

FIVE

Kelly

Wryly opens a letter from his mom, Doris. Inside is a return bus ticket to St. Paul. Along with the ticket is a message scrawled in his mom's characteristically messy handwriting. It's difficult to read, but says something about his trip home for Thanksgiving. Her handwriting is bad because it is hard for her to hold a pen with her arthritis and many of the words are misspelled. Wryly never corrects her because he knows that she only went to grade six back in the Métis Settlement she grew up on. Thanksgiving doesn't mean a thing to Wryly except for the big meal, but he knows that his mother thinks it's important that he be home for it. Receiving the ticket makes him feel guilty because he knows that she has somehow saved enough on her disability pension to make sure he can come home.

Her handwriting makes Wryly think of how, as a child, he used to watch her hands move as she did bead-

work sitting at the kitchen window. How she'd sit for hours sewing down bead after bead, one at a time, with two needles until a flower outlined in white would take shape on the moccasin vamps she was working on. She'd bring them down to the local Friendship Centre's craft shop when she was all done. She'd also spend all year beading moccasins to sell at the Christmas Bazaar.

In St. Paul, Wryly's mom was known as the bead-work lady, but now that her arthritis has gotten so bad, she finds it difficult to do. People from St. Paul used to come looking for her to make them a pair. Doris would sit them down at the kitchen table and trace the shape of their foot on a piece of brown paper cut out of a shopping bag and write their name on the bottom of the simple pattern along with the price. Hunters in the area knew that she made things out of deer and moose hide, so they'd track her down and sell her raw hides. She'd tan them herself when she went home to visit her cousins on the Settlement, or, if she were in a hurry to get an order out, she'd send them to Halford Hides to be commercially smoke tanned.

These thoughts make Wryly feel sad that he never learned how to hunt, skin a deer, tan a hide or any of the things that his mother did. It also reminded him that she was getting on and that one day she may end up needing full time care. Wryly knew that he couldn't live in a small town like St. Paul now that he'd lived away and

that there would be no way that he'd be able to go back to take care of her.

At times when Wryly feels down and has no money to do anything, he heads to the library and buries himself in a book or watches one of the videos in their collection. However, the recent date with Meghan has complicated visits to the library. If he's careful and doesn't show himself on her schedule, he can probably avoid seeing her. Reading and watching videos has always been his escape. When his mom and Joe, her common law husband, fought he'd go hide in his room and read. At that time he read Anne Rice or Stephen King. Later on, after Joe was killed in an accident while driving his truck, he stayed in his room and read everything by and about Jack Kerouac. When he finished with Kerouac, he started on Charles Bukowski. After that, he began reading Noam Chomsky.

Today, he breaks with his usual pattern of watching videos and grabs a poetry anthology. As he walks by the Audio/Visual department where he normally picks up a set of earphones, the clerk reaches for them, but Wryly smiles and waves him off. Instead, he sits down and flips through the pages of the book. Immediately a line catches his attention "another slack romantic/chasing his heart like an unleashed dog/chasing a pickup truck," which pretty much summed up how Wryly felt right now chasing his dream of becoming a filmmaker.