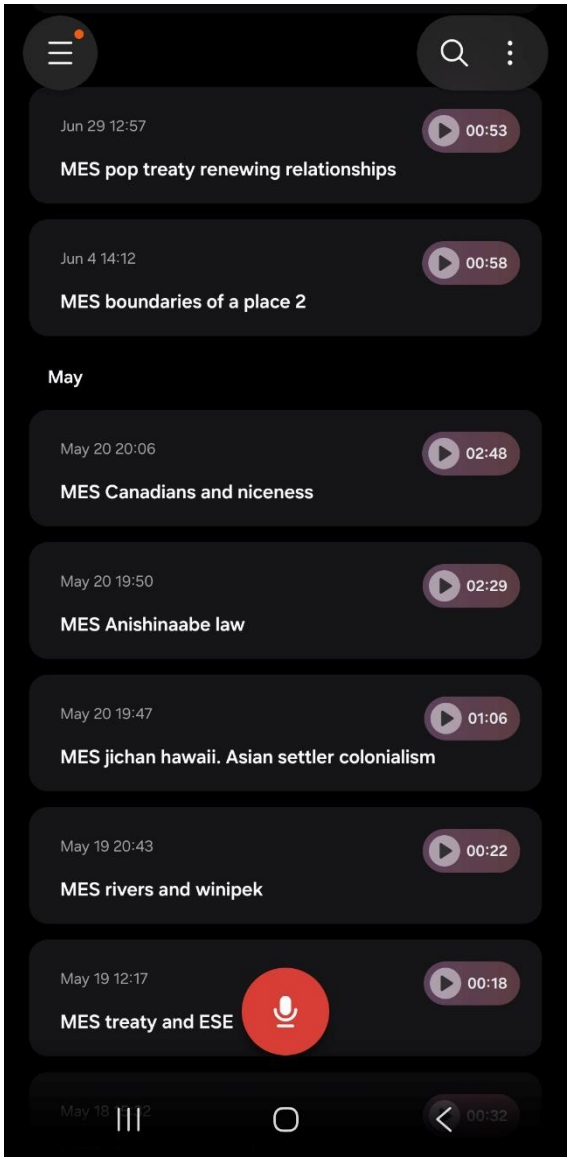


Figure 1: Screenshot of recent voice memos on my cellphone. Image by author, June, 2026.

In addition to place, autoethnography necessarily involves other people: "the people and places we relate to every day inform how we understand, express, and become" (Feghali, 2024, p. 285). Ellis et al. (2011) consider "interactive interviews" (para. 20), which are "collaborative endeavors between researchers and participants" (para. 20), as a kind of autoethnography. Therefore, I also approached research outings with my grandparents autoethnographically. As follows, "relational ethics" (Ellis, 2007) and "relational accountability" (Wilson, 2008, pp. 97-125) remain critical. It is not only the researcher at stake in these activities.

Research outings and photo-elicitation interviews with grandparents

Grandparent-centered research questions:

- *What can I learn from my relatives' oral and visual narratives about ways to practice belonging in Wînipêk/Winnipeg?*
- *With which more-than-humans do my grandparents maintain a special connection? Why?*

Data collection: Research outings, one-on-one interviews, *Where I'm From* poems

In November, 2025, I took a flight back to Winnipeg with two cameras in my pocket. I had returned to be led on 'research outings' by my grandparents. As a visual method, "seeing places with participants (walks)… enable more insight into the concrete aspects of place that may be affecting understandings and actions" (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015, p. 99). Moreover, Dustin Brass (Saulteaux) (2018) writes how "place holds memories and stories, and calls forth embodied responses within us" (p. 157). I designed these research outings with the intent of learning about my grandparents' memories of Winnipeg and home, and how these experiences have shaped my own understanding of myself and my relationship with Winnipeg.

First, I visited with my Beste (maternal grandmother) in her home in the south end of the city. She showed me family objects that she has held on to, and the memories embedded in them.

The next day, my Kokum (paternal grandmother) took me on a walk along Assiniboine Avenue, running parallel to and in-between Portage Avenue and the Assiniboine River. The road stops where the river bends, and at that point, we turned north toward Portage Ave. to have lunch.

The day after that, my Grandpa (maternal grandfather) picked me up in his car, and drove me all around St. James (West End). He showed me the first Winnipeg house that he lived in. He showed me the house my mom first lived in, and practically every house since then. He also showed me places he used to work, like the bowling alley on Portage Ave., as well as his *alma mater*, places he would meet friends, and a walkway in which he had his mom's name engraved in a brick.

Later that day, my Jichan (paternal grandfather) drove me around St. James again, where he also grew up once returning to Canada as a teenager. We then left the perimeter of the city, twice, to visit two different golf courses where he sometimes works, plays a game, or just hangs out.

We began each outing spending 5 to 10 minutes writing a draft of a *Where I'm From* poem (Lyon, 1999) following a template (Appendix A). We used these poems to help focus our thinking during the research outings, but did not share the poems with each other. During these outings, I lent my grandparents a point-

and-shoot 35mm film camera, containing a roll of colour film with 24 exposures. I asked them to make photographs of these places (Appendix C), to help us with the interview later on. María Jesús Romera Iruela (unmarked) (2023) calls this kind of photo-elicitation "reflexive photography" (p. 70) because research participants took the pictures.

Before returning to Tkaronto/Aterón:to/Chi-Odena//Toronto, I got the film developed. In "the delay between taking the photographs and seeing the images" (Grant, 2025, p. 107), I would reflect on the research outings while walking in Tkaronto/Aterón:to/Chi-Odena//Toronto. Two weeks later, the photo scans were emailed to me. I ordered "two sets of prints—one for myself as a researcher and another for the participant" (Bach, 2007, p. 8). Once mailing each grandparents their prints, we set up a time for an interview on Zoom.

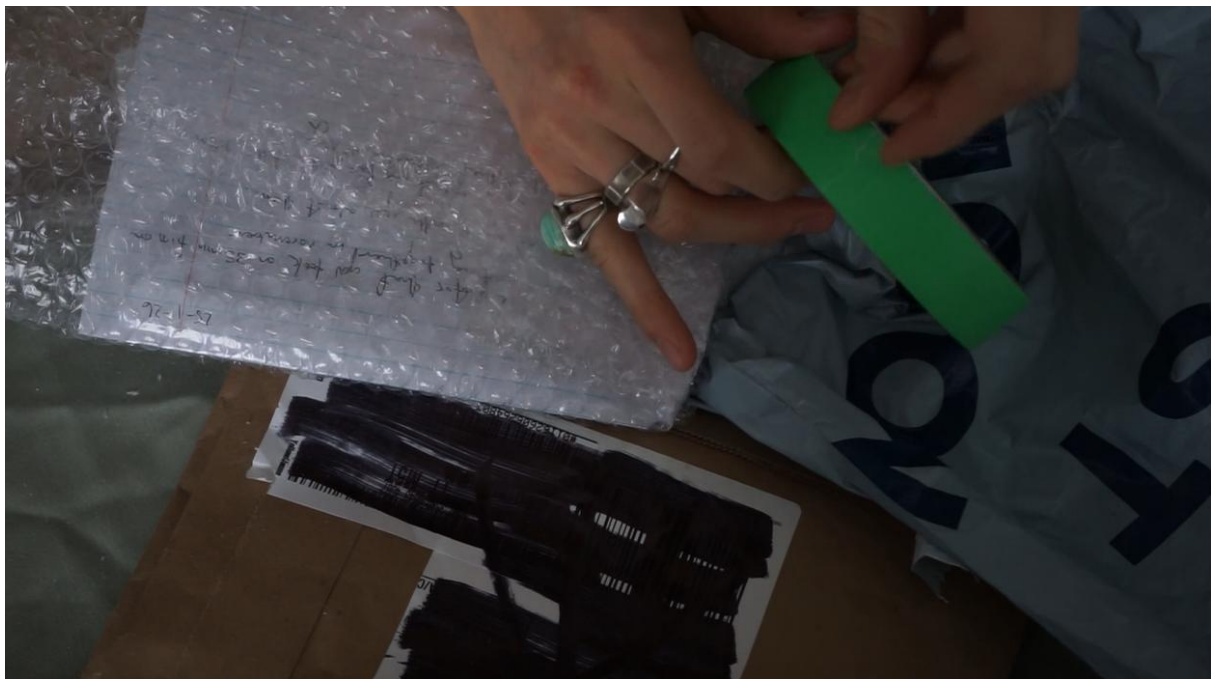


Figure 2: Packing printed photos to mail to my grandparents. Image by author, January, 2025.

The interviews happened over three weeks in February 2026, and the Zoom meeting was recorded: to have clips for the film, as well as audio to generate a transcript. Additionally, I timidly filmed bits of conversation on my camera, which is reflected in the opening of our film. We began each Zoom call with us both writing a *Where I'm From* poem (Lyon, 1999) following the same template. I came into the call with ideas of my poem prepared, and we spent 10 minutes to 1 hour thinking about how to write these poems (some grandparents had more questions/hesitations than others). Both my grandparents and I finished the *Where I'm From* poems (Appendix B) after the call, and sent them to each other in the coming days.

The interview guide (Appendix D) focused on the photos that my grandparents took during the research outings. Excitingly, photographs "opened up avenues for discussion in the interviews that unlikely would have emerged otherwise" (Butler-Kisber, 2010, p. 10). Our conversations were not restricted to the literal content of the photographs, but provided a base from which my grandparents shared their stories. During each interview, I took up Jacob and Furgerson's (2012) instructions to "seriously, close your mouth and listen!" (p. 9) and occasionally asked probing questions to keep us on track. I also created "a script for the beginning and end" (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012, p. 3), which includes thanking my grandparent and letting them know what will happen next with the research. After each interview, I would "take some time to reflect" (Roberts, 2020, p. 3198), first by walking, and then writing.

Analysis: Illustrated poems, interpretative phenomenological analysis

I uploaded the Zoom audio into Otter.ai (https://otter.ai/) to generate draft transcripts. Understanding that "transcripts be *verbatim* accounts of what transpired in the interview" (Poland, 1995, p. 302, emphasis in original), I had to go over these transcripts 3 to 4 times while listening to the interview recording to fix the machine's errors. After transcribing each interview, I gave my grandparents copies of the transcript to go over. They asked for no corrections, so I proceeded with the analysis.

First, I read over printed copies of the transcripts to select "particularly impactful" (Leigh & Brown, 2021, p. 65) words and phrases. I reorganized these phrases into an "illustrated poem" (Leigh & Brown, 2021, p. 64) and shared the poem with my grandparents (Appendix E). They seemed delighted to read this poem made from their words. This process of analysis should be both "helpful in making sense of the participants' experiences" (Leigh & Brown, 2021, p. 67) and attend to the researcher's "own embodiment" (Leigh & Brown, 2021, p. 67). Therefore, illustrated poems give insight beyond traditional coding.

That said, I also coded the interviews using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). As Tuck & McKenzie (2015) affirm, "phenomenology… entails methods of seeking to elaborate and understand embodied relationships to place" (p. 105). The double hermeneutic of IPA highlights my grandparents' processes of making sense of their place in the world, and my analysis of their sense-making. In IPA, "focus directs our analytic attention towards our participants' attempts to make sense of their experiences" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 75). Using a "combination of inductive and deductive coding" (Skjott Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019, p. 264), for me, this process required "coding in rounds" (Elliott, 2018, p. 2856). My analysis illuminates personal experiential themes specific to each interview, and later compares themes to "highlight the shared and unique features of the experience across the contributing participants" (Smith et

al., 1999, p. 100). The group experiential themes (Appendix F) from my analysis directed my filmmaking process.

Filmmaking: Sensory ethnography, walking methodologies, filming process and equipment, films for reference, editing process

Sensory ethnography

Since the research outings in November 2025, I have been filming, both in the company of my grandparents and without them around. As a genre, sensory ethnography interests me because it "gives you a sense of being in a place" (T. Danielson, personal communication, October, 2022). In feminist sensory ethnography, the filmmaker will "use the senses to enhance relationality rather than remove it from the equation" (Guzman & Hong, 2022, p. 193). Similarly, Boon et al.'s (2018) autoethnographies describe "tuning in to the multiplicity of our senses helps reveal what a landscape really is: a collection of smaller things, of plants and animals—of the more-than-human—not in isolation from a human behind a camera… but as continually and complexly interconnected" (p. 55). Elena H. Guzman (Afro-Boricua) and Emily Hong (Korean-American) (2022) discuss how autoethnographic sensory ethnography refuses "ethnographic subjects as the 'exotic other'" (p. 204), but risks rendering obscure the senses and meaning that a film wants to communicate because of "embodied differences" (p. 192) between audience members and the filmmaker.

Walking methodologies, filming process and equipment

My approach to filming autoethnographically begins with walking. Many filmmakers use walking as their method, including Guy Maddin (Canadian) (2008) for *My Winnipeg:* "Walking became… the process that helped Maddin to generate new ideas for the film" (Wershler, 2010, p. 40). Wershler (2010) suggests that "walking around [Winnipeg] transforms it into a home" (p. 41, original word "it"). However, walking must not replicate the flâneur, which "is a problematic walking trope in that he is conditioned by autonomy, ability, Whiteness and masculinity, and as such he is able to walk anywhere, detached from the immediate surroundings" (Springgay & Truman, 2019, p. 4). In contrast to the disembodied flâneur, Donald (2021) proposes a kind of walking that "activates the *wâhkôhtowin* imagination" (Donald, 2021, p. 59). Looking at "the etymological roots of *wâhkôhtowin*…wâki + pimohtê + ito + win—what is expressed literally is a 'bent-walking-over-the-land-reciprocity-movement-concept'" (Donald, 2021, p. 59). Thus, Donald (2021) describes a practice of walking that is embodied and attuned with Land. Leah Dorion (Métis) and Elder Curtis Breaton (Métis) similarly offer alternatives to "the colonial sedentary

system” (p. 16) and focus instead on “the original relationship forged by Métis with water” (p. 16). Movement and walking therefore facilitate a sensory ethnography of my and my grandparents’ practices of belonging.



Figure 3: Me, walking. Image by author, May, 2025.

Often reminded of Campbell’s (2007) encouragement to return to the principles of wâhkôhtowin, place and Land inform where and how I walked to make this film. On these walks, I would return to places my grandparents have shown me, and places I frequently visited as a kid: the banks of the Assiniboine River, Nistawayak, my parents’ homes. I used a Sony a7 mirrorless camera and a Zoom H5 sound recorder. Without the camera, I would also go on walks with a shotgun microphone, which amplified certain sounds and directed my listening toward them. On the many occasions that I have recorded the sounds of the Assiniboine River, ‘water sounds’ cannot be isolated from bird songs, rustling leaves, and construction across the water. This process of recording sound asks me listen to a place more holistically.



Figure 4: Recording at the Assiniboine River. Image by author, June, 2026.

Films for reference

Since the murder of Tina Fontaine, it has been impossible for me to disassociate the rivers of Winnipeg from MMIWG2S. Filmed on the Red River, Erika MacPherson (unmarked) and katherena vermette's (Michif) (2016) *this river* shows the love and care of community members involved in the Drag the Red project. Beyond the damage (Tuck, 2009), *this river* centres active hope and community building. Combining history and everyday life, Alanis Obomsawin's (Abenaki) (2014) *Trick or treaty?* educates the audience on varying interpretations and lived realities of Treaty 9, and community action to make change. Working with Zoom interviews and personal archival footage, Millefiore Clarkes' (Canadian) (2020) *Love in Quarantine* has also guided my process. Clarkes (2020) shifts between a film she made 20 years prior and present-day conversations about love. The people with whom she is in conversation appear as recurring characters, informing how I have integrated my grandparents' presences. As I work with footage filmed by my mom and step dad, originally recorded on video cassettes, I also take guidance from Sytra Mohammed's (Black) (2025) *Ye mizzoro birr – The revolving door home,* which uses family archival footage and "explores home when it is no longer attached to a place or property" (7:20). Both Sarah Polley's (Canadian) (2012) *The stories we tell* and Lisa Stevenson and Eduardo Kohn's (2010) *El reflejo* reflect playful processes of filmmaking with family and highlight acts of remembering in the context of death. Diana Allan's (unmarked) (2018) *So dear, so lovely* also leads with a playfulness, and follows an editing process that disjoins image and sound.

Editing process

In the process of editing the film, I wanted to balance narration and conversation. It was always assumed that I would film, record, and edit the audio-visual data, but that the content would reflect collective knowledge building with my grandparents. Prof. Martha Stiegman helped redirect me toward using more content from the Zoom interviews with my grandparents: often moments also selected for the illustrated poems (Appendix E). This reminded me of Obomsawin's film editing process, which beings with sound because "the word is sacred" (A. Obomsawin, personal communication, October, 2023). Following Aburawa and Shah's (2025) "creative subtitling," the subtitled version of the film (Appendix H) draws attention to the word and our conversations. I selected a seemingly large font size knowing that many of my family members will watch the film on their cellphones.

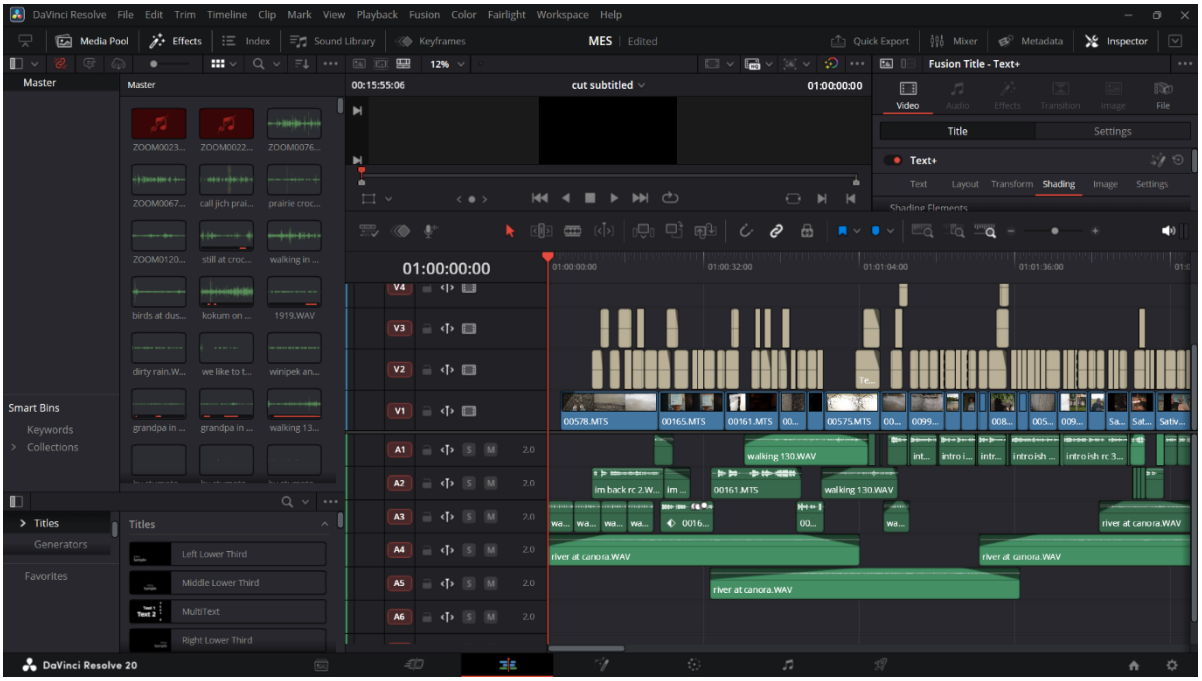


Figure 5: Workspace in Davinci Resolve while creative subtitling. Image by author, July, 2026.



Figure 6: Still from subtitled version of *Muddy water (is where I'm from).* Image by author, August, 2026.

Once I rooted my editing process in the interviews with my grandparents, the film better reflects the personal and group experiential themes (Appendix F) illuminated by my interpretative phenomenological analysis. Paired with co-writing portions of the script with my grandparents, the questions and suggestions that I offer in the film stay true to our everyday conversations. I shared rough cuts with Prof. Stiegman and my grandparents, and incorporated their feedback until the film clearly and efficiently communicates ideas and senses that reflect this collective research process.

Findings and discussion

Filmmaking

Structure and process: conversational, intergenerational narratives, short form

I ask, *how can environmental art help me learn about situated responsibilities?* Well, "artists ask different questions" (M. Leitold, personal communication, February, 2026): making art opens new pathways of understanding. I have learned how environmental arts are bound to social, political and ecological questions (L. Myers, personal communication, March, 2026), through which I continue to learn about complexity in interlocking systems of power, and intersectional practices of care. I find filmmaking in particular a beautiful process because it is inherently collaborative. Taking a conversational form that

centers intergenerational narratives, I got to experience how talking with my grandparents and revisiting these conversations in the film editing process, over and over again, reveals more about where I come from each time. Even though, “films are often thought of as entertainment rather than education” (p. 2), Jocelyn Thorpe (settler) and Kaila Johnston (Cree) (2022) suggest that, because we are always learning, films can address education-related calls to action by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015).

Making this film has also encouraged participant feedback (Chalfen, 2020; Smith, 1999), as my grandparents have expressed less interest in reading formal academic writing. The short form in particular invites audiences who might not watch a feature-length film (A. Aburawa & T. Shah, personal communication, May 2, 2026). Additionally, the short form makes it feasible for someone to take on multiple roles in the filmmaking process (A. Aburawa & T. Shah, personal communication, May 2, 2026; D. Allan, personal communication, February, 2023). The film that we have made, *Muddy water (is where I’m from),* has required that I coordinate logistics, write the script (Appendix G), record sound and image, and edit the film, always in conversation with Prof. Stiegman and my family members. Preparing, filming and editing, combined, have added complexity to how I have engaged with my research questions.

Content

Limits, boundaries and territoriality

I begin the film with coming home. Throughout my journey back, I have been thinking a lot about the ease with which I can return to Winnipeg and how I feel welcome back.

> “Winnipeg, wherever you’re born and you spend your formative years, will always be home” (D. Leitold, interview with my maternal grandfather).

Scholars like Brand (2001) remind me that this is not everyone’s story. Brand (2001) has also complicated my understanding of home and origins: “a city is not a place of origins” (p. 64), but rather where people meet and disappear their origins. Conversations with some of my grandparents have revealed this assimilatory logic in immigrant communities. For example, my maternal grandfather spoke about not learning Hungarian from his mother:

> “It's interesting how she, she, she didn't teach any of her 12 children Hungarian. And I asked her that once, and she told me, ‘This is Canada, we're speaking English in Canada’. That was it” (D. Leitold, interview with my maternal grandfather).

The ease with which my great grandmother identified as Canadian comes in large part from her status as a White woman who left behind the 'Old Country' in search of opportunity in so-called Canada, with little money at the start. Without the context of settler colonialism, racial capitalism (Robinson, 1983), and Indigenous resistance and resurgence, these family narratives easily reproduce the myth of Canada as a 'nation of immigrants'. Because my "great grandmother was a very, very staunch Canadian" (D. Leitold, interview with my maternal grandfather), it has felt generative to talk with my Grandpa about how immigrants enter into treaty relationships upon their arrival, and how these treaty relationships might inform practices of belonging (Feghali, 2024). Practices of belonging aspire not for recognition by and assimilation into a settler state, but instead uplift local Indigenous lifeworlds. This belonging, however, does not play into "settler adoption fantasies" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 14). Rather, "home becomes an integrated experience" (Feghali, 2024, p. 291) wherein practices from other Lands helps those living in diaspora to understand themselves in relation with local Indigenous Peoples and Land.

Nistawayak, considered the heart of the city where the Assiniboine River meets the Red, can be considered "the original name of what is now Winnipeg" (Sinclair, 2024, p. 38): not simply because of physical geography, but rather the process "when people came from three paths to create a community" (Sinclair, 2024, p. 38). Moreover, Tyler McCreary (Settler), in conversation with Brenda Macdougall (Métis), Adam Gaudry (Métis), and Chris Andersen (Métis) underline that "if you look at Prairie cities, they all exist where Métis communities existed… Winnipeg is obviously the best example" (McCreary, 2019, p. 154). Indigenous urbanization precedes the territory that we call Winnipeg today and the "definite kinship within urban settings" (McCreary, 2019, p. 157) endures. These kinship relationships of Michif urbanization embrace movement between urban centres and return.

As part of the home and ancestral territories of Ininiwak/Cree, Anishininewuk, Oceti Sakowin, and Anishinaabeg Nations, Winnipeg and local expressions of urban life follow thousands of years of gathering in this place. Nistawayak and Winnipeg, then, have become a place where some immigrants "disappear their origins" (Brand, 2001, p. 65), where Settlers "carry their sovereignty and lifestyles with them" (Veracini, 2011b, p. 206), and remains a place of Indigenous origins. Throughout the rest of my life, I will continue to ask about what it means to be from Winnipeg, I do not wish to dismiss this question. However, during my research with my grandparents, we started questioning arbitrary boundaries and origins. As I begin "to think of urban spaces as hubs rather than locales" (McCreary, 2019, p. 155), I have become quite interested in connections between places and how understanding a place relationally still attends to the specificities of local life.

In particular, the research outings with my grandparents helped me to think about the boundaries of a place. My Jichan (paternal grandfather) took me to a place that left the city of Winnipeg twice. Despite

leaving the arbitrary limits of the city, where he took me was still within his boundary of home. What these research outings illuminate is that I have always accepted the boundaries of Winnipeg as a fact. This reminds me of Jodi Byrd's (Chickasaw) (2020) comment that US settler colonialism

> "depends upon us naturalizing the idea that there are 50 states… that these are borders that are absolutely secure and are not contingent upon treaties that are negotiated with every single community that makes this up" (30:47).

Borders—of the US states, of Winnipeg, of settler colonial nation-states—contain and constrain understandings of a place. In the words of Brand (2001), "nation-states are configurations of origins as exclusionary power structures which have legitimacy based solely on conquest and acquisition" (p. 66). And yet, it is through these boundaries that I have often defined my belonging. This prompted me to shift my thinking from Winnipeg to Wînipêk.

Wînipêk and home

Wînipêk, the origins of Winnipeg's name, exceeds the boundaries of the city. Wînipêk refers instead to the watershed of Lake Winnipeg (Sinclair, 2024). This watershed spans the homeland of Red River Métis, the territories of 158 First Nations, and reaches Numbered Treaties 1-7 and 10 (Lake Winnipeg Indigenous Collective, n.d.). Everyone shares this water.

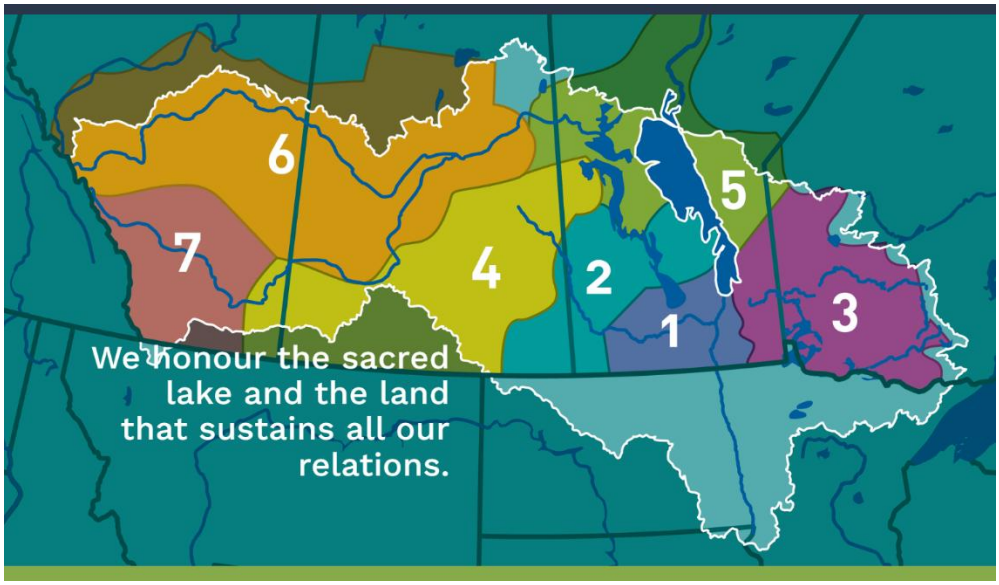


Figure 7: Lake Winnipeg watershed and Numbered Treaties. Image by Lake Winnipeg Indigenous Collective, n.d.

In the words of Sinclair (2024), “Wînipêk is a Cree and Anishinaabe word derived from *wiinad,* meaning ‘dirty,’ and *nibiing,* meaning ‘waters’” (p. 11). Considering the watershed as a place of muddy water, I return to my Grandpa’s comment that Winnipeg will always be home. I am reminded of how mud and home both stick our bodies: “mud… always leaves hints of itself behind” (Boon et al., 2018, p. 37). The connections between Wînipêk, home, and embodiment foreground many of my grandparents’ suggestions that home is not only about place, or that place is not fixed to geographical location. And so, home becomes mostly about relationships. Feghali (2024) writes about the “fundamental gap in the formation of ‘home’” (p. 289) when we do not anchor our belonging in ecosystems. Home is made of relationships with humans and more-than-humans.

Learning from “interspecies collaborations” (p. 59) between dolphins and other marine mammals, Alexis Pauline Gumbs (Black) (2020) writes of home as collaboration: “there is no such thing as home unless I’m with you. No such thing as home unless you’re here” (p. 59). Collaborations on home are dynamic: “making home is an ongoing process in people’s lives” (Freund, 2015, p. 83). Therefore, home reflects what we carry with us and what we leave behind. As I develop my practice of belonging, I attend to what I have learned from my parents and my grandparents, and what I continue to learn about ways of making home that centre Indigenous lifeworlds.

Locating “homeplace” (p. 33) within her body, vermette (2025) writes from Treaty 1 Territory,

> “my body is a nation
> lucky to live in my home territory
> wherever else i go
> i am a visitor
> and will act accordingly
> but wherever else i go
> i am here
> so still
> home” (p. 34)

Belonging, too, is relational and “bodily” (Feghali, 2024, p. 295), practices which occur through an ongoing attunement to place and Land: “place-devoid constructions of knowledge has the been the development of locating learning in the mind as opposed to in or connected to one’s body and to lands” (Bang et al., 2014, p. 41). Walking on our research outing, my Kokum (paternal grandmother) showed me her relationship with the Assiniboine River.

I asked *with which more-than-humans my grandparents maintain a special connection*. It took editing the film to connect that my Kokum and I grew up in different places, yet both along the Assiniboine River.

> "And although I was initially disappointed because we couldn't do, like the tour around the Hutterite colonies and everything, this was remarkably similar. With the wooded areas, with the river, with the creek, and even the one with the gunky sandbar in the middle of the river" (L. Lavallee, interview with my paternal grandmother).

Since she cannot drive, my Kokum has been remembering her childhood by visiting the Assiniboine River in Winnipeg. Together, my Kokum and I continue to reflect on family stories and memories that travel along these waterways (L. Lavallee, personal communication, July, 2026).

Attuning to Wînipêk and thinking about the "settled expectations" (Mackey, 2016) in Winnipeg, I started to think about the city's relationship with water. The Greater Winnipeg Water District Aqueduct started stealing water from Shoal Lake 40 First Nation in 1919 (Shoal Lake 40 First Nation, 2021). Tomiak et al. (2019) open a book problematizing Winnipeg as a settler city with this "huge Canadian contradiction" (p. 2) of a centuries long relationship that lacks reciprocity from Winnipeg. As Todd (2018) writes, "water is a site of, and is used as a manifestation of, settler colonial violence in Canada" (p. 61). Constructing this aqueduct shows how settler colonialism is not only about land, but "about changing the land" (Davis & Todd, 2017, p. 770).

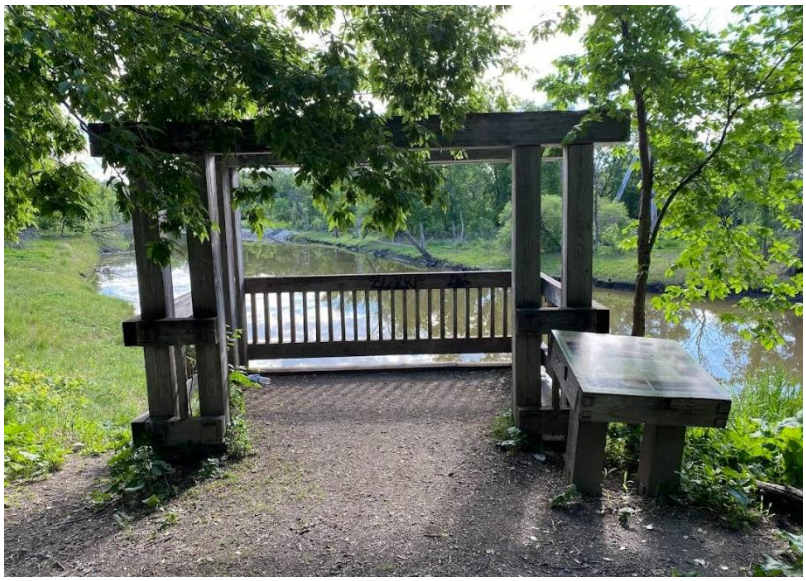


Figure 8: Shoal Lake 40 plaque and lookout. Image by Jean IRL, 2021.



Figure 9: Shoal Lake 40 lookout today. Image by author, July, 2026.

Observing the “remnants of the original shoring used during installation of the Aqueduct across the Seine River” (Goldsborough, 2025, para. 1), and the decayed lookout designed to commemorate the aqueduct passing underneath, I began thinking of ruins. Boon et al. (2018) show the educational potential of ruins: “Ruins have histories. Ruins tell stories. We may be looking, but are we learning?” (Boon et al., 2018, p. 87). This aqueduct passes under the Seine River: described as “no more than a creek” (vermette, 2018, p. 75), this river often remains absent from narratives of Winnipeg, including my own. Wondering what the source of our drinking water says about being from this place has encouraged me to go out of my way and routine, and walk along the riverbanks of the Seine. This kind of learning requires moving beyond the spots I know well along the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, perhaps creating new habits and opening possibilities for spontaneous conversation in the process.

Here, too, local Indigenous legal orders and Land “bend and diffuse the State’s European-derived laws” (Todd, 2018, p. 67) and provide guidance for living together in collective care. Both Winnipeg and Shoal Lake 40 belong to Wînipêk, the watershed of Lake Winnipeg. Visiting this watershed reminds me of the long-standing relationship between these territories and the peoples calling them home. A relationship massively altered by the aqueduct and boil water advisory, and also a relationship that precedes Settler presence.

Fleeting moments with my Beste

What does the Land tell a settler family about our origins? Not until after I returned to Winnipeg, my Beste (maternal grandmother) told me that she's dying. Ever since, time spent with her has felt fleeting. In our interview together, she talked about not really knowing where her grandparents were from—were they even born in Canada?—and she expressed regret for not knowing more.

> "We never, we never kept, kept track of that, and I never talked to mom about it too much. Yeah, I don't know why, but we didn't. And I'm sorry about that. We didn't. Yeah" (D. Leitold, interview with my maternal grandmother).

Our interview together reminded me of the phone call that started this whole research project: when she did not know how to describe her culture. I was reminded of my research motivations to de-invisibilize Whiteness as I seek to understand myself, where I come from, and my place in the world. This interview also reminded me that, after our phone call from my old apartment in Tio'tià:ke/Montreal, I developed a strong desire to work with my Beste in understanding what is our culture and how we might reconnect.

As I mention in the film, it is this side of my family where I notice the most gaps.[1] At the time I was filming, this process of reconnecting with my maternal grandmother's heritage led me to examine our family trees.

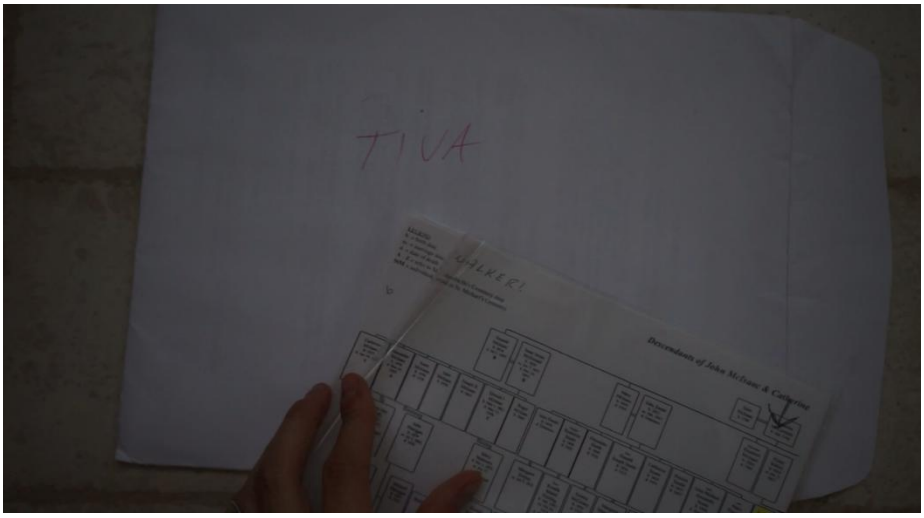


Figure 10: Family tree previously stored in my Beste's basement. Image by author, July, 2026.

[1] Much of the phrasing of this section of the film comes from conversations with Prof. Lisa Myers as we developed the theme for the 32nd Eco-Arts and Media Festival.

While the family tree answered some of my Beste's questions about when her family came to Turtle Island, something felt missing: we have these names, but no idea who these people are. Using the metaphor of tree branches to talk about genealogy reminded me of Boon et al.'s (2018) writing on roots: "The imagery of plant roots, web-like and ever-reaching through the depths of a soil-based home, has long garnered comparisons to questions of identity, belonging, and ancestral history" (p. 30). Perhaps this metaphor of branches and roots becomes useful to reference the shallow experience of trying to learn about our heritage through genealogy alone.

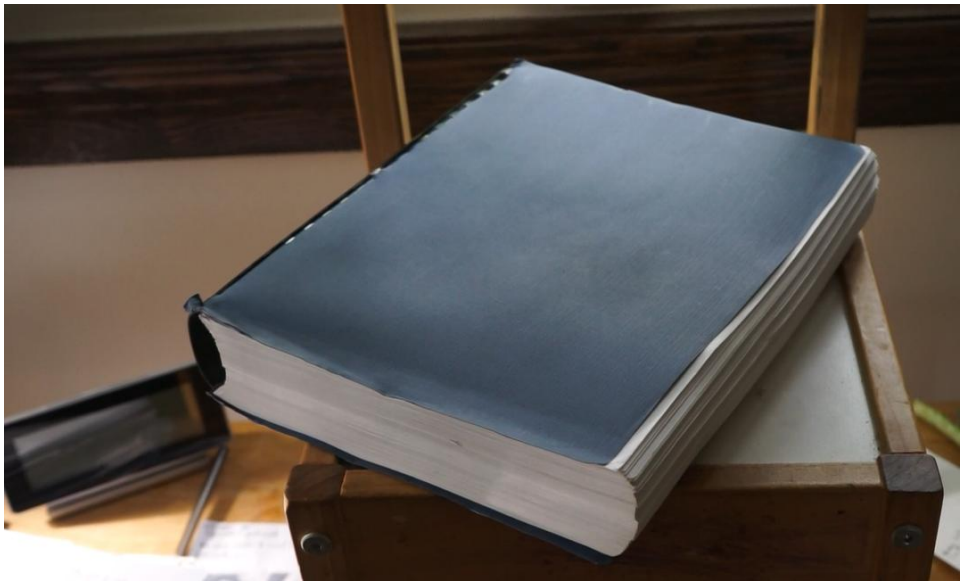


Figure 11: Ancestry book assembled by the Library of St. Boniface. Image by author, May, 2026.



Figure 12: Me at age 2.5, showing curiosity about family photographs. Image by D. Leitold, May, 2004, courtesy of my mom.

The genealogy that I already had access to was that of my Kokum's: it was assembled for my father by the Library of St. Boniface in 2005, and it is what someone requires to apply for citizenship with the MMF. While insightful, these documents provide a kind of belonging based in bureaucracy that remains disconnected from a more holistic sense of community, kinship and Land. This narrow sense of belonging resembles what Mohammed (2025) calls a "loose definition of home," (3:13) as property attached to an address wherein "we become able to fill out documents and be approved for even the most straightforward of things like a library card" (3:17). However, I have been expanding my understanding of home and belonging beyond the institutions that attempt to contain them.

Relatedly, Gumbs (2020) has helped me reframe my understanding of schools as "the scale at which we could care for each other and move together" (p. 56), rather than an institution. Here, Gumbs (2020) writes with striped dolphins, for whom "the primary unit of life… is school" (p. 55). Many inhabitants of

Wînipêk also live by schools, and asking questions in their presence emphasizes a mode of learning that is not extractive: “We have to ask ourselves continuously how we can give back, and how we can uphold respect, receptivity, and reciprocity while being mindful of what our research may unsettle” (Gaudet, 2019, p. 58). Thus, the sense of incompleteness during my process of genealogical research with my Beste underlines that I must not rely on settler institutions, especially as I seek to better understand myself relationally. This process also offered a deeper appreciation for family photographs, illuminating connections between collaboration, home, and belonging. Visiting deeply embodies this collective approach to learning, “intergenerationally and within generations” (Gumbs, 2020, p. 55), in interspecies collaborations and within my human family.

Working with family and memory

Writing the *Where I’m From* poems (Lyon, 1999), my grandmothers and I had the most fun. My grandfathers both appreciated what I came up with, but found the process challenging. They all still sent me a copy to share with you (Appendix B). Through poiesis, the process of making something new, I have also been thinking about relationships between poetry and images (A. Gamarra, personal communication, September, 2022). vermette (2025) does this too, asking where she comes from:

> “carry memory
> photos frame identity
> learn how to read them” (p. 27)

Moreover, vermette (2025) illuminates how poetry and picture-making are both practices of keepsake and observation. Stories told through collections of photographs reflect not simply a family’s story: they are often “tended by the Matriarchs” (vermette, 2025, p. 27) and illustrate their specific ways of storytelling and remembering. Indeed, my maternal and paternal grandmothers have kept our family photos and reference these collections often. Perhaps, if poetry is also like taking a snapshot (vermette, 2025), this helps to explain why the *Where I’m From* poems felt most accessible to my grandmothers and I.

That said, combining poetry and photography in the research outings and photo elicitation interviews contributed to a strong theme of preserving memories with all of my grandparents. Sometimes, the photos that my grandparents took were not literal representations of a place, but metaphors and symbols representing their memories.

Through the picture of my Beste (maternal grandmother)’s massive kitchen island, she recalls hosting family gatherings.



Figure 13: My Beste's kitchen island. Image by D. Leitold, November, 2025.

My Grandpa (maternal grandfather) photographed the top of Overdale Avenue because he always wanted to live on that street with the sweet architecture and grand trees.



Figure 14: The corner of Portage Avenue and Overdale Avenue. Image by D. Leitold, November, 2025.

My Kokum photographed a woodpecker as a memory of playing in the woods behind her childhood home.



Figure 15: Woodpecker on tree. Image by L. Lavallee, November, 2025.

My Jichan photographed his shoes as did not remember wearing any while growing up in Japan.



Figure 16: My Jichan's shoes in a parking lot. Image by K. Kawakami, November, 2025.

In this sense, my grandparents created something new, poesis, combining old memories with their lived realities of places today.

What are the stories of Wînipêk/Winnipeg that I have inherited from my ancestors? How do these stories inform my historical, future, and present relationships with/on Land?

This is the research question that I began with. Returning to how I phrased this question, I am reminded of Cate Sandilands' (Settler) (2021) warning of

> "the prevalent, heteronormative ethos of *inheritance* in which, among other things, we are led to believe that we are justified in using the world instrumentally for the direct, accumulating benefit of *our own* future generations" (p. 179, emphasis in original).

In developing a practice of belonging (Feghali, 2024), vermette (2025) reminds me:

> "you are only here
>
> to learn from those who came before
>
> and make space
>
> for those who come after" (p. 13)

Wanting to account for Settler and Michif responsibility, I have been thinking more about the ancestor I want to become (even if I don't have biological children). Sandilands (2021) writes that "good ancestry is, in contrast, a generous offering of one's life to an unknown, multiplicitous future" (p. 179). While not all using the language of 'ancestor,' my grandparents proudly gesture toward my parents and the good that they have done and will do for generations to come.

> "But Jason's a good kid. I mean, he worries about the kids. He does a good job what he can do with them, so" (K. Kawakami, interview with my paternal grandfather).

For example, my Jichan (paternal grandfather) talks about my father's care for his own kids, as well as other living beings. In doing so, he has repeatedly warned me about individualism, which often severs relationships (articulated in his *Where I'm From* poem, Appendix B). To shift my focus from inheritance to being a good ancestor also reminds me of a call with Prof. Lisa Myers, who said that our bodies are not vessels passively inheriting things (personal communication, April, 2025). Rather, we have agency in what we carry with us and how we care for those to come.

Time

Thinking of myself as simultaneously as "a helper, learner, and listener" (Tuck et al., 2023, p. 150) as well as an ancestor has helped me engage a long view of time (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015, p. 95). Importantly, this long view does not simply incorporate Indigenous knowledges, politics and practices into unquestioned and unchallenged settler institutions. For example, Tania Li (unmarked) (2017) cautions that settler states' "idea of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC)… embeds a rather static and linear version of time" (p. 277). Prioritizing local Indigenous laws illuminates a more robust process of decision-making that values life and continuation. Curley and Smith (2024) explain why "Anishinaabe temporalities—from periodicity, timeframes, kinship, to nonhuman temporalities—provide a firmer basis from which to make environmental decisions around" (p. 170). As I visit the Red River, I remember that

> "this river has never been idle
> she was here before you
> and she will be here
> long after we've all
> gone" (vermette, 2018, p. 56),

This river ecosystem holds knowledge of the long view. Visiting the rivers in Winnipeg has become part of my process of learning about the spirit and intent of this territory's treaties.

This long view of time remembers the 1285 Peace Treaty, initiated by Ininew/Cree and Lakota Nations with Anishinaabeg and Dakota Nations during a megadrought. "Without this peace… there would not be the Manitoba we know today" (Sinclair, 2024, p. 44). Made at Nistawayak, where the Red and Assiniboine Rivers meet, the 1285 Peace Treaty expands my temporal boundaries of this place and teaches me about treaties less recognized. However, we do not talk about the 1285 Peace Treaty in everyday conversation, nor in most educational settings (Manitoba Education, 2014). If we do not talk these treaties, how will we learn about their effects on contemporary and future relationships? As outlined in the 10th TRC Call to Action (TRC, 2015), we need more robust treaty education. Treaties teach about living well together, they provide foundations upon which to practice belonging.

Urban Land, Wînipêk, the everyday

What does it mean to belong to a place? How can I practice belonging in Wînipêk/Winnipeg?

Wînipêk is an "Indigenous centre" (Sinclair, 2024), but this does not mean that cities are less Indigenous: "Urban land (indeed all land) is Native land" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 23). Practices of belonging are

based on this acknowledgement. Unfortunately, both nature and Indigenous Peoples are too often seen as 'out there'. Even calling a city settler colonial reinforces these binaries: "the conceptual problem is presented as the position of Indigenous people *in* settler colonial cities rather than the existence of the settler colonial city itself" (Tomiak et al., 2019, pp. 12-13, emphasis in original). Tomiak et al. (2019) add that "Indigenous resistance, survivance, and resurgence operate in ways that explode the urban/rural binary" (p. 17) and challenge overall settler futurity.

Urban land-based practices evoke Gerald Vizenor's (Anishinaabe) (2008) concept of survivance. Restorying "the prairies as a *fish place*" (p. 60, emphasis in original), Todd (2018) describes survivance as "a deeply rooted and visceral commitment to *live well and with care* across time and space in territories heavily, brutally impacted by colonial violence" (p. 67, emphasis in original). Survivance centres Indigenous self-determination and Land reclamation, and creates "viable futures of robust indigeneities" (Bang et al., 2014, p. 50). Urban Land itself supports survivance, it is the persistent "settler entitlement, jurisdiction and control" (Mackey, 2016, p. 125) that needs to be rethought.

Consequently, I have been appreciating the Red, Assiniboine, and Seine Rivers and their refusal of setter spatial formations. Writing and filming with Wînipêk shows how "the fluid is the feminine, the unruly, the disruptive" (Boon et al., 2018, p. 61). Todd (2016) similarly writes about rivers' generative contributions to place:

> "whereas cities guard their boundaries quite jealously with ring-roads and ordinances, rivers permeate and implode these boundaries, necessarily drawing city-dwellers into broader awareness of, and responsibilities to, the watersheds within which they are enmeshed" (p. 91).

Rivers have a lot to teach me about local relationships.

In this process, I have been talking with my father and his father about our last name, and what this name tells us about who we are, as a family now living on Turtle Island. Translated from Japanese to English, 'kawa' means river, and 'kami' means upper or above. While this last name could relate to a specific river (or watershed) near which our ancestors had once lived, Kawakami has become such a common last name that my Jichan (paternal grandfather) and I began wondering if it refers to river relationships in general (K. Kawakami, personal communication, July 14, 2026). Kawakamis are no longer limited to a place on a map, and what we learn from fostering relationships with rivers abroad must reflect Land's specificities.

Revitalizing relationships with river ecosystems requires a deeper kind of belonging. Craft (2023), for example, speaks of Lake Winnipeg as "the water that I belong to" (6:33), articulating that "the question of jurisdiction also needs to be looked at from the perspective of belonging" (8:15). Similarly, Todd (2018)

expresses how she is bound to Wînipêk "by multiple generations of my Métis (otipemisiwak) family who have moved along its major waterways since the early 19th century" (p. 62). They make clear how belonging compels them to attend to water, "water's rights, legal personhood, spiritedness, agency and autonomy" (Craft, 2023, 13:15), and "fish stories" (Todd, 2018, p. 72). Although we are all writing from different territories—home to different nations, different treaties, different practices—we are all in relationships with the same watershed: Wînipêk.

Visiting the Red, Assiniboine and Seine Rivers, I feel hopeful. But hope means nothing without action: "you need to test it in the world; you've got to be with people" (Kaba, 2021, p. 28). Reframing belonging as a practice (Feghali, 2024), roots me not in arbitrary origins (Brand, 2001), but rather a commitment to "the repatriation of Indigenous land and life" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 21). This commitment re-centers local Indigenous governance and jurisdiction: "Settler belonging… needs to be moderated through Indigenous nationhood rather than against it" (Battell Lowman & Barker, 2015, p. 65). This means Land Back, where, as Krawec (2025) asserts, "#LANDBACK means a restoration of relationship rather than the presumption of ownership" (p. 53). Belonging enacts a necessary "commitment to tenderness and relationships" (Davis & Todd, 2017, p. 775), and might require "shifting our current patterns of living in the every day" (Dhillon, 2018, p. 2). Living in so-called Canada, to practice belonging requires a commitment to transformation.

Because "attending to one's relationships is ongoing, unspectacular work" (Todd & Kanngieser, 2020, p. 3), narratives of belonging might be "conceived as carrier bag" (Le Guin, 1986, p. 3), deglorifying linear narratives, conflict, and the individual hero/explorer/"'fathers' of colonialism" (Smith, 1999, p. 23). Kyle Whyte (Potawatomi) (2021) identifies the "underlying conception of heroism involved in epistemologies of crisis" (p. 61): epistemologies which seek quick solutions to return to 'normal' and "mask numerous forms of power, including colonialism, imperialism, capitalism, patriarchy, and industrialisation" (p. 57). Instead, Whyte (2021) celebrates how "epistemologies of coordination emphasise coming to know the world through kin relationships" (p. 58). Similarly, McCreary (2019) celebrates "the everyday discussions about who we are" (p. 168). Carrier bag narratives are interested in what happens when the hero comes home: "its purpose is… continuing process" (Le Guin, 1986, p. 4). As such, this project has helped me articulate my theory of change (Tuck, 2022) which finds hope in pedagogical moments of everyday life. Through K'zaagin (love), Sinclair (2024) invites everyone related to Wînipêk, and Turtle Island more broadly, to "Listen. Learn. Commit. Act" (Sinclair, 2024, p. 347). These verbs should not be enacted as spectacular performance, but rather in everyday relationships: with grandparents, family, broader community, with Land.

Conclusion: Moving forward and looking to where I'm from

In this research project, I learn about practicing belonging in Winnipeg, or maybe, belonging to Wînipêk: not as a settler move to innocence, but as a commitment to Indigenous futurities. From the outset of my research, it has been clear that the Red and Assiniboine Rivers impart a particular feeling of being in Winnipeg, and maybe also being from this place. I have been learning about articulating my belonging in relation with Wînipêk rather than the arbitrary boundaries of the city. This reframing denaturalizes places as they are defined by the settler Canadian state, re-centers diverse Indigenous intelligences related to the watershed, re-centers Land itself, and still holds central the rivers' presence. This reframing extends my care both geographically and temporally.

Such a practice of belonging must remain accountable to local Indigenous laws, lifeways, and Land. As a Settler-Michif woman, my 'legitimacy' to be here comes through agreements and relationships in Treaty 1: informed by Anishinaabe law. Most crucially, land is to be shared, not surrendered, and Anishinaabe lifeways, but also Ininew/Cree, Dakota, Lakota lifeways on this territory must not be altered. Obviously, these promises have been broken or unfulfilled, and treaty relationships have not been revisited as they ought to have been. Committing to everyday treaty relationships, I am part of a collective responsibility for continuous, relational learning and making space for already in-process practices of resurgence.

Inviting my grandparents into conversations about where I come from has taught me details that I did not know about our families and places where our families have lived. These conversations have also revealed moments of collective not knowing. Rather than chasing spectacular discovery, uncertainty opens possibilities to continue learning together, to embrace non-mastery, and to decide what we carry with us and who, as ancestors, we will become.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Where I'm From poem template

I Am From Poem

Use this template to draft your poem. Amazing way to explore deeper stories about where YOU come from. Use some of these stories as you share who you are with others.

I am from _____
(specific ordinary item)

From _____ and _____
(product name) (product name)

_____ , _____ , _____
(adjective) (adjective) (sensory detail)

I am from _____ ,
(plant, flower, natural item)

_____
(description of above item)

I'm from _____ and _____
(family tradition) (family trait)

From _____ and _____
(name of family member) (another family name)

I'm from the _____ and _____
(description of family tendency) (another one)

From _____ and _____
(something you were told as a child) (another)\

I'm from _____ , _____
(representation of religion or lack thereof) , (further description)

I'm from _____
(Place of birth and family ancestry)

_____ , _____
(a food item that represents your family) (another one)

From the _____
(specific family story about a specific person and detail)

Adapted with permission from the *iamfromproject.com*

(Image 1 of 2)

The _____
(another detail of another family member)

_____
(location of family pictures, momentous, archives)

_____
(line explaining the importance of family items)

The Original Poem:
Where I'm From
By George Ella Lyon
I am from clothespins,
from Clorox and carbon-tetrachloride.
I am from the dirt under the back porch.
(Black, glistening
it tasted like beets.)
I am from the forsythia bush,
the Dutch elm
whose long gone limbs I remember
as if they were my own.
I am from fudge and eyeglasses,
from Imogene and Alafair.
I'm from the know-it-alls
and the pass-it-ons,
from perk up and pipe down.
I'm from He restoreth my soul
with cottonball lamb
and ten verses I can say myself.
I'm from Artemus and Billie's Branch,
fried corn and strong coffee.
From the finger my grandfather lost
to the auger
the eye my father shut to keep his sight.
Under my bed was a dress box
spilling old pictures.
a sift of lost faces
to drift beneath my dreams.
I am from those moments --
snapped before I budded --
leaf-fall from the family tree.

Adapted with permission from the *iamfromproject.com*

(Image 2 of 2)

Template from Boston University (2020), Template adapted from Lyon's (1999) work. My grandparents and I used this template to write our *Where I'm From* poems.

Appendix B

Where I'm From poems

<u>With my Beste</u>

By tiva kawakami

I am from face cloths

From Kleenex and Ziploc bags

Portable, convenient, silky smooth

I am from chickadees (both the bird and the plant)

Tiny, but impossible to ignore

I'm from Christmas crackers that release a rainbow of tissue paper crowns, and a defensiveness of what we love

From Diane and Audrey

I'm from saying goodbye with the door propped open for half an hour, and greeting children with playful pinches and red lipstick kisses on our cheeks

From eating my dinner roll slowly, interspersed with other bites of food, and stop biting your fingernails,

I'm from no religion, but we celebrate the Christian holidays

I'm from Winnipeg, the centre, and much before that Denmark and the UK

Chiquita Christmas loaf that sparkles with red and green cherries, lime Jello salad with celery and carrots,

From Grammik's spicy comment as many firemen lifted her out of her bed

The soup she made my mom and dad from a can of Cheez Whiz, some green onions, and a bottle of beer,

Basement corners so rich in photo albums it would seem they were built as an archive,

Sharing memories has always brought us joy.

By Diane Leitold

I am from pork 'n beans with weiners on toast

Heinz Variety and Libby's

Inexpensive, quick lunch to feed 6 school aged children

I am from honeysuckle vines

Flowering, climbing up the south walls of our house (below my bedroom window)

I'm from Christmas time and Clifton Community Club

From Ejnar and Audrey

I'm from participating in every sport available, and The Outdoors

From "Don't upset your dad" and "Ask your mother"

I'm from going to Sunday school as a child

But not continuing in any faith

I'm from Winnipeg, Breckan, Ontario, The UK and Denmark

Angel Food cake and overcooked vegetables

From the day I saw Dad drop in the livingroom from a heart attack

The fear of losing him, and Mom having to care for 6 young children

Stacks of photo albums and boxes of slides

Memories of my life and family etched in my mind.

<u>With my Kokum</u>

By tiva kawakami

I am from printed out photographs and photos of them sent electronically

From Celestial Seasonings, Bengal Spice of course, and Stash, the licorice one

Herbal, bold flavours, with a sweetness that leaves me craving another sip

I am from silver maples

Their care in abundance wherever I have lived

I'm from buying each other more Tall Grass pastries than we need, and stubborn generosity

From Lorraine and Great Grandpa Laurie

I'm from showing our emotions outwardly, and showing up prepared

From being told that I'm capable of doing things on my own, and that of all my relatives, I look most like you: from our cheekbones to our silhouettes

I'm from an emphasis on spirituality because Catholicism was too strict

I'm from Canora Street, and Lido Plage Road, the Assiniboine and Red Rivers, Turtle Island and Europe, where my family converged from places East, West, and South

Rutabaga, meatballs

From the time that Tracy took a mouse on the bus and you helped her hide it behind her hair

The girls at the track meet who asked you about your heritage, and who your relatives are

Photo albums and envelopes, and the St. Boniface Library archives too

References for kids like me, curious about the continuity of our heritage

By Lorraine Lavallee

I am from rain showers and mud puddles, dancing in the rain in my underwear with the dirtiest feet ever.

I am from Tenderflake lard and Robin Hood flour miraculously transformed into warm bannock with melting butter and strong sweet tea with fresh milk.

I am from polka dots, kind Hutterite women and dandelions as far as the eye could see.

I'm from structured Sundays I no longer practice. I turn to Creator, the presence I feel when I look up at the night sky. I am humbled and in awe of all that is.

I'm from stubborn stock in spite of the obedient child I was.

I'm from my Dad, from Grandpa, struggles and quiet loving arms; remembered voices telling me to make my own way instead of following.

I'm from country Catholic and fellowship; I hold good memories close and try to release the others.

I'm from Portage la Prairie, Lido Plage Road. I'm Red River Metis, Norwegian and French. Also from soups, stew, macaroni and tomatoes.

From following Grandpa around the barnyard while he tried to do his chores – and

Mom's Uncle Albert who kept telling me to watch for the Eaton's truck for a special delivery. I guess the driver got lost.

<u>With my Grandpa</u>

By tiva kawakami

I am from shoe horns

From Purell hand sanitizer and the Trident watermelon gum

Clean, aromatic, reliably waiting for me in the arm rest compartment of your car

I am from oak trees (or are they elms?)

Shading streets, parks… and even duck ponds

I'm from intergenerational baseball games that happen once a generation and stubbornness

From Gertrude and David

I'm from the insistence that everything is okay, always, and checking-in when we know it matters

From being told to stay in school and reserving the verb "love" for when I really mean it

I'm from no religion, but welcomed anticipation for the Christian holidays and their associated time off and other treats

I'm from Winnipeg, West End, before that Ashern… and way before that Hungary, I guess,

holopchi, but deconstructed, and chickens, formerly farm-to-table style

From the journey of Gertrude's immigration and the fact that she only became a Canadian citizen in her 60s (to collect pension, I have learned)

The time that my grandpa and mom won the same book award at the same school (nerds)

I would guess basements hold our family archives, dispersed across the 12 kids and their families

While we care about our memories, we seem to embrace more living in the present

By David Leitold

I am from an Oral B toothbrush

from Sensodyne toothpaste and Listerine mouthwash

with brushing, gargling and refreshing taste

I am a cactus

who stands straight and tall and always prickly

I am from family reunions which are noisy and fun loving

From Gertude and Andrew

I am from stubbornness and straight forward

From honesty and work ethic

I am from no religion and look outward to the universe

I am Montreal, Quebec and Ganna, Hungary

With cabbage & meatballs and matrimonial cake

From Gertrude's journey to Canada

With my Jichan

By tiva kawakami

I am from golf ball tees (found in crannies of cars' front seats)

From Tim Horton's coffee and Slurpees

To-go, sloshing, temperatures so strong they tingle my insides

I am from flashy fish,

In tanks, aquariums, ponds, and on dinner plates

I’m from going to AYCE sushi and ordering strategically, and choosing relaxed

From Mary and Ken

I’m from the racing others to pay the bill, and bringing balance through calmness and laughter

From being told not to worry about it, and that pop and I always give too many options

I’m from no religion, really, but pop tells me how he’s curious about Shinto

I’m from Manitoba, but it could have been BC. Ancestrally, we’re from Japan (kind of)

Soy in all forms, seafood of all kinds

From the multiple backflips that you would do in a row

The scraps of thread that Mary tied together to make something useable again

Pop’s front closet and Rubbermaids in his basement

Only after I show people a picture of you, they will believe that I’m Japanese

By Ken Kawakami

I'm from tiny dust (see me flying through air and find me sleeping under bed)

From father earth and creater

Flying through nature creater of issues

I am plant in garden, in house, looking beautiful

I am toxic member creater of argument, set respect, and demand boundaries

From Kuro and Mikey

Kuro is demanding owners of human Mikey owns foods pushing Kuro away from plate

I'm not educated having no knowledge so I make things bigger just by over thinking

I was born on Morris Manitoba but I been every where seen all different types of trees, footwear, clothing, and good and bad quality of products human

Advice to grandchildren, No one teach you about money you must learn yourself, financial freedom requires sacrifices, our bodys doesn't work same anymore as get old, we wouldn't be here for ever so talk

to us more, not every thing goes according to plan be ready to adapt, and you cannot control everything learned to let's go of what you cannot change 😉

Appendix C

Select images from research outings (in chronological order).

My Beste (maternal grandmother)

After I first called my Beste to ask about her culture from my apartment in Tio'tià:ke/Montreal, she called me back a couple of days later to say that her culture is Christmas. Neither me or my mom grew up Christian, and so, we celebrate a kind of capitalist Christmas. However, I understand my Beste's appreciation for Christmas as less about the gifts, and more about spending time with family. My Beste has many childhood memories of Christmas: the one Christmas morning that her dad had a heart attack, and the many Santa Claus parades that she watched from her maternal grandparents' balcony. Both spectacular and mundane memories of Christmas have shaped my Beste and her practices of care.

During this research outing in her home, I learned that her Christmas decorations belonged to her mother or her grandmothers. I have been learning about her sense of belonging through family traditions.



Figure 17: Santa decoration that my Beste had on display. Image by D. Leitold, November, 2025.

My Beste also spoke about her love of Canadian art and representations of Canadian landscapes, especially during wintertime. This opened many conversations on urban Land as Indigenous Land.

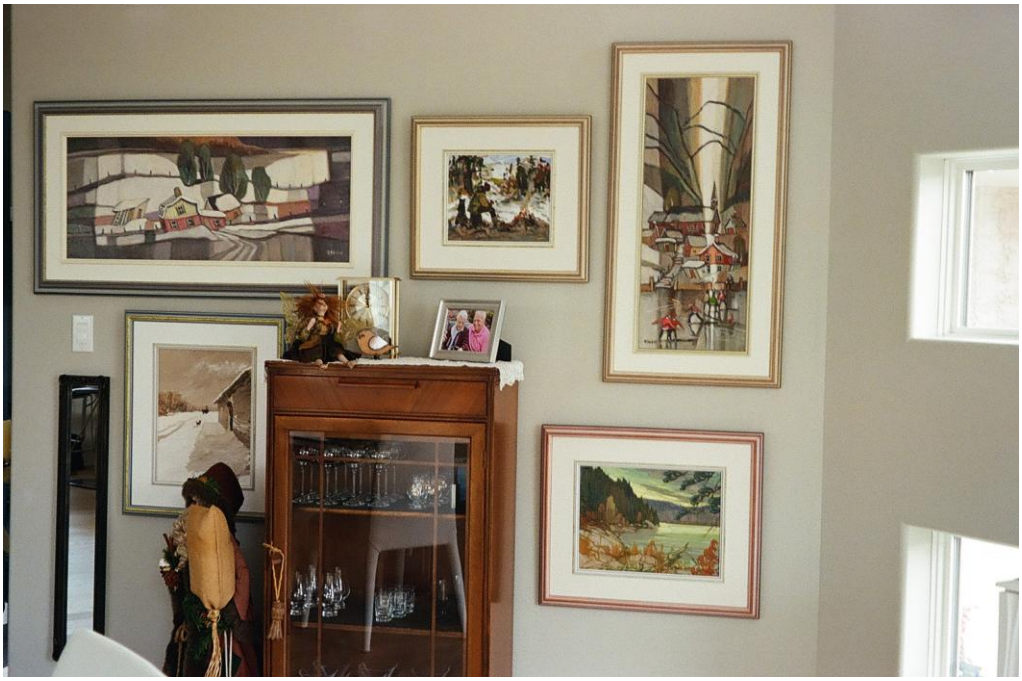


Figure 18: A display of Canadian art around my Beste's maternal grandmother's cabinet. Image by D. Leitold, November, 2025.

Lastly, the picture that most impacted me features a photograph of my Beste's mom and her youngest brother, who have both since passed on. As per the interview guide (Appendix D), when I asked my Beste which picture from the research outing most represents home, she selected this one. This part of our conversation helped orient me toward an understanding of home as made through relationships.



Figure 19: Photograph of my great grandma Mik and great uncle Glen. Image by D. Leitold, November, 2025.

My Kokum (paternal grandmother)

Together on our walk, my Kokum would often make a picture of what was ahead of us. This was not a tendency that I noticed during the research outings themselves, but rather became more evident as I reviewed the printed photos together. I do not think that this photographic perspective ignores questions about the past and experiences in the present, but rather serves as a reminder of who comes after us. While reviewing rough cuts of our film, my Kokum would comment on connections between Wînipêk, practices of belonging, and caring for future generations (L. Lavallee, personal communication, July, 2026). This perspective also aligns with my Kokum's consistent emphasis on her children (mostly my father).

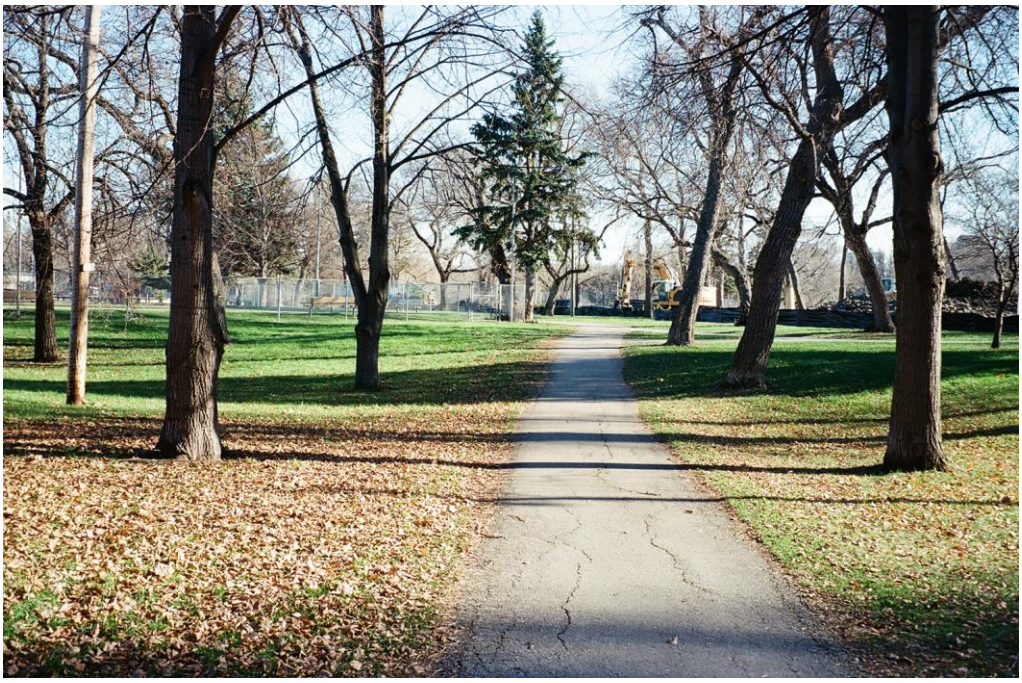


Figure 20: Path through Bourkevale Park. Image by L. Lavallee, November, 2025.

On our walk, we came across a construction site along the Assiniboine River, and joked that they were building more condos. This facilitated a discussion on understanding home beyond private property. Moreover, during both the research outing and the interview, my Kokum mentioned a sense of entitlement within Winnipeg, which she associates with moving to a bigger city.

> My Kokum: “And there's so many vacant and abandoned buildings that, you know, they just move on and do something else, so. It's a sad state”
>
> Me: “What’s the alternative?”
>
> My Kokum: “Use what you have” (L. Lavallee, interview with my paternal grandmother).

This has opened a series of conversations between us about the complexities of problematizing Winnipeg as a settler city, leading to Indigenous erasure, and naming forms of consumption.



Figure 21: Construction site with trees cut down along the Assiniboine River. Image by L. Lavallee, November, 2025.

Finally, this picture of the sandbar in the Assiniboine River helped me understand that my Kokum and I both grew up along the same river, albeit at different points. Her childhood story of Mrs. Piper taking her for lunch on a sandbar features in our film (Appendix H). This image represents part of our ongoing conversations about how rivers carry stories.



Figure 22: Sandbar in the Assiniboine River in Winnipeg. Image by L. Lavallee, November, 2025.

My Grandpa (maternal grandfather)

This photo comprises one photo in series of photos of houses in which my maternal grandfather lived. While he teaches me that home exceeds the building of a house, him taking me to these homes also opened a dialogue on how property, racial exclusion, and settler colonialism influence our understandings of home. At the same time, I learned a lot from his story of living in this 3 bedroom house with 11 people, and how living with so many siblings and his mother in that small house has shaped my Grandpa's sense of self.

His stories of this home also mention that, at the time, he was “living on the outskirts of the city” (D. Leitold, interview with my maternal grandfather). Such stories remind me how Winnipeg and life in Winnipeg constantly changes.



Figure 23: 410 Wallasey Street. The first house my Grandpa lived in when he moved to Winnipeg. Image by D. Leitold, November, 2025.

One of my Grandpa's favourite spots in the city is this garden path in Assiniboine Park where he got his mom's name engraved in a 'memory stone'. While only briefly featured in our film, and not explicitly mentioned, visiting this path opened many conversations on the importance of 'having memories', as my Grandpa would call it. In asking my Grandpa about where I come from, he emphasizes memory-work. The consistent mention of the words “memory” and “memory-work” in our conversations remind me of Craig et al.’s (2025) piece: “Visiting as memory work invites us to unearth submerged histories and attend to the persistent vitality of more-than-human relations that resist colonial erasure” (Craig et al., 2025, p. 9). Consequently, I have enjoyed talking with my Grandpa about memories within Wînipêk and the watershed’s inhabitants.



Figure 24: Path with memory stones in Assiniboine Park. Image by D. Leitold, November, 2025.

The last stop on our research outing was my mom's house. As with other grandparents, asking my Grandpa about who I am always leads to conversations about my mom. Because his mom (my great grandma Leitold) helped raise my mom, my Grandpa likes to talk about his mom's qualities as they appear in my mom today. He also like to talk about the qualities of my great grandmother that I also have:

> “that's why your mom has some traits. You have acquired some, believe me, some of grandma Leitold's traits. You're very sensitive, you're frugal, you're not cheap, you're frugal” (D. Leitold, interview with my paternal grandfather).

Something about having her traits without really knowing my great grandma (she died when I was 1) has oriented me to consider multiple scales of time, as well as discussion on becoming good a good ancestor.



Figure 25: My mom’s house. Image by D. Leitold, November, 2025.

My Jichan (paternal grandfather)

Telling me about his life as a parent, my Jichan often talks about his love of golf. For him, golfing has become a way to relieve stress. My Jichan sometimes associates golfing with being absent from his family. I suggested that relaxing can be an act of care not only for oneself, but one's relationships. Combined with my Jichan's regret about working too much, I am reminded of Gumbs (2020) proposition: "What if all those ways we feel like failures in our families are not failures at all, but a pre-school lesson that could teach us to restructure our care?" (Gumbs, 2020, p. 57). Regret can help signal that we should evaluate how we show up for our relationships.

My Jichan also talked about the prairie landscape and endless sky that becomes even more apparent slightly outside of Winnipeg's perimeter:

> "it was nice to see it, in a whole wide open country. But I do that whenever I go golfing. So, I see that it's peaceful Canada, compared to, you know, Japan. We used to be a pretty busy place compared to--just like I live in a big city, so..." (K. Kawakami, interview with my paternal grandfather).

This led to many conversations about Land, wherein he also told me stories of much different Land in Hiroshima. In these conversations, my Jichan mentioned a slowing down that comes with sensing the Land. This has opened exciting conversations about urban Land and slowing down in the city.

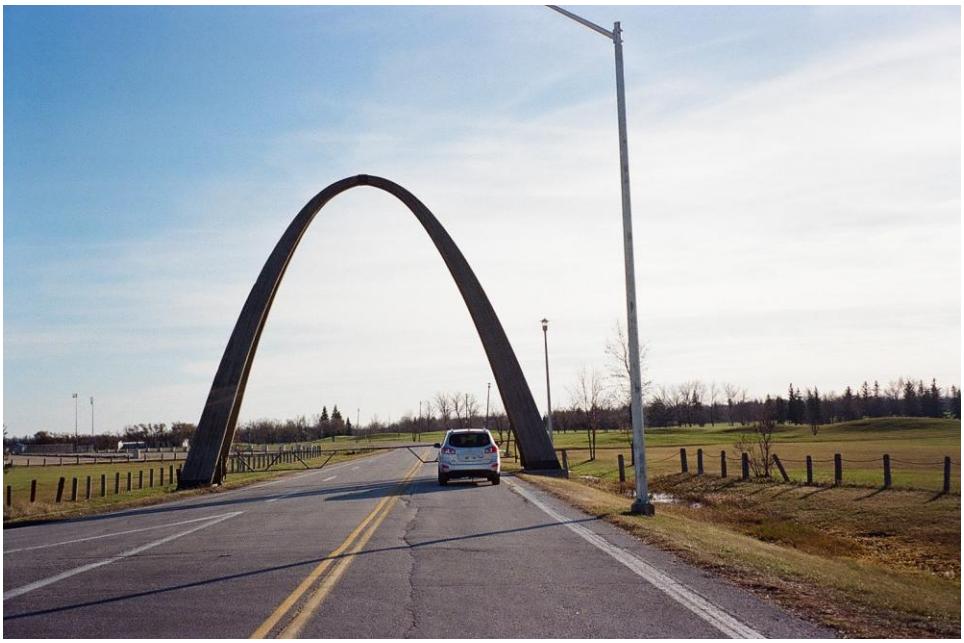


Figure 26: My Jichan's car and the archway entrance to Bloomburg Golf Course. Image by K. Kawakami, November, 2025.

After taking me by the last school he attended, my Jichan showed me the community club where he spent time with friends. While school was not a welcoming experience, my Jichan maintains relationships with many friends and/or memories of them from this community centre to this day. His shift to desire, here, also signalled to me that he does not want anything to do with school, thus changing how I continued to approach our research relationship.



Figure 27: Kirkfield Westwood Community Centre. Image by K. Kawakami, November, 2025.

The last image that my Jichan made on our research outing is this one of his shoes. After spending much of our time together comparing Winnipeg and Hiroshima, my Jichan thought to tell me that he rarely wore shoes while growing up in Japan. In this moment, I caught myself distracted by not fully understanding what my Jichan was saying: the different cultural context, but also he would slip in Japanese words, like *geta,* that I did not know. This conversation prompted my reflections on the complexity of my simultaneous disconnect from the Japanese language and Japanese words having always been a part of my everyday life.

In the film (Appendix H), I discuss this tension further: through my Jichan's name for my father and our last name. I look forward to continuing conversations with my Jichan and father about how these words change meaning while living in Winnipeg and being in relationship with Wînipêk.

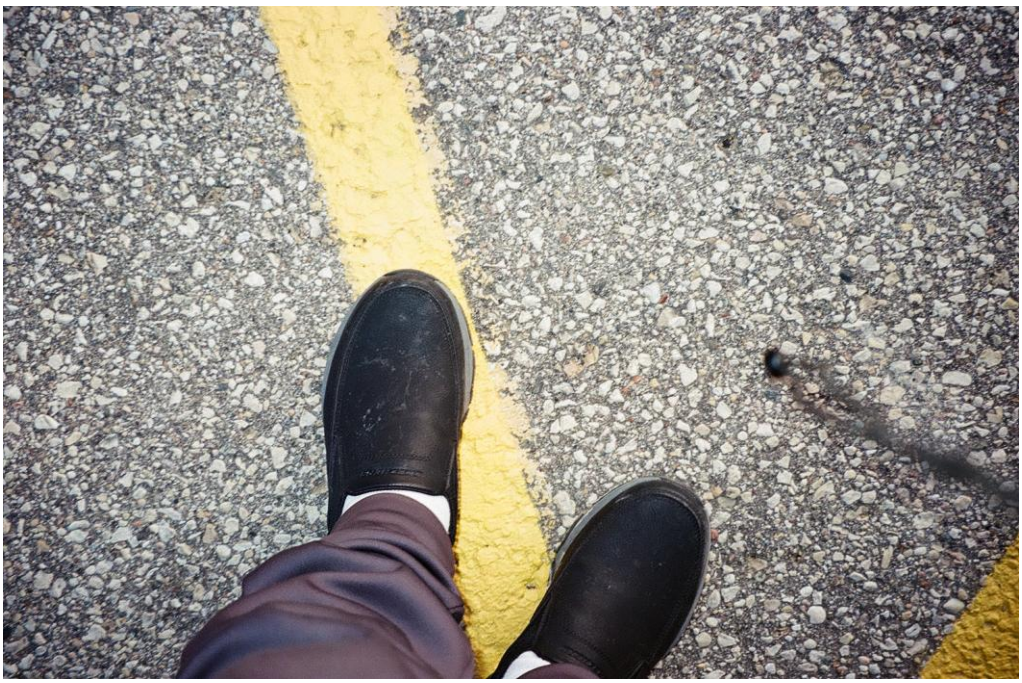


Figure 28: My Jichan's shoes in a parking lot. Image by K. Kawakami, November, 2025.

Appendix D

Interview guide

One-on-one interviews to be conducted by Sativa Kawakami with each of her four biological grandparents.

Before the interview:

Say hello and check in.

Thank the participant for sharing their time and knowledge.

Remind the participant of my research objective:

> To learn about myself and my place in the world through conversations with my grandparents, and to learn about my grandparents' practices of belonging and understandings of home.

Go over the informed consent form:

> Highlight that I will record the audio and video of our interview after we complete the poetry generation exercise. I will transcribe the audio of these recordings and code them for analysis. I will also use the interview transcripts to make found poetry as an additional form of analysis. Short excerpts from the audio and video from these interviews will also go into a 10–15-minute film: the main component of my master's portfolio. Make clear that each participant will have multiple chances to review the content before I show it to anyone else.
>
> Remind the participant that I cannot maintain their anonymity. Moreover, during the analysis of these interviews, the data will remain confidential, but excerpts of these interviews included in the final film and accompanying written component will be shared with family and university audiences.

Ask if the participant has any questions before we start.

Pre-interview exercise (not recorded):

Pull out photos from walking/traveling/sitting exercise. (Each myself and my grandparent will have printed copies of these photos).

"Where I'm From" poem exercise:

Both the participant and I will have five minutes to fill out as much of the template as we can.

Ask the participant if they want more time to complete the poem.

Ask the participant if they are ready for the interview.

Photo-elicitation interview (recorded):

Begin recording and let the participant know that I am doing so.

Question guide:

1. Tell me about your experience on our walk/drive/sit.
2. What do you know about the place where you took me? How did you learn that?
3. Which pictures did you take because I was with you? Why?
4. What is your favourite picture? Why?
5. How do you describe the relationship between you and [the content of an image]?
6. How has this relationship changed over time?
7. Which patterns or similarities do you notice between images?
8. Which contradictions do you notice between images?
9. What/who might be missing from the collection of images?
10. Which pictures most represent home? Why?
11. Do you want to add anything that I did not think of asking?

After the interview:

Stop recording and let the participant know that I have done so.

Thank the participant again.

Remind the participant what I will do with the data: transcribe, code, found poem, and film.

Remind the participant of the relevance of the information they shared.

Ask the participant if they have any questions.

Let the participant know that they can reach out at any time: to ask further questions, withdraw from the study, or offer information they might have missed.

After the participant has left the call, evaluate the interview to improve for next time.

Appendix E

Illustrated poems made from my grandparents' words using the photo-elicitation interview transcripts.

<u>With my Beste</u>

Well, that's my mom and, and my brother.

But really, we never spent time with our cousins.

Everybody--both parents have to work.

Not necessarily to survive, but to have more stuff.

And so, you don't have time for spending the time and researching all this background of your family and stuff.

And I've, I've got it in a box downstairs.

You know, you're making me want to do that, want to look at it.

We never, we never kept, kept track of that.

And I never talked to mom about it too much.

Yeah, I don't know why, but we didn't.

And I'm sorry about that.

Somehow, mom and dad started, started their own traditions with just being, like living here.

And the heritage never really came into it really, I'd say.

We don't make Scottish dishes because they were grandma's, you know?

Grandma was a Gill.

There was granny Gill.

She was an old, well, an old, old, old lady with tied back hair.

So we went to where grandma and grandpa lived, grandma and grandpa Walker.

And then mom and dad, where they lived and stuff.

And then us, each of us, all through our lives.

I moved a lot.

Wouldn’t it be neat to have built up a relationship with some, some family members in Denmark?

My family was in Horsens.

And we did go there, Rob and I went there.

But I don’t know how far the Denmark, how far Denmark goes.

And you and, you know, interesting.

Nobody in Denmark ever tried to find us, as far as I know, either, right?

And I always would bring mom something too.

Like a something little that, like a little thing.

And I got all these little things now. (Laughs).

That’s some of the art is from around, around the houses, from, from travels.

It's, well, it's not just objects

So that's kind of our memories.

And then Christmas mornings, grandma and grandpa Walker would come over to have--every year.

And mum being the only child, so they were always with us, yeah.

There was always new skates somehow.

My dad would, you know, he's, he had a good sense of humor.

He was always trying to delay it.

(Laughs).

But that was, that happened every single Christmas, yeah.

And then I have a picture of this Christmas, of all of us together.

Because I don't have, I don't have many pictures of Tiva.

Because you're not here.

You're so lucky actually, to have so many people to love you and stuff.

You've got so much family.

Yeah, we should have been asking questions like you are, you know?

But we never did.

Never occurred to me to do it.

That's just the way, that's just the way it happened, and you can't change it.

So, yeah, so have fun with it. Have fun with it.

With my Kokum

And what I was trying, I guess, to recreate, was the sort of like a typical day in my childhood.

Which would be on repeat, right?

Like, I was the kid, until my brother came along.

Because you're a kid, you live.

Like I was raised between two Hutterite colonies.

This was remarkably similar.

With the wooded areas.

With the river.

With the creek.

And even the one with the gunky sandbar in the middle of the river.

We paddled--she paddled, out to a sandbar behind her house.

And we had lunch on the sandbar.

And to me, that was sort of, like I could almost see Mrs. Piper there.

I started school early because they needed eight students.

I was number eight.

Otherwise, the school would have closed.

And my parents had arranged for one to make sure I got to school and back home.

He walked me. But he walked fast.

And I had to learn to catch up.

We had catechism on the curriculum. Yeah.

And even, as a kid, you can see the influence of the church on our daily curriculums.

And is it because of my rural upbringing?

Because you're basically a captive audience, aren't you?

I think the Catholic is very regimented.

That church was, is, was the oldest or second oldest after Saint Boniface in Manitoba.

So, I... so, it's been around for a while.

I was coming from where you honour your father and your mother.

And you listen to what they tell you.

He was a Knights of Columbus. He was very devout.

And my dad had a lot of good ideas. He knew something of the culture.

My grandfather went and got his stepmom.

But she was actually very much a mother to him.

To dance.

And she was really, in the truest sense, a kokum.

If I had to characterize her, it would had been a mouse: with the black eyes, you know?

The Norwegian grandmother.

She was very, she had very strong opinions.

And then she, her mother bought a farm up here.

And that's where all that history started, and that.

And on the other side, it was very patriarchal.

Pépère was French, and he was the boss.

And mémère was the kokum.

I used to like to sit and watch her brush her hair out at night.

I just remember she was soft and smelled like baby powder.

But, and then he'd come in, and it was like, I had to leave.

But I do, I do have that resentment because... electoral rolls:

We were Cree, and then all of a sudden, we were French.

And now I don't know whether that was because they wanted to protect or wipe out.

Because, I guess that was the era where you hid it.

The patriarch would have been very happy with that.

About my mom?

I guess it was her curiosity.

She had herself and the stuff in her pantry.

But she was a phenomenal baker, and that.

Because she enjoyed feeding people.

Or us, anyway. She actually was crazy for kids.

The doctor said, "You have a tendency to raise your children the way you were raised".

But your dad, I think, got to pick and choose.

"I liked this part of growing up, so I'm going to hang on to it.

I did not appreciate that, so that's out for my kids".

You know, he made a choice.

He's going to be a better ancestor for his grandchildren.

Everybody had a different relationship with him and have different memories of a life with him.

So that's all different aspects I see.

Even of him in his relationship with each child, right?

It also gives you a bit of a background about where you're from.

So that is something that not everybody has, right?

I think he was just looking for something off the beaten path.

You can go get off at the park, and then you can just wander through memory lane.

But that's what sort of made it like home to me.

And yet, how would he know?

Because when I became a city girl, I left all that behind.

I'm still a city girl, but I have more empathy, I think, for my past.

You know, I used to tear up a Canada Day.

And now, I just almost bristle.

I guess it was just a rude awakening, for me to know that we're human.

Just like everybody else.

Yeah, expansion: of the city and urban sprawl.

But, it's such a stark contrast of...just moving in, building up.

People can't actually see green space without somebody trying to buy it. To build something.

Then you get prime for water views.

Yeah, contradictions: buildings with, versus nature.

It's just almost like colonizers all over again.

Cranky. (Laughs).

How much more can the earth take?

Makes me, it does make me cranky.

And what would be missing would probably be animal life.

Our house was surrounded by poplar forest.

If I had seen the woodpecker, I would have followed it forever.

Frogs and tadpoles, and.

I collected mice too.

And, another thing about going back out home, there's been so many changes.

It probably would have been more disappointing.

I can't imagine things would stay the same.

But how much of that has... sort of made you who you are?

Even minor inconveniences that some people get really upset about.

I figure, well you just adapt.

Use what you have.

I think it's important to go back to that, and remember that, and carry it forward.

It's what I remember, "From lard and bannock".

So, I could change it to "Tender Flake and Robin Hood".

Because the other thing was like, jam and honey.

Well, the honey we got from the Hutterites, so there was no brand.

It was like gardening, you know, the raspberries, the strawberries, and everything else, and that.

And then, you know, putting food away, canning the chickens, all that stuff for, for the winter.

So, even then, it was modern.

But it's, it's what our ancestors had to do, right?

Well, it's still insights into your background.

And, and because I was raised outside my culture.

And now I'm kind of afraid to dip a toe in it.

I gave him props for doing stuff that I didn't have the guts to do.

With my Grandpa

And so, I guess here is what we're trying to do, is tell a story.

I sort of say to myself, that's a little deep for me, but, you know, where am I from?

I struggle with that.

I'm more, more of a structured guy.

I would have to go back to Ashern, Manitoba, living on a farm.

My mom would say to Ron and I, "You two, go find your grandma".

According to my mother, she never spoke English. Couldn't speak English.

And she would be frustrated.

She'd go out with her cane and go walking. Who knows where.

But she lived with us in Ashern.

I just love their spirit, of that whole generation that immigrated to whatever country.

They come here because there's opportunity here.

In order for her to apply for an old age pension, she had to be a Canadian citizen.

So, I got her to... I filled out the forms for her and then submitted them.

And I explained to her, to him, that she had 12 children, of which 9 she raised on her own.

And she didn't have time or even think about going for citizenship, okay?

So for most of her life, she had raised these children, and it had been a struggle.

Now, she had a chance to enjoy her granddaughter.

It wasn't a struggle to her.

And, and that's what generations before did in the European countries.

Grandparents were involved in their children's upbringing, and there's nothing wrong with that.

You know, "She's living history". She's, you know, she's, you got it here, enjoy it, take it.

I wasn't using her, I was giving her an opportunity... to stay young.

She thought of herself as a Canadian. She always believed she was Canadian.

She was a Canadian citizen when she stepped on Canada soil.

"This is my new home. I'm a Canadian". You don't need a piece of paper.

It just clicks.

Or maybe she just purposely said that to say, "I'm a Canadian. I'm not a Hungarian, I'm a Canadian".

I mean, your, your great grandmother was a very, very staunch Canadian.

I don't know how I... to be honest. I don't know where I am from.

For some reason it irked them that I was from a family of 12 kids.

It's interesting how she, she, she didn't teach any of her 12 children Hungarian.

And I asked her that once, and she told me, “This is Canada, we're speaking English in Canada”.

That was it.

In those days Sativa, we were living on the outskirts of the city.

And if you went, if you went north up the street, then there was just open land.

And long before, when I lived there, St James was a city.

Just like East Kildonan was a city, and St Vital was a city.

Then they merged them all.

I am from the duck pond.

The memory stones.

And the reason is that's history. That'll be there for another 50 years.

What does that mean to some? Probably nothing.

For me, it brings back memories whenever I go by there.

"You know, Dave, this is the best kept secret. It's free."

So you cross the river.

They're mostly oak trees. Or are they elms?

So when, when you look at these pictures, they, they, they do tell a story... of my upbringing.

Winnipeg--wherever you're born and you spend your formative years, will always be home.

It'll always be home for you, just because of the memories you've created.

Yeah, you've come back, but you've been away from, if I can call it home.

And right now, you haven't laid any roots down.

That's the difference.

A house is a house, but home is, is where memories are created.

It's trial and error, and whatever your, your parents taught you, you, you adapt.

I should have been more focused on my daughter.

When they're that young, you just, they're like sponges.

But there was a crutch there, and that was that my mother, who was in there teaching her.

I got lucky.

You have acquired some, believe me, some of grandma Leitold's traits.

You're very sensitive, you're frugal. You're not cheap, you're frugal.

And you probably did that through osmosis--It just... it's in the DNA, you know?

Well, in your case, you've got four different contributions to your, to you.

But at the end of the day, you're still a Canadian.

With my Jichan

We had a nice big river.

Still there.

There's a swift current there.

"Yeah, you saved my life", he says. (Laughs).

That's the only thing that I could recognize, after all the tall building.

But the river's there.

Almost every city, they have a some kind of river running through.

I don't think there's not a city that don't have a bridges.

Even a Winnipeg is a Winnipeg.

They all have a bridges.

As far as the earth goes, when I came to Canada, the dirt was all black.

And I've never seen that in Japan.

A volcano type, an orange, type of deal.

You go to warm climates, those trees are crooked or winding.

In Canada, in the cold climates, tree seems to grow straight upwards.

But mind you, we never traveled too much in Japan.

Yeah, Winnipeg is a small town compared to Japan.

You know, population under a million.

I'm sure you noticed between the Winnipeg and Toronto, or Quebec.

A million, that's not much.

A lot of people say, "Hey, Ken", type of deal.

The world's big, but it's not that big that you don't run into somebody from a Winnipeg.

It's amazing.

No matter what part of the country you go, you probably run in with somebody from Winnipeg.

And the country is so big compared to Japan.

It was nice to see it, in a whole wide open country.

But I do that whenever I go golfing.

The picture of the entrance to the golf course.

You know, which an arch on, right on the road?

I remember they were putting that thing up back then.

Bring you back a memory about what that place look like before.

And how they turned it into the golf course.

Where the last picture I took is a shoe, which reminds me of Japan.

I don't really recall wearing a shoe down there, you know?

My father decided to go back to Japan.

I mean, they can't do anything about it, right?

But, Japanese people are funny.

They're pretty, taking pride in a lot of things.

I talk a little bit about my mother's last moments at the Grace Hospital.

That's the first time I ever hold the hand of the person leaving this Earth.

But again, like situation was, I had no one to guide me.

Because my father was away for long time.

Certain grandkids I'm happy with.

Certain grandkids, I feel sorry for them.

I can't do anything about it. Yeah.

Yeah, yeah. What the hell.

I'm like Mikayla: happy, happy.

(Laughs).

As far as trying to change her, it's not going to change her.

See what she is.

My family life --I mean, I sit back now and I regret it.

Regret that I was spending so much effort in the job than the family.

But as far as the job goes, I was a very good at it.

And you know, like, I had a lot of my workers.

They respect me, right, too. They spoke up for me.

I kind of enjoyed the kind of argument that we had. (Laughs).

It wasn't an argument.

But my view versus your view, type of deal.

But you're pushing yourself to be--you know, become what you are now.

Not, somebody didn't force you to.

You, you, you choose what you are.

Yeah, life will change as you go.

Never stand still, it's always something.

Winnipeg is a pretty slow, slow place compared to Quebec, or Toronto, or BC, hey?

Appendix F

Most influential group experiential themes from IPA analysis. Themes in bold, accompanied by codes that led to the development of these themes.

New life in the 'New World': Canadian; Acceptance; Diversity; Immigration; New Life; Opportunity; Land and ecology; War

Skilled worker, making parents proud: Achievement and evaluation; Acceptance; Work; Leadership; Opportunity

Family gatherings and traditions: Family; Food; Old memories; Hosting; Christmas (celebrations and traditions)

Pride in my parents: Care; Relax; Parenting; My papa; My mom; Time

Individualism and limits of care: Family; Tension; Money: Parenting; Care

Winnipeg as home: Winnipeg; Home; Land and ecology; Park; Plants; Animals

Appendix G

Script for the film, *Muddy water (is where I'm from).*

VO: Okay, I'm back in Winnipeg. So, I've been making this film about my relationship with this place that I'm from. And turns out that's not so easy to do when you're not actually living in Winnipeg.

Me on Zoom: Can you see the chat and how I was starting to, to try to type it in there for you?

Jichan: No.

Me on Zoom: Okay.

Jichan: I just see your camera there.

Me on Zoom: Yeah, it's just I can see the wall. I can see your wall.

Me on Zoom: You're not in it. You're not in it.

Kokum: No, I mean I was getting out of your way so you could see more wall.

Me on Zoom: Oh, no. That's okay. I just didn't want to put you in it cuz sometimes…

Kokum: No, I think as long as I don't know it, it's probably better.

Me on Zoom: Okay.

Title here.

VO: It took moving away to start thinking about what it means to be from Winnipeg. And it took planning to move back to Winnipeg to try to understand why, for me, Winnipeg feels like home.

VO: Every place offers these distinct senses of being there. I asked my mom, as I do with most things, about her sense of Winnipeg. She talked about the scrappiness of the people. An empowering kind of scrappy: gritty, spunky, brave.

VO: You could represent Winnipeg with cold winters, or a labour strike, or a prairie crocus, and, in each case, make an argument for a characteristically Winnipeg kind of persistence.

VO: While this is true, it’s not the whole story. And so, I’ve been talking with my grandparents, trying to understand more about who I am and where I come from.

VO: In these conversations, my grandparents always mention that generation in between.

Jichan: Okay.

VO: Their kid. My parent.

Jichan: Well, you look at the papasan.

VO: My Jichan refers to my dad as papasan. I thought this was because I call him papa and he's my Jichan’s son. It took me many years to understand that it just means dad in Japanese.

VO: And my mom, well, if it weren't for my mom, I probably wouldn't be making this film.

Mom: Press record and let go. Okay. Now, now you're taping. So, now you're taping in our new apartment.

Young me: Okay. I'm going to show the room all around: the TV, the plants, and you,

Mom: Your mom. Hi!

Young me: And…

Mom: We should walk backwards and away, tiva. They're all coming. These guys are all coming towards us. Oh my god. Okay. We're actually getting chased out of the bird sanctuary by a bunch of large birds.

VO: Have you ever been to a place where it's clear you're not welcome? Or, maybe you being there is okay so long as you stay in your lane?

VO: It's on that camcorder that my mom first taught me how to film. And now, here I am, still filming and asking about my relationship with this place where I'm from.

Grandpa: Winnipeg, wherever you're born and you spend your formative years, will always be home.

VO: One of the first days after I came home, it rained mud. Dirty rain, a rare weather phenomenon. Have you ever heard of that before?

Grandpa: It's been so dry and this… the high winds, you'd have the soil in the air and then a rain came along--

Me: And do you think that muddy rain is especially special in Winnipeg?

Grandpa: Well, in all the years I've lived in Manitoba and Winnipeg, I have never experienced that before.

Me: But then also, I was wondering if it's special because I've been thinking a lot about Winnipeg and where the city gets its name, right? And Winnipeg comes from Wînipêk, which is this Cree and Anishinaabe word that means muddy water.

Grandpa: Oh!

Me: And so then I, yeah, I don't know. I found it interesting that it rained mud and I'm now back in this place that's named after muddy water.

Grandpa: And if, well, if you look at the Red River and the Assiniboine River, they are muddy rivers.

Jichan: Oh you know, even a Winnipeg is a Winnipeg. But it's, you know almost every city they have a, you know, some kind of river running through. I don't think there isn't a city that doesn't have a bridges. They all have a bridges.

VO: But here's the thing. Wînipêk does not refer to Winnipeg, defined by the perimeter plus whatever urban sprawl. Rather, Wînipêk refers to the watershed of Lake Winnipeg. And the scale of this watershed illuminates my relationships beyond the city's boundaries.

Kokum: I think, did I tell you about Mrs. Piper? The retired teacher. That lived across, she lived across the road from us. And she packed a lunch and took me in a canoe, and we paddled—we paddled, *she* paddled—out to a sandbar behind her house. And we had lunch on the sandbar. And to me, that was sort of, like I could almost see Mrs. Piper there.

Kokum: This was remarkably similar.

VO: Every time I've visited, and now since coming home, I often walk along the riverbanks. My intention is to visit Wînipêk.

VO: You know, the year that I was in kindergarten, we rented a house that backed onto the Assiniboine River. I walked past there recently, wanted to imagine how I saw the river 20 years ago. Same cottonwood, Manitoba maple, green ash. Same bright sun, same muddy water.

VO: If I were to ask you to take me to a place and to tell me about your relationship with it, where would we go? Where would the place end? Would it end? Who else would be there?

Young me: Now, should I do it with real water in here?

Aurum: Yes! Finally.

VO: I've been thinking about places and their boundaries because I recently asked my grandparents to take me to a place and tell me about their relationship with it.

VO: Visiting these places, I witness my grandparents' expressions of home. Home is not a collection of places, but is about the relationships and stories connected to wherever they take me.

Grandpa: Your great grandmother got her Canadian citizenship officially.

Grandpa: He had all these immigrants there, and he had this elderly woman that had been living in Canada since 1926.

Grandpa: She had 12 children, of which 9 she raised on her own, and she didn't have time or even think about going for citizenship.

Grandpa: Although in her mind, she was a Canadian citizen long before. She was a Canadian citizen when she stepped on Canada's soil.

Jichan: And as far as the earth goes, when I came to Canada, the dirt was all black. And I've never seen that in Japan, because there's so, like a volcano type, so it was a, you know, kind of orange.

Kokum: I just wanted to show you a snapshot of my surroundings as, as a child, growing up.

Kokum: Because when I became a city girl, I left all that behind. And now, it just seems like I'm still a city girl. But I have more empathy, I think, for my past. And that.

Kokum: So, I think it's important to go back to that, and remember that, and carry it forward. And you sort of do that too.

VO: I've been wondering what makes someone from a place. And how being from a place is different from belonging to that place. I am from Winnipeg, I was born and raised in this city, but belonging is not automatic.

VO: I have always been interested in thinking about belonging and home with the rivers because, through my Kokum, these waterways carry family stories of this place from before it was even called Winnipeg. While Vice-President Dauphinais is our most famous ancestor, visiting the rivers enacts ancestral remembrance of multiple Michif expressions of urban life and resistance.

VO: This watershed invites movement, describing home in our bodies and relationships, not unlike what my grandparents have been saying. And other family, who began calling this place home years later, have river stories, too… albeit ones that translate quite imperfectly on this territory.

VO: To practice belonging requires centring Indigenous lifeworlds. Belonging to Wînipêk, then, foregrounds my relationships with the waterways themselves and all of those with whom I share the watershed.

Me on the phone: Do you know what happened in Winnipeg in 1919?

Kokum: The General Strike.

Me on the phone: The General Strike, but also, 1919 is the year that the Greater Winnipeg Water District Aqueduct was completed. So, when we started stealing water from Shoal Lake 40.

VO: Throughout this time, Shoal Lake 40 has upheld their commitments to keep Winnipeg's water clean. Throughout this time, we let Shoal Lake 40 live under a boil water advisory for 27 years.

Me on the phone: And so, I thought, huh, that's kind of, I mean, it's also it's convenient, right? Cuz we celebrate 1919 for this labor history that the city is so known for. But then that celebration in some sense also obscures how we get our water.

Kokum: It does.

Beste: We should have been asking questions like you are, you know, but we never did.

Me on Zoom: I'm, I guess that's why I'm kind of trying to not let it go so far. And if there's gaps, there's some. But yeah.

Beste: You know, I've got some stuff. Mom, mom got somebody put together like a whole family tree thing. And there was more, there's more information too. And I've, I've got it in a, in a box downstairs.

Beste: You know, you're making me want to do that, want, want to look at it.

Me on Zoom: I want to look at it, like…

Beste: You want to look?

Me on Zoom: No rush to find it. But yeah.

VO: It's funny how making a film about my relationship with Winnipeg became the circumstance in which I thought to ask for these family documents from my Beste.

VO: It's this branch of my family where I encounter the most gaps. Not really sure when people came here, what motivated their move, and why they stayed. Not really sure which stories and habits my ancestors took with them, and which ones they chose to leave behind.

Beste: And I never talked to mom about it too much.

Beste: Somehow, I don't know how, you know, mom and dad started, started their own traditions with just being, like living here. And not, the, the heritage never really came into it really, I'd say.

VO: Incredibly, making this film has coincided with a new weekly tradition where my mom brings home a bag of family photographs from my Beste's basement. And these photos, not the family tree, are documents that I find most compelling as I ask about my relationship with this place that I'm from.

Me on Zoom: Why does that one most represent home?

Beste: Well, that's my mom and, and my brother. Yeah, I had a special, I, a special... I kind of was, I guess, the oldest one here. So, I had a special relationship with my mom.

Beste: And I'm sure Daina and I will be talking about this after our, after our call here. I mean, we'll talk about it on our walks and stuff.

Grandpa: Sativa, your mother spends time, your mother got involved in your life. With me, I was busy working and focused on my, my work.

Grandpa: But, there was a crutch there, and that was that my mother was in there teaching her.

Jichan: My family life, you know, now, I mean, I sit back now and I regret it. Regret the thing that you know, I was spending so much effort and the time in the job, than the family. So, whatever.

Jichan: But Jason's a good kid. I mean, he worries about the kids. He does a good job with what he can do with them, so.

Kokum: He's going to be a better ancestor for his grandchildren.

VO: My grandparents keep talking about my parents, maybe as a way show me what our families learn with each generation. In talking about their kids, our conversations are not only about where we come from, but also where we are going.

VO: I was talking with my papa about how I wanted to make a film about land and it's becoming a film about muddy water. And then, we started talking about our last name. “Kawa” means river and “kami” in this sense, means upper or above. To this, my papa said something about how the river in our last name is not quite as muddy. Which is funny because we don’t really know this river in our last name. Or at least not yet.

VO: Right now, I feel grateful to have returned to my childhood home just up the street from the Assiniboine River.

Mom: Good morning!

Beste: Good morning!

Mom: Good morning! First day of school!

Beste: And we’re going to walk in the rain.

Grandpa: That's where your all your formative years were. You know what I'm trying to say?

VO: As I continue to ask about who I am and where I come from, I’ve been wondering if part of the reason why this place feels like home is because it’s where I first started asking questions.

VO: And I’m always learning about asking better questions. I’m learning from my family and from confluences of the everyday.

VO: My grandparents show me how home is a creative process: that we make home through relationships. Framed in this way, making home and belonging become collective practices rather than entitled acts of possession. This practice of belonging begins with respect that centres Indigenous land and life.

VO: Here, from the centre of Winnipeg, where I was born and raised, Wînipêk, the watershed, and all of the laws, and languages, and life related to it will always teach me about caring for this community that I call home.

Jichan: Yeah, life will change as you go. Never stand still.

Beste: You've got so much family, which is, which is, uh, you're so lucky actually. So. Yeah, so, have fun with it. Have fun with it.

Appendix H

Link to *Muddy water (is where I'm from)*

https://vimeo.com/reviews/7f3cd274-0974-4200-8992-21919495e62c/videos/1214753501

Link to subtitled version of *Muddy water (is where I'm from)*

https://vimeo.com/reviews/af331a5d-b211-49d9-9d7e-eafb0b1e52a3/videos/1214987235

If you have trouble accessing the film, please contact me (tiva.kawakami@outlook.com). Enjoy!