

Dàanì Hozì Hòl eyits'ò Dàanì Weyìts'atla Wegodiì Hòl

The Creation of the Barren Lands
and the Couple Inside the Mountain



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1966 ekò eyi godi Vital Thomas yet'a June Helm xègoado ilè.
Enìht'è "The Beaver" k'e dek'eèht'è agìla ilè. (xat'ò 1966)

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Based on a story told by Vital Thomas to June Helm in 1962
as published in The Beaver (Autumn 1966).

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ISBN 1-896790-04-6

K'akwe whaà hozì k'èhots'eezhò-
le ɬè ts'edì. T'aa ts'ò k'ets'eet'ì sì,
ts'ò ts'inè k'e zò agòt'e ɬè. Shihdeè
nawheʔa gots'ò hotedà nèk'e
Yabahtì T'àcho gots'ò ts'ì zò ɬè.
Ekòo dzeè k'e done ɬk'odeè elì
Tideèbàa nàdè ɬè. ɬàà tɔdzì gha
nàzè ha dèhtlà. Wets'èke gowhatsò
yeda hòk'è wheda.

Wets'èke tseèhgà wheda. Dedòò
gha kw'ìhʔegòò k'e nàʔeeli. Ch'oh
yek'e nàeli ghò wheda.

In the early days there were no
Barren Lands. Trees covered the
north from the Rocky Mountains
across the Inuit lands on Hudson
Bay. In those days a great medicine
man lived near Tòndeè, our Great
Slave Lake. One day he went
hunting for toji ekwò, the woodland
caribou, and he left his young wife
behind, alone in the camp.

The young wife knelt in the
doorway of their shelter. She was
embroidering a new shirt for her
husband with a porcupine quill
design. A leather tassel dangled
from a thong around her neck
brushing away flies as she worked.



Xɔtsa done wɪɪzɪ ɾeh k'e ajàa t'à dèhyeh. ɪdòò k'eet'ɪ là nàzèedɔ̀ at'ɪ nɔ̀, yenaɖa nàwo, ɪtɪ yàetɔ̀ xè. Dɔzhìdaà ghàɪdà-le, yegoht'ɔ̀ k'e k'eet'ɪ. “Eteèt'ɪ nàht'ɪ,” ts'èko hanɪwɔ̀. Weɾeè nezɪ nàhdli-le, wek'e ch'oh nàhdli-le eyits'ɔ̀ wekw'è si weɾeè k'e while. “Eyɪ dɔ̀ wets'èke gòhtɪ-le t'à yegha nàzeeli while,” hanɪwɔ̀. Dɔzhìdaà ghàɪdà-le et'ì ededɔ̀ gha ɾeh k'e nàzeeli ɪlè sì yeghɔ̀laeda, nezɪ nàyeèlɪ t'à wɪlää k'è hoɪzɪ.

Nàzèedɔ̀ dakwe t'à xàyaɪhtɪ-le, ekɪ eyɪ nàwo. Ts'èko, ɪlää nàzeeli ha hoèhdzà yeghàeda. Wɪghɔ̀ k'e winìtɪ tɔ̀ nìt'ɪ. Xɔtsa ch'oh t'à dɪlakw'ɔ̀ ghajhè. Welakw'ɔ̀ k'e edòò ajà t'à edelakw'ɔ̀ eht'ò. Dɔzhì, ts'èko wèdaat'ɪ ne yɪhwhɔ̀ eyits'ɔ̀ ɾeh k'e nàeli sì wet'àwoht'ɪ nɪwɔ̀.

Suddenly a shadow fell across the shirt over her lap. With a slight shiver the young wife looked up to see a young hunter standing before her with a bow in his hand. Before she even saw his eyes she noticed the man's hide shirt, poorly sewn, no quill embroidery, no fringes, and she thought, “This man has no wife to sew for him.” Without meeting his eyes she looked down at her work again, proud of the neat design she was creating on her medicine man's shirt.

The young hunter didn't speak at first. He just stood still, keeping his shadow on the shirt on her lap. He watched the young wife try to continue her work. Droplets of sweat formed on the tip of her nose. Her hand slipped and a quill pricked her finger. He glimpsed the drop of blood before she sucked it away. The young wife was beautiful and he wanted to wear the shirt in her lap.



“Nàzèedòò nezı aht’e ne,” dọzhìi hadi. “Ts’èko nezı eghàlade sìi sets’èke elı ha dehwhọ. Sek’è naıtla,” yèhdi.

Tsèko, dọzhìi hayèhdi t’à deı lajà, demọò k’eet’ı. Dọzhìi weèhdà ıkw’ıa xè wedaà nàzedlò ghàıdà. K’achı wezeè k’e t’asii nàhdı-le sı ghàıdà.

Dọzhìi hadi, “Ets’ènọnèe dehga tıch’aàıdeè gıkeè k’è ıọ gòla. Nedọò gowhatso wheęda anılà. Amì nexoehdi ha? To tıch’aàı nets’òèhgè nıdè dàıde ha?” hadi t’a Ts’èko gà nàgòıhgè. Wııghọ k’e wenìtì deyııtso. “Sets’èke gòhlı nıde dehwhọ. Sek’è naıtla. Nezıı nek’èhdi ha ne,” ts’èko èhdi.

“I am a good hunter,” he said. “I need a good wife. Come away with me.”

The wife shivered when she heard these words, shivered and furtively glanced around the camp for the medicine man. In the same glance she saw the young hunter’s smoothly plucked chin and his sparkling eyes. Again she saw the hide shirt with no embroidery.

“A long-toothed cat has left tracks on the other side of the river,” the young hunter said. “Your husband has left you all alone. You have no one to protect you. What if the long-tooth visits you in the night?” He crouched down before her and wiped a droplet of sweat from her nose. “I need a good wife. Come away with me. I can keep you from harm.”



Ts'èko wɪ̀nì deǵì t'à ts'ehɿ̀ laǵà.
Tɿ̀ch'aàdì deè eyits'ò dedòò xɿ̀ ghò
nàniwo t'à. Dòzhì weʔeè k'e t'asì
nàhdli-le ghò nàniwo t'à k'achɿ̀ ch'oh
t'à delakw'òò ghahgè. Dòzhì ɿ̀aà
yenada wheda, yenì k'e k'eet'ì.
Ts'èko dedòò kw'ìhʔeh k'e nàelɿ̀ sì
eyì zò ghàeda. Nòdèa ts'èko hadì,
"Nexè naehtɿ̀a ha dehɿ̀ diè. Sedòò
ɿ̀k'ò t'à nàtso ne. Wech'àdets'eʔì ha
dìi ne," dì.

Nàzèedòò, ts'èko wedòò
wekw'ìhʔeè neyìɿ̀a gà deehgò k'e
nèyìɿ̀ah gà naehtɿ̀a ha ets'aèhtɿ̀a.
Ts'èko yet's'ò niitɿ̀a hadì, "Dehɿ̀ kò
nek'è naehtɿ̀a ha," dì.

The young wife shivered at the
thought of a long-toothed cat. She
shivered as she thought of her
husband. She pricked her finger with
another quill as she thought of the
hunter's unembroidered shirt. The
young hunter remained crouched
before her, his fingers exploring her
face. Her eyes stayed fixed on her
husband's shirt. Finally the young
wife said, "I'm scared to go away
with you because my husband is a
great medicine man. There is no way
to hide from him."

The young hunter took the
medicine man's embroidered shirt
from the wife's lap, stood up and
threw it over his shoulder. He turned
and started to walk away. The young
wife scrambled to her feet. "I'm
scared to go," she said. "But I'll go
with you anyway."

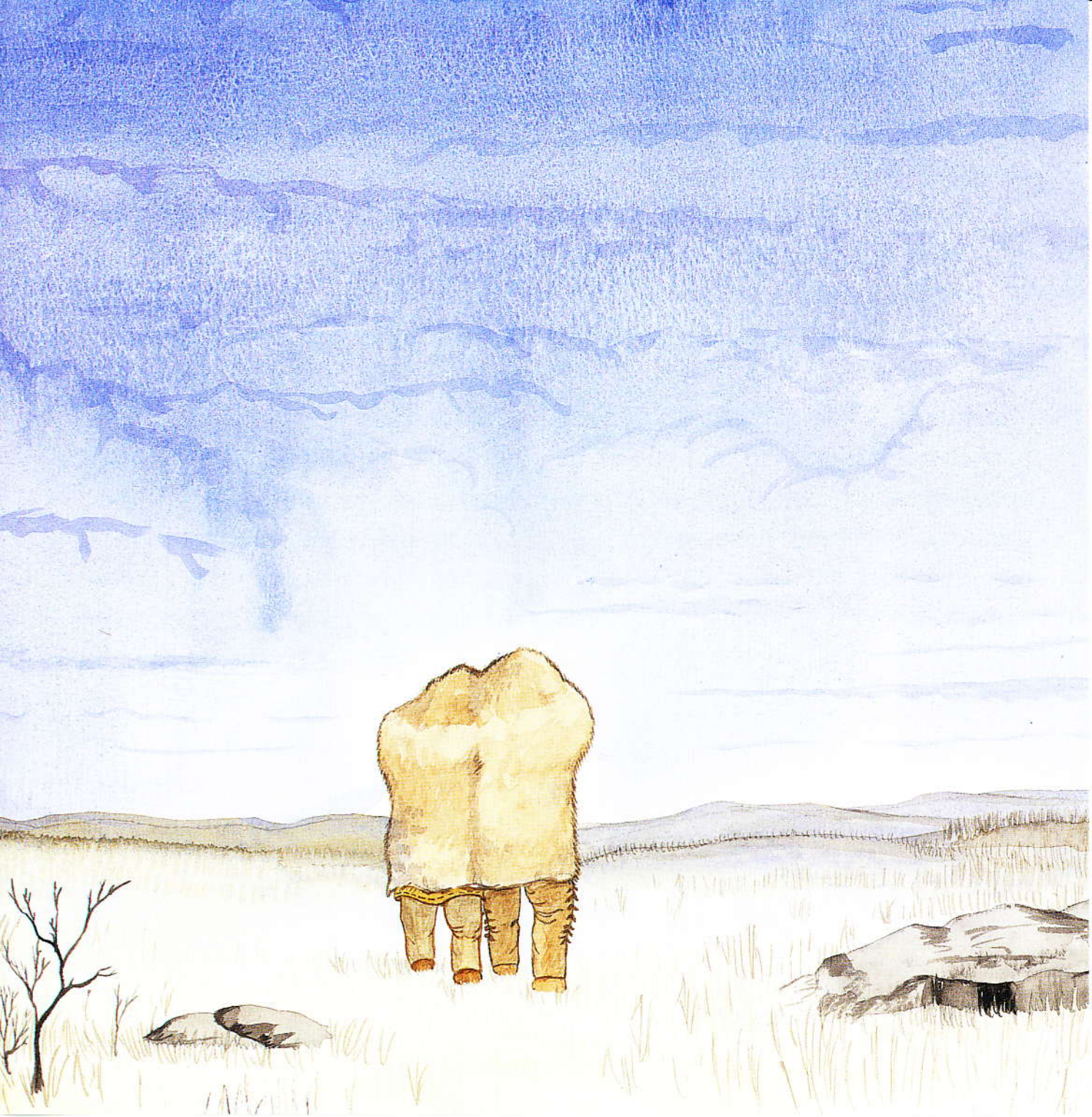


Eyi t'à nàzèedòò eyits'ò ts'èko
elexè dechìni ts'ò legeèhtla,
k'àbatsòò ts'ò nèe diì hozì gòyeh sù
ekòò ts'ò et'ì agejà.

Xèhts'ò agodaade kò nàzèedòò
ts'èko xè kweyì eʔò ghò nègìide,
ekò tohogeewhì ha. “Jò hoizì ne,
hoilà ch'à,” Nàzèedòò hadiì. Kwe yì
ori k'e nètègele. “Dechìni goichà diè
ne. Nedòò gogòhà hoilì ha-le,” di.
Ts'èko dejì t'à ts'ehì lat'ì hanikò
nàzèedòò yegha ehkw'ì adi t'à wha-
le et'ì geète.

So the young hunter and the
medicine man's young wife set off
into the bush together, heading east
to where the Barren Lands are now.

Near nightfall the hunter led the
runaway wife to a cave where they
made camp for the night. “We are
safe here,” the hunter said as they
lay down on a bed of spruce boughs
in the cave. “The bush is too big.
Your husband will never find us.”
The runaway wife shivered a little
but the hunter's warm arms under
the medicine man's embroidered
shirt made her believe him and soon
they were fast asleep.



Ik'œelɪdœdœ nezɪ dechɪnɪ nàwhezè.
Ekwò nàke eɬaɪhdè. Ekw'œdœbeh t'à
ekwò nɪwhet'à, edzeè, ewalɪ, ewò,
ets'oò, edetehmɪ yɪ yɪwa, gà
edets'èke ts'œ nayeèhgɪ. Bò wèhdaa
ɪdè àila sɪ kwe yek'e doyeèwa,
nœœdè nɪdè edets'èke xè yets'œetɬa
ha nɪwœ ts'œœ.

Edi nàdè sɪ tanɪ nœœtɬa kò gœœwà
ts'œ dœ gode lagodɪ hœt'e. Ezeh xè
eèhk'œ hanikò esanagodɪ-le. Ahxœ
tatsœgaa naizeh adɪ nɪwœ. ɪwhaà
najièhtɬa. Sets'èke bò k'aeht'è ha
seda kwe kœ k'e yɪwhɪ sonɪ nɪwœ.

Out in the bush the medicine man
had a good hunt. He killed two
caribou close together. With his
stone knife he butchered the
animals and filled his backpack with
hearts, tongues, livers, and kidneys
to take home to his wife. Then he
piled rocks on the carcasses to
protect them from wolves until he
could return with his wife to haul the
meat back to camp.

About halfway back to camp the
medicine man heard voices in the
distance. He called out, but there
was no reply, so he thought perhaps
a raven had cawed. Then he
quickenened his step as he thought of
his wife heating stones in the fire,
preparing the cooking pot for his
meat.



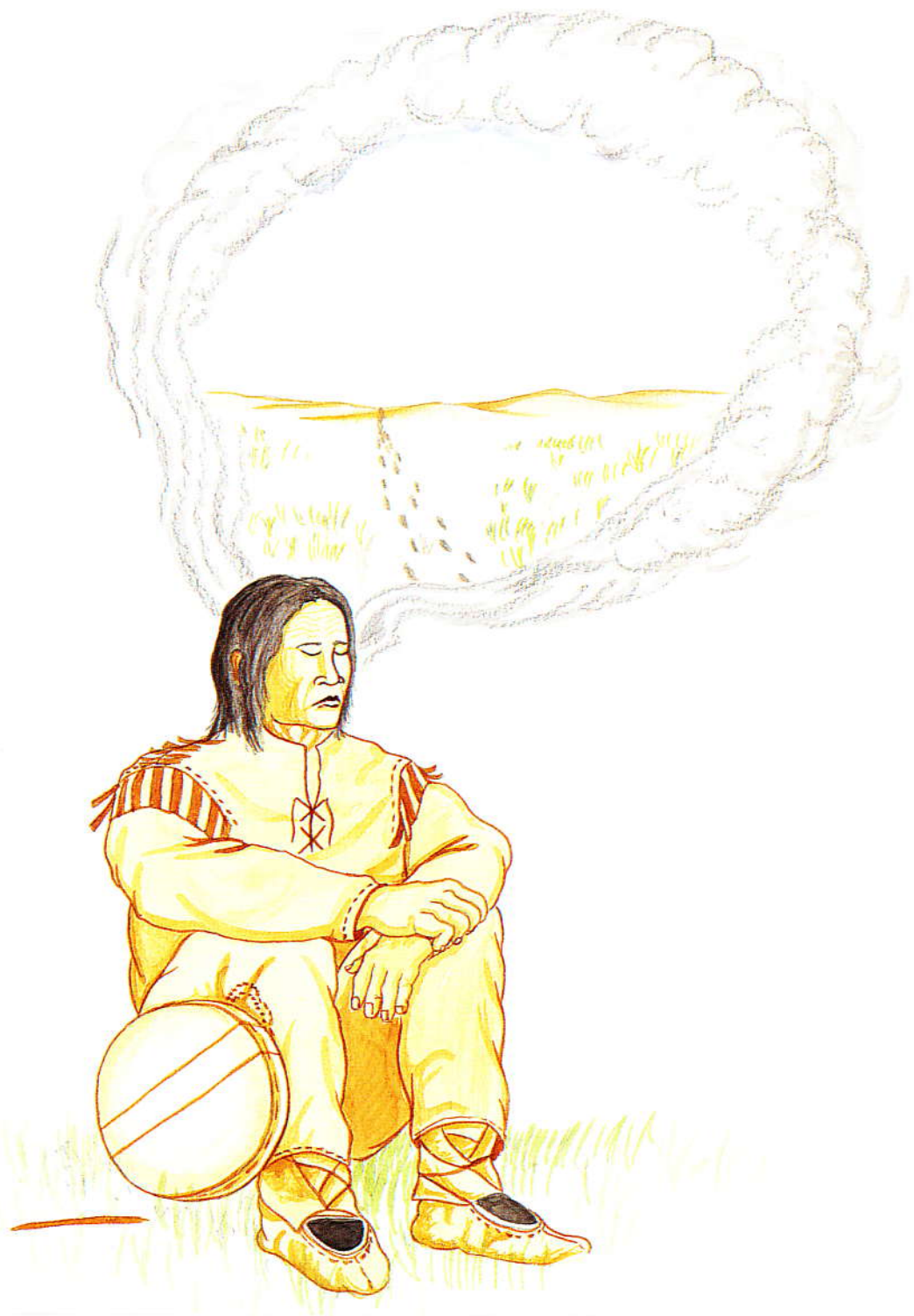
Ik'qelii dọọ edek'ọ nọọtla kò, kò dèk'ọ-le nọọ. Dakwe t'à sets'èke jìe kaèhtla ne nịwọ. Eyị t'axọọ tì kaèhtla ne nịwọ. Kò dèk'ọọ k'è edetehmị nịyìhxè, eyìgà edets'èke danaèhị. Hanìkò wets'èke nọọtla-le. Dehgà ts'ọ tọmọèhzha, hanìkò ekọ sị wheda-le. Izhìì hodàgoòàà jìe tọ sị ts'ọ tọmọèhzha, hanìkò ekọ sị wewhìle. Edets'èke ghọ nàniwo ajà. Edekọ nọọtla kò dèè k'e k'eet'ì. Dọ nàke keèk'è gòlaa yaị, ịlè nechà-lea wets'èke wekè lanì eyits'ọ ịlè dọ nechàa kè.

But when he got to the camp the fire was out. At first he thought his wife had just gone to pick berries. Then he thought she had gone to the river to get water. He set his meat down beside the fire pit and waited for his wife to return. But she did not come back. The medicine man ran to the river but his wife was not there. He ran to the ravine where the berries were thick but she was not there either. He began to get worried. Back at his camp he studied the ground. He noticed two sets of moccasin prints on the ground, one small like his wife's feet, the other large like a man's.



Ik'ɔelɪ dɔɔ its'è ajà. Dechinɪ dɔkeè
k'è dèhtɪa. Hanikò sɪ googho ts'ɔɔ
dɔkeè k'è wègaat'ɪ-le ajà. Dɔkeè k'è
k'etɔmoeda t'à ets'aeda ets'aeda t'à
sɪ denahk'e its'è ajà. Edɪ gots'ɔ dɔ
godeè hɔt'e ɪlè nɪwɔ. Sɪ googho dɪ
ts'ɔɔ dets'èke eyɪts'ɔ dɔzhɪ yexè
at'ɪ sɪ gogòhɔà ha whàjà.

Now the medicine man was angry.
He chased the tracks into the bush,
but soon lost the trail in the thick
undergrowth. He got angrier and
angrier chasing around in circles
trying to find the trail again. He tried
to remember where he had heard
the voices when he was coming
home and he headed in that
direction but he couldn't find his
runaway wife and her man. The bush
was just too thick.



Dò ɬk'ɔelɪ siì its'è, t'à hadɪ,
“Gígòhʔà ha ne, dèè gok'eehk'ɔ kò
gígòhʔà ha t'jìt'e,” dɪ. Dek'àhkàa ts'ɔ
t'eh hàɪdla gà ɬt'ɔa dezhàa nɪ
goèhtɬa. Whaà-le et'ì ts'ɪlɔ ts'ò
goòk'ɔ t'à kòwoò nechà ajà. Dàa
gots'ɔ nawhets'ɪ t'à Wekweèti gots'ɔ
Yabahti Tɬ'àcho ts'ò dèè hazhòò
gok'enɪhk'ɔ.

Xɔtsa dɔzhì eyits'ɔ ts'èko ts'ɪgɪdè,
kweyì gòɔɔ yì ɬɔ dàgoèhʔɔ t'à
geeko. Ts'èko ezech, hadɪ, “Hòt'a
gogòhʔɔ, ɛlagòhde ha,” dɪ ezech.
Nàzèedòò kweyì gots'ɔ xàèhts'ì.
Dechɪnɪ goòk'ɔ t'à k'àbatsòò ts'ɔnèè
ɬok'eè wègaat'ɪ yaʔɪ. Ts'èko ts'ò
nàidzeh, hadɪ, “Kò ch'à k'èt'à dàà
ts'ò anats'ede zɔ t'àa ne,” yèhɪ.

The medicine man's anger heated up. “I'll find them even if I have to burn the bush down,” he said. He pulled out his flint stone and in no time at all he had a fire roaring through the dry leaves in the undergrowth. In no time at all the flames had raced up the tree trunks to leap from crown to crown. With the help of the west wind the flames spread like wildfire across the land from Snare Lake to Hudson Bay.

Suddenly, the runaway couple woke up coughing. The cave was filled with smoke. “He's found us,” the wife screamed, afraid of what she had done. “He's going to kill us.” The young hunter crawled out of the cave. He saw the roaring forest fire sending clouds of smoke into the eastern sky. “K'èt'à anaade!” he shouted to the woman. “We must go back west to escape the fire.”



Ts'èko, dɔzhì xì dechìni kò ch'à
k'ekwigeèhʔa. Ło ło t'à geeko,
googho ni kw'ihchì gini k'e at'ì,
eyits'ɔ gigoht'ɔò ghàʔika t'à nàdlà.
Tideèbàa nìlegeètla kò ło k'èts'ɔajà,
hanikò ts'èko deyigoòʔàa yìeta t'à
wekechì ehkè. Ekiyèè k'e wedòò
nàidzeèh hɔt'e yeèhkw'ɔ. "Sedòò
at'ì! Dàts'ede ha sɔni?" dɪ.
Nàzèedòò ts'èkolà daachì gà
nakwigeèhʔa, ɪdèè googho ta ts'ò
ɪk'òdòò hòt'ò ezeè hɔt'e.

Frantically the fugitives scrambled
through the bush, coughing in the
thick smoke, branches whipping at
their faces, tearing at their clothes.
When they got to the shore of
Tòideè, Great Slave Lake, the smoke
had cleared, but the wife stumbled
into a hole and twisted her ankle. At
the same time she heard a shout at
her back. "My husband!" she cried.
"What will happen to us?" The
young hunter grabbed her hand and
they fairly flew as the medicine
man's shouts echoed through the
bush behind them.



Ìhdak'ètì ts'ò et'ìì agejà. Gòlotì deh
xè goòṛà nèlegeètla kò ts'èko sì
nìnitsò dṛṛṛh nàakw'ot'e. Ìka while
nìwò, Ìk'òòdòò wedawehda kò nìwò.
Hanìkò nàzèedòò shìh ts'ò
dahkw'iekwì. Yìlà hòt'ò nàyitò gà
yaamì shìhk'aga dekiìtla. Dòzhì,
ts'èko edek'è dekiìdlì, kwe k'èezò sì
ts'ò agejà. Ts'èko wedòò Ìzhì ts'ò
nàidzeh yeèhkw'ò t'à sì deji diè.
Nàzèedòò kwe dàèchì, t'òhbàachà
daxòts'ìṛṛah lanì kwe dàèchì.

They fled toward Ìhda K'è Tò,
Marian Lake. When they got to the
mouth of Gòlò Tò Deh, the Marion
River, the wife was ready to
collapse. She wanted to give up and
let the medicine man catch her. But
the hunter pointed to a mountain.
Gripping her hand he led her up the
mountainside, pulling her along until
they reached a rock he seemed to
know well. As the terrified wife heard
her husband shouting down below,
the hunter lifted up the rock, just like
you'd lift a tent flap.



Ts'èko ts'ò ezech, "Goyaɬtla hoò!" yèhdi. Ts'èko sìi deɟi dɔaɬ nàeda ha diè. Ts'èko, shìh togoòtɬ'ò yìi goyayeèhtso, hanìet'ìi ededɬ xɬ yek'è goyaèhtla. Kwe elets'ò ayele kwe-t'ìi ɬk'òò dòò hadìi ezech yeèhkw'ò.

"Naxeehɬ ne," gòhdi ezech.

ɬk'òò dòò shìhk'aga dekiìtla kò kwe yìi gots'ò dɔ gogedeè hɔt'e goèhkw'ò. Ekò goyìi ts'ò geèɬ gok'èezɔ. Edìi ts'ò agodì sìi ekò nàitlò gà kwe kàhdlà. Kwe yìi gɔɔwà nòò eyits'ò kwe yìi nìiwà ts'ò gogedeè hɔt'e. Ts'èko wedòò sìi ìts'èe xè edìi ts'ò agodì sìi ekò ts'ò nàitlò, dèe k'e kwe kàhdlà hanìkò kwe kàhdlà nìdè k'achɬ ekò-le ts'ò gogedeè hɔt'e goèhkw'ò. ɬda t'à k'achɬ ekò-le gogedeè hɔt'e.

"Goyaɬtla hoò!" he yelled. The wife was too frightened to move. "Go inside. Let's go!" Roughly the hunter shoved her into the dark hole and jumped in after her. Just before he pulled the rock back over their heads he heard the medicine man shout, "I see you!"

As the medicine man climbed up the side of the mountain he heard voices under the rocks. He knew the fugitives were inside the mountain. He scrambled to the spot where he heard the voices and tore a rock out of the ground. He found only more rock underneath and he heard the couple talking half way down the slope. Angrily, he rushed to the spot and started tearing rocks from the ground, but as he would lift one rock from one place he would hear them talking someplace else. Each time he lifted a rock they were in some other part of the mountain.



Nòdèa hòt'a, ɬk'òò dòò nìitsò, sì nìitsò t'à its'e ha dìi. Dagoechi ha-le yek'èezò t'à ɬk'òò dòò dets'èke ts'ò nàidzeh, hadi, "T'aats'ò dèe gòʔò ts'ò dī nēka nēgoèht'ì ha-le," wedòò yèhdi. Hadì t'axòò hanì shìh yìi geke gots'òò naèhtla. ɬk'oò dòò ts'èko ɬadi hak'eet'ì, yexè hozìi k'e ekwò ha nàzè ha.

Ekò gots'ò dīi dzeè k'e ts'ò eyi shìh Weyiits'aatla wiyeh hòt'e. ɬhk'è done ɬk'òò gūllì sìi ekò aget'ì nìdè dò nàke shìh yìi gots'ò gogede giikw'o hòt'e.

Finally the medicine man got tired. He got so tired he couldn't even be angry any more. He knew he couldn't reach them, so the medicine man shouted to his runaway wife and her lover, "So long as the world goes on you are never coming to the surface of the ground again." And he left them inside that mountain and set off to look for a new wife to go with him to the Barren Lands to hunt caribou.

Since then we call this mountain Wezitsatla, Went-Inside-Mountain. Sometimes Dogrib medicine men can hear the voices of those two people inside the mountain.

