

## Hunting

*John Holman*

They had been hunting all day. The sun was low and the sky growing a deeper blue. The Franklin Mountains glowed a dark blue against the lake snow.

Norman was hungry. His stomach growled and he wanted some bannock and tea. Cold air frosted his breath and his thick mukluks were caked with frozen snow, but inside his beaver coat he was sweating.

The fluffy snow made working hard. His legs were tired and his stomach was empty.

Norman and his father tramped back to the camp. The sun was low and just peeking over the mountain. Dark sea blue shadowed the sky and a gentle wind started to blow. They would be going home tomorrow.

Gee, nothing for Christmas." Norman felt sad. The wind whistled through the trees.

They made a fire and melted crystallized snow from the lake. Cold moose meat was pan heated and they dunked their bannock in the tasty grease. Later on they sipped tea from warm cups. Norman felt good and thought of his husky pup at home. Far away a wolf howled. Norman listened to the echoes and curled up in his feather sleeping bag. His father kissed his forehead and said, "Good night son."

The last cracklings of the fire popped once in a while.

Norman fell asleep almost as quickly as he usually woke up. When he awoke his blanket was damp from his breathing. The early morning sun brightened the canvas tent. His father was outside singing. Norman, hearing the terrible sound, tried hard not to laugh but he couldn't hold it in.

"What's up? Are you awake, son?"

"Yes, dad."

He wondered as he had done many times before why he was never awake before his dad.

He got out of the sleeping bag and dressed quickly in the cold air. Then he sipped cocoa and ate bannock, liking the taste of the strawberry jam. His father had just finished cooking the mush and it smelled good. They ate silently, sitting on their feet and keeping their mukluks from the fire.

Across the lake a black dot moved. Norman told his dad to look. He fetched the binoculars and studied the dot. Norman could see it moving towards them at an angle.

"Shhhh!" Dad put his finger to his mouth. It was only then that Norman realized it was a moose. Dad took his gun and walked down to the willows at the edge of the lake. He crouched there. Norman stayed still and looked through the binoculars. He could see the moose so clearly it looked like a scene of a picture postcard.

There was the moose royally crossing the lake, the trees and mountains making up the background. The sun glowed. Then he heard a crack that was loud and echoing, just like the sound of river ice cracking. The moose fell.

Two days later Norman and his family enjoyed a fun Christmas. He will be a good year, he thought, as he

bit into a moose rib and savoured the taste.

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## Ráts'eezee

Dzine hogháré rázée ʔakát'ı, gú góhé rásayaʔo hé godarát'l'e. ʔeyı shıh hai tu k'e yaderale k'é kéodarát'l'e hénı keodééht'ı.

Norman lééhtée wá ledı hé hek'a dáwı dúé k'é besho ʔegorehxo. ʔekáʔadéhshó ʔééleegu k'é hééjı nıde bewá ts'ę le hénı ʔat'ı, hagú beʔeráakeekéé la ʔákot'ú ya tę zọ hıı gú ʔája, kólı besáwéhʔee t'á goshó ʔedeeriwı.

Ya hıshuwe ʔek'one derale dę ts'eda gha goshó kégofa. Bew'éné rihtedéniwe hé w'ıla besho du t'áhsı góhıı.

Norman detá hó k'ét'á kedenóbálé ts'érakedéʔa. K'áʔone shıht'ane derátll'e hé w'ıla síleta dats'ı gú ʔagodadee. ʔéék'ęę ʔáradedádee.

Norman dúyé yeniwı gú dukáʔadı, “Héyhéé, Tewe Yatı gogha du t'áhsı.” Ts'uta dééts'ı.

Ko kedéhıa gú hıfé tu ts'ę ya kenıhwı. ʔıts'é fęk'ai kenıhwı gú ʔıye lé hé lééht'ée keyıʔa. ʔeyıt'l'á ledı wewele kado. Norman gha gonezọ ʔaragújá gú kók'é belıhıá weda ghó rávedıwe. Ts'ılıyee gots'ę bele heese goyedlı. Keʔedıhtı huwehʔo gú deshohts'ére t'á shuréhde. Betá yerata goghónayıtı gú “Seya gonezọ shunıtı” yéhdı.

Duʔuwaani kó t'éwé ʔadı dí beyıderéde. Yáhkale forı hıt'ú ts'enıwe. Hééjı ts'ę bets'ére hotı wehse hénı ʔaja. Nóbale yee sadée ts'ę goshó kéodéht'ı. Betá tıch'a gots'ę heje goyedlı. Goshó dzá ráwew'ę k'é Norman ráʔuhdlóle yeniwe kólı rıenıdlo.

“Dágóht'e? Seya ká dzodıdını?” “ʔabá hęʔe.”

Dáhsó ʔabá golọ gots'ę sewere zọ ts'edéweo yeniwe gú ts'ére t'á gots'ę kádéhıa gú ladı ʔıhıe gók'a hénı ʔagóht'e hé forı hıt'ú raréhıa. Cocoa héts'e hé lééht'ee wá yek'a. Jam goshó begha leyıko. Betá leyélé wéhsha goshó leyıko. Síleta shékayee. Kó ch'á kedeekee k'e keekee nı.

Hıná tuk'e t'áhsı dezene ráyeda. Norman detá gha ʔekó ʔudeefı. Bééyeeđéht'ı hé yekáreyıhta. Lá ts'ę gots'ę yeda gú Norman yáyeda.

Shhhh... betá síleʔawót'e gha yets'éragohsı. Norman ʔekáhxóné ʔıts'é ʔat'ı kodéhsha. ʔabá deefeek'ú rıdışú gú tı'anı k'ái ráweʔa ts'ę tádéya. ʔeyı rıt'l'ádéfa. Norman ʔekula síleta ʔeyı bééyeeđéht'ı hé yáhımıda. ʔeyı ʔıts'é dádéhshó gonezọ bódat'ı k'é hotı ʔedıht'l'é hıshu postcard hotı gháts'eyeda ʔekáʔahęt'e.

Tu k'é ʔıts'ého nééyeele. Béde ts'ú, gots'ę shıh ʔahęt'e. Lọ késanıdı. Hayıléladı féek'u hudéhʔo goyedlı. Hotı ʔuyálele dehogá lu ts'eyádewe k'é ʔagodéja. ʔıts'é rádawe.

Godó rákee dziné Norman dekọę got'ıne ke hé súde ʔedenıé Tewe yatı gokéhsı. ʔıyeshoʔw'éné heʔá gú ʔedets'é duká yeniwe. Hıdú xai gonezọ gha sını.

— North Slavey

