

Essay

As I lie in bed, not making a sound, or making any move, I am thinking back to the past. Today the spring wind is blowing, and spring clouds are over us, white and whole. I can hear the wind blowing, as if through a hole. Clouds are passing by, and I wonder in what direction they're going. My mind starts to think back . . . to the past . . .

My father is very quick and able to hunt very well. We sleep in tents in spring time. My mother is cleaning skins. My brother and I are small. My father has lots of dogs. Some of them are never able to stay still. They often pull away with excitement, and they are strong. My father is able to get any type of animal.

I know too, that my father loves me very much, and for this reason, I have become very spoiled, and I am able to get anything I want.

My parents always seem happy. I hear women singing with babies on their backs, rocking back and forth to make them go to sleep, singing A-yaa-yaa. And outside the tent people come and gather to eat. They sound so happy as they talk. Children are playing outside, little girls playing house amongst the rocks, the boys pretending to be hunting. Everyone is speaking Inuktitut.

Then, I see a pack of geese flying by, and "Bang!" I suddenly remember, I am only daydreaming the past. There are trucks outside making a lot of noise. Watch that the children don't get run over. Today is 1976.

How did our way of life change? When did I become an adult? I have a husband now. I am no longer a child, cannot turn back to the past. I start to cry, without making a sound, without moving.

The wind is still there . . . the same wind. The clouds have not changed. But we are changing, our lives, our bodies, everything. This we can't help.

You Inuit living in Ottawa, you now have to live and work in the South, in a place which is not your home. You do this in order that we will be able to return to the way of life we lived in the past. This seems backwards to me. How sad it is . . . everything is changing. It makes me think that maybe the ending of this earth is very close. I love you all my fellow Inuit everywhere.

Mary Atuat Thompson
Eskimo Point
From "Inuit Today"