

Jordan Abel

Burnaby, BC

Kincolith

24 years old

In the Endless Circles of Wood

Int. Café – Night

SKAI WILSON, 22 years old, stands in front of the microphone on the raised platform at the end of the room. He is wearing blue jeans, a white button-up shirt, and a black blazer. Some people are eating, but most are talking quietly and sipping wine. Skai taps on the microphone.

SKAI

Hello? Hello? Hi.

The conversation lowers to a few scattered whispers and Skai flips through the sheets of paper in his hands.

SKAI (CONT'D)

This one is called “A fallen totem pole, at Yan.”

The room is silent now except for Skai's quiet breath against the mic.

SKAI (CONT'D)

You are not buried yet. Although, the ants
have been trying.

Cut to:

Int. April's Apartment – Day

Skai sits in a high-backed chair, leaning forward. Behind him there is a window that has been propped open by a smooth fist-sized rock, and a tall bookshelf that has been stuffed with books.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)

What do you like the most about writing?

SKAI

That's a good question.

Skai leans back, and folds his hands behind his head. He is still for a moment before he leans forward, running his hands along his thighs and patting his knees.

SKAI (CONT'D)

The flow, I guess.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)

Could you describe that for us? The flow, I mean.

SKAI

It's weird. Tough to put into words.

Skai chuckles and scratches the back of his neck.

SKAI (CONT'D)

I like that feeling, you know? When everything just keeps on coming and it's almost like you're barely there, like it's all just a dream. That's what I like the most.

Cut to:

Int. Café – Night

Skai stands behind the microphone.

SKAI

They do not understand your fissured skin the way I do.

He wraps his hand around the microphone.

SKAI (CONT'D)

They do not remember your foggy birth.
That grey cloud wrapping around your trunk. Or, the month of soft rain afterwards.
No, they remember your crevasses.

He lets go of the mic.

SKAI (CONT'D)

You are a million broken down tunnels
pressed together by reeds and mud. You
are forgotten stories decaying in the
woods. Wedged onto Rutherford's dusty
shelves . . . The ants will piece you back
together one day. Smooth earth over
your hollows. And even you will forget
why you stood so proud on that island
shore.

Skai stops reading and looks up at the audience. After a moment or two there is
some light applause. He smiles and slides the top sheet of paper to the bottom.

Cut to:

Int. April's Apartment – Day

Skai sits in the high backed chair, staring forward at the camera.

SKAI

It's just like any other job, really.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)

How do you mean?

SKAI

Sometimes you have to get up early, put
on a pot of coffee and devote yourself. And,
other times, you have to stay up late,
bleary-eyed and exhausted, just hoping to
string a couple of words together.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)

But, you have another job as well, right?

SKAI

I do. I have to.

Cut to:

Ext. Full Service Car Wash and Vacuum Centre – Day

Skai leans against a white cement wall. He is wearing blue coveralls that have an
embroidered Freddy's Ultimate Car Wash logo on them. A handful of Skai's co-
workers are standing around, smoking and talking. They are all wearing the same

blue coveralls with the same embroidered logo. A black Chevy Malibu pulls up into one of the stalls and TYLER, 29 years old, walks up to the window as the driver rolls it down.

Tyler
What'll it be today, sir?

Tyler hands the driver a glossy pamphlet that explains Freddy's packages.

Driver
Give me package B.

TYLER
Good choice. Good choice. We've got a fresh pot of coffee on inside and I think game's about to start. Why don't you head on into the lobby and we'll take care of the rest. Just make sure that you leave the keys in the car.

DRIVER
Sure.

The driver turns off the car, leaves the keys inside and makes his way into the lobby. When he's inside, Tyler waves everyone towards the car and Skai, along with his co-workers, approach the vehicle. Skai unhooks the vacuum nozzle from the over hang above the car, opens the trunk of the Malibu and starts to vacuum.

Cut to:

Int. April's Apartment – Day

Skai is cross-legged on the high-backed chair, trying to massage his own shoulders.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)
How do you like the carwash?

SKAI
It's not so bad. They pay me okay and leave me to myself.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)
Do you find it difficult to balance your writing with your work?

SKAI

Not really. Sometimes you just have to do what you have to do. You know?

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)
Could you elaborate?

Skai unfolds his legs and leans forward.

SKAI
I work at the carwash, because I know how to do that job. It gives my life some structure. I can go there and know exactly what my day will be like. I know that I have to wake up at seven, and that I'll be back at home by four-fifteen. I know that all I have to do all day is stand outside in the sun and vacuum up cars. I know that I don't have to think about it, so I can think about other stuff.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)
What do you think about?

SKAI
Words, mostly. Bits and pieces of sentences. Sometimes full sentences. Rarely full stories. If you're quiet, you can learn a lot about other people. They like to talk, they like to announce.

Cut to:

Ext. Full Service Car Wash and Vacuum Centre – Day

Skai closes the passenger side door, clips his vacuum nozzle onto the overhang and taps the top of the car a few times. Tyler hops into the drivers seat and pulls the car into the wash bay. There are no cars under the overhang, so Skai makes his way into the dark hallway that leads into the backroom.

Cut to:

Int. Back Room of Freddy's – Day

Skai stands in the doorway, watching his co-workers. There are three co-workers present: 19 year old RUSSEL, 17 year old LINDSAY, and 46 year old ALBERT. Albert is reading a book in the corner while the other two talk.

RUSSEL

So there I is, all sly, ready to party, and
the mother fucker just comes out at me.
Gets all up in my grill.

LINDSAY

Shit son.

Russel stands up and positions his fists like he is ready to fight.

RUSSEL

So I got no choice, you hear? I just got to
knock his bitch ass down.

Russell punches twice into the air.

RUSSEL

One. Two. Down. Just like a bitch.

LINDSAY

No way, bro. You're ballin'.

A green light flashes on above the doorway where Skai is standing and a loud beep is emitted. Albert gently closes his book, stands up and claps his hands together.

ALBERT

Okay, okay. Let's get a move on guys.

Cut to:

Int. Café – Night

Skai stands in front of the mic, flipping through pages.

SKAI

I wrote this one recently. It's called "Haida
Eagles, at the deserted village of Yan."

Skai looks away from the audience and down at the paper.

SKAI (CONT'D)

The moss has taken hold. Gripped the
nook resting on your wooden breast.
Blanketed your still wings that once
carried you over the ocean . . . You no

longer have to watch the gate for the
 outcast boy wandering in the woods.
 Or circle the endless waters for the
 hand, reaching out of dark waters. . .
 There is time, now. For nothing. . .
 The clouds billow endlessly on that
 long horizon. The sun always dips
 behind the same watery stretch. . .
 Your blank wooden stare is all you
 need. Your clinched beak. Fulfilled.
 Ready. For your long descent into
 the ground.

Skai stops reading and looks up at the audience. They clap politely.

SKAI (CONT'D)

Thank you.

Cut to:

Int. Skai's Apartment – Day

Skai opens the door and waves April in.

SKAI

Come in. Come in.

April comes inside and Skai yawns.

SKAI (CONT'D)

Well, this is my home.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)

Do you live alone?

SKAI

Yes. Yes, I do.

In the hallway, there are a couple of pairs of shoes. On the walls are Aboriginal paintings and a few masks. Skai leads her down the hallway and points out the kitchen on the right hand side.

SKAI (CONT'D)

That's where I cook food.

He leads her further down the hallway to a closed door. On the left is the entrance to the living room.

SKAI (CONT'D)

Behind that door is where I sleep. And, over here, is where I live. Any questions?

Cut to:

Int. Café – Night

Skai is at a table with a glass of wine in his hand. He is talking to a two young girls with clipboards in their hands.

GIRL 1

Yeah, I totally agree.

GIRL 2

This was way more fun than I thought it would be.

SKAI

I'm glad you enjoyed it.

GIRL 2

Would you mind if we included you in our project?

SKAI

What kind of a project is it?

Skai takes a sip of his wine.

GIRL 2

It's nothing special. We were just supposed to go to a poetry reading and write a report about it.

Girl 1

It would really help us out.

SKAI

Sure. Go for it.

GIRL 2

Thank you so much!

Cut to:

Int. Wrench's house – Night

Skai has a box of beer under his arm, and he sets it down on the coffee table. On the couch is WRENCH, 22 years old, and SLEDGE, 24 years old. They are both watching hockey on an old big screen television in the corner. Skai opens the box and hands both Sledge and Wrench a beer. He pulls out a third beer and opens it.

Wrench

Oh, what have we here? Where are your manners, Skai? Not only did you not offer this lovely young lady a beverage, but you didn't even introduce us.

Skai chuckles and is about to speak, but he gets cut off.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)

Oh, it's okay. It's easier if everyone just pretends that I'm not here.

WRENCH

Nonsense. Camera or not. You're a guest in our chivalrous home.

Sledge grins and turns his attention from the game to the camera.

SLEDGE

Yeah, it's not every day this guy brings a woman around. Please, have a seat.

Cut to:

Int. Wrench's House- Night

Sledge, Wrench and Skai are all lounging in the living room. There are a few empty beer bottles on the coffee table and the television is off.

SKAI

So, there we were in the sweltering heat, and Sledge here—

Sledge buries his face in his hands.

SLEDGE

Oh, god! I know where this one is going.

Wrench turns to the camera.

WRENCH

You might want to get a close up of this one.

SKAI

So, he thinks to himself: I wonder what would happen if I fire this flare gun at this extremely dry tree?

WRENCH

You can see pretty clearly where that was headed.

SLEDGE

Yeah. There I am, leaning back on the folding chair, aiming this flare gun, just thinking—

SKAI

And then there it goes.

SLEDGE

In all fairness, the tree wasn't on fire that much.

WRENCH

What? It's either on fire or not on fire. There's no fine gradations here!

Everyone laughs.

Cut to:

Int. Skai's Apartment – Day

Skai is lying on his couch. His head is propped up by a pillow.

SKAI

Okay. Ask away.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)

Where does your inspiration come from?

SKAI

Many places, I guess. A lot of the time, if I don't know what to write about, I just find a picture that I like and write about it. Other times, it comes from music or books that I've read.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)

A lot of your poetry has Aboriginal themes. Is that something you try to write about, or is that something that comes naturally?

Skai sits up.

SKAI

I don't know. Naturally, I guess. But, it's something that I think about a lot, too.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)

How do you feel your work fits with the work of other Aboriginal writers?

SKAI

Loosely. I try to write about things that I love. I try to write about things that break my heart or make me laugh. If you were to tell me to write a First Nations poem, I don't know where I would start. I just write about the things that I identify with.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)

There are certain subjects in Aboriginal history that you haven't discussed in your poems. Do you have plans to discuss them?

SKAI

Sure. What subjects do you want to talk about?

Cut to:

Int. Grocery Store – Day

Skai is pushing a half-full cart through the aisles. In the cart he has broccoli, carrots, brussell sprouts, two packages of lean ground beef, and sausages. He stops the cart and pulls a box of minute rice off the shelf.

SKAI
Do you want anything?

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)
No, no. Just get whatever you usually get.

SKAI
It's sort of weird. You want to me to pretend you're not here?

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)
Yes. Exactly.

SKAI
I don't know if I want to do that.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)
Why not?

SKAI
Because I like that you're here.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)
Oh. Thank you.

SKAI
So . . . uh, you want anything?

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)
Gummi worms?

Skai grins and starts to push the cart again.

SKAI
Okay. We can do that.

Cut to:

Int. Skai's Apartment – Day

Skai takes a sip from the coffee mug in front of him and places the mug back down on the coffee table. He pauses.

SKAI
Residential schools . . .

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)

Take your time.

SKAI

It's true. I haven't really tried to tackle that subject in my poetry.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)

Why do you think that is?

SKAI

Honestly?

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)

Of course.

SKAI

I've never really come to terms with it.

Skai holds the mug up to his lips, but he doesn't drink anything. He sets the mug back down and sighs.

SKAI (CONT'D)

Okay. So, of course I didn't go to residential school. I'm way too young for that. But, my grandparents went to one. That's where they met.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)

Really?

SKAI

Yeah. So, when they get out, when they raise a family of their own . . . of course they don't know how to be parents. Because, essentially, their parents were their abusive teachers. Beating them when they tried to talk to each other in their own tongue.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)

I'm sorry.

SKAI

It's a cyclical thing. My grandparents get abused, so they abuse their kids.

And, then their kids abuse their kids.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)

Is that where you fit in?

SKAI

No. I didn't grow up around my family.
For better or for worse. My mom ran
away with me, because my Dad molested
a teenage girl when I was just a baby.
He ran off or went to prison. I'm not
really sure.

Cut to:

Int. Café – Night

Skai stands in front of the microphone with a few pieces of paper in his hands.

SKAI

A friend asked me to write this one. It's
about a few things, I guess. Something
new and something old. But, I bet you'll
find out for yourself.

There are a few laughs and Skai chuckles as well.

SKAI (CONT'D)

Dear Stephen. You seem to have forgotten
that we are still awake. That we still
remember. To listen. To your speeches.
To your apologies. Even many years later.
When you raised your heavy eyes, and
repeated the words. Sorry, for the
residential schools. Now that's a class
act. Timely, appropriate, sincere. And, I
should be honest. I was at a gala at the
time, wearing a monocle and a top hat.
Being everything but ordinary. Yes, it's
true. I wasn't at work. Because poets are
overpaid. So, I get it. I get you. You just
need a break. You just need some time . . .
Collect your thoughts. Get a massage.
Please, don't worry about it. We will still
be here for you when you decide to come
back. We will still remember all your hard

work.

The audience claps.

Cut to:

Ext. Full Service Car Wash and Vacuum Centre – Day

There is a line up of cars waiting to be vacuumed out. Skai quickly vacuums out a car and then moves on to the next the next one. The rest of his co-workers are also rushing to get all of the cars into the wash bay. Skai finishes a car and wipes his forehead with the back of his hand.

Cut to:

Int. Lobby of Skai's Apartment Building – Evening

Skai is standing in front of his mailbox, flipping through the stack of letters in his hand.

SKAI
Bill, bill. And, another bill.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)
What's that one?

SKAI
Ah. Not a bill.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)
Well, who's it from?

Skai opens the letter.

SKAI
It's from the Prairie Journal.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)
And? What do they say?

Skai holds the letter and cheque in front of the camera.

SKAI
They took a few of my poems! And, they paid me.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)
How much do you make for selling a few poems?

SKAI
Not that much. About fifty. Maybe one-hundred dollars. That's if they pay you at all.

Cut to:

Int. Car Wash Lobby – Day

Lindsay sits by the register, looking up at the camera.

LINDSAY
Skai? He's all right I guess. Keeps to himself mostly. What's this for?

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)
I'm making a documentary about him.

LINDSAY
Really? Why him. You should make a documentary about me, girl.

Lindsay stands up and starts dancing.

LINDSAY (Cont'd)
I'll give that boy a run for his money any damn day.

Cut to:

Int. Car Wash Lobby – Day

Tyler takes off his blue Freddy's ballcap, revealing his receding hairline.

TYLER
Is that better?

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)
Yep. That's good.

TYLER
So, what should I say?

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)
Tell me about Skai.

TYLER
Ah, Mr. Wilson. Good kid. Good kid.

Tyler pauses.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)
Is there anything else you can say about him?

TYLER
Well, he's always on time. Never complains about anything. Does his job. I never have to call him up to tell him that he works today. Russel! Get the hell out of there!

Russel is in the wash tunnel, pressed up against the glass that looks into the lobby. He holds his hand up to his ear.

TYLER (cont'd)
Quit screwing around, Russel!

Cut to:

Int. Car Wash Lobby – Day

Albert is sitting by the glass viewing area in the lobby where all of the patrons watch their cars getting washed.

ALBERT
Yeah, we talk sometimes. When it's just us. He's a writer. Likes to write everything down.

Albert laughs.

ALBERT (cont'd)
I don't know. He just likes to think about stuff. He likes to think about it and then he likes to write it down. It's simple.

Cut to:

Int. Café – Night

NATHAN, 39, bearded and wearing a tweed blazer, is sitting at a table with a view of the empty platform and microphone behind him.

NATHAN

I've seen him a few times before. He's not bad. I like his enthusiasm.

Cut to:

Int. Café – Night

MONICA, 35, is standing by the counter.

MONICA

It's fresh. Youthful. But, he has a long way to go.

Monica takes a sip from her glass of red wine.

MONICA

The kids got spirit, though. He's up at that mic every chance he gets.

Cut to:

Int. Wrench's House – Night

Sledge is standing in the hallway.

SLEDGE

Three years, I think. I don't remember entirely.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)

How would you describe him?

SLEDGE

Funny. Easy going. Is that good? How do you mean?

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)

Well, I'm making a documentary about him and his poetry. So, I guess, anything that you want to say would be valuable.

SLEDGE

Ah, the poetry.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)

Do you ever talk about it? Does he ever discuss it with you?

SLEDGE

Sometimes. Mostly, though, I'm not really a poetry kind of guy. When he tells me to buy a magazine that his work is in, I do it.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)

Have you ever been to one of his readings?

SLEDGE

No. No, no, no. I don't think I'd fit in there. I mean, if he asked me to go, I would be there for sure.

Cut to:

Int. Wrench's House – Night

Wrench is on the couch.

WRENCH

I have not been. Not yet.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)

How would you describe him?

WRENCH

As a good partner in crime. But, seriously, we got along just fine.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)

And the poetry?

WRENCH

It's good stuff.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)

As an Aboriginal Canadian yourself, do you feel his poetry reflects your understanding of your culture?

WRENCH

Wow. These are tough questions. And we only just met! Okay, okay. Yeah, I feel it reflects my understanding. Although not my experience. It's strange. It's almost like the projection of the things that made us who we are. It goes back to the roots a lot of the time.

Cut to:

Ext. Bus Stop – Night

Skai stands by the bus stop. He has his backpack on and he's holding a black notebook in his hands. He steps onto the quiet street, gazing down the cement pathway to see if a bus is on the way.

Cut to:

Int. Bus – Night

Skai sits quietly at the back of an empty bus. He is staring at a page in the middle of the notebook. He looks out the window for a moment and then back down at the page. He pulls a pen out of his pocket and starts to write.

Cut to:

Int. Skai's Apartment – Day

Skai is on the couch, and, through the window behind him, there are dark grey clouds drifting through the sky.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)

Why did you start writing?

SKAI

I think I was bored.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)

That's the only reason?

SKAI

I think a better question is why did I continue to write. Will you ask me that?

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)

Sure. Why did you continue to write?

SKAI

Because my spiritual grandfather told me I should. He told me we needed to save our culture and customs through writing.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)

Who's your spiritual grandfather?

SKAI

Chief Dan George. He said that we'll lose everything, unless we preserve the ways of our ancestors through writing. He said that the spoken word is not enough.

Cut to:

Int. Auditorium – Night

Skai stands at the podium, tapping a few sheets of paper against the wood.

SKAI

This one is called "Grave Poles in Ruins Near Massett."

Skai smooths out the paper.

SKAI (CONT'D)

They found you in the rain. In a bright pocket of mist. Still. With your knuckles. Shined knots of pine. Split open. Black grooves creaking their way through. But, you wanted this. Forever ago. In the afternoon. Of tired, heavy eyes. Sore knees at the gate. That burning lightning echoing through the trees. This is your chance. After all. To wait . . . Standing ring in ring. In the endless circles of wood. For your feet to sink into the moss. For your shoulders to droop. For the last warm breath of sun.

Cut to:

Ext. Parking Lot of April's Apartment Building – Night

Skai is leaning against the hood of April's car.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)
No, no. You drive. I'll film.

SKAI
If you insist.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)
I do. This documentary is about you. Not me.

Skai smiles.

SKAI
You're very pretty when you're insistent.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)
Thanks. Now get in the car. We're going to be late.

Cut to:

Int. Auditorium – Night

SKAI
Thanks. Thank you. Okay. This one doesn't have a title yet. . . You knew me before my fingers uncurled. Before I coughed and felt the world in my lungs. When cherry blossoms were slick with rain and I stick-shifted a copper civic through the shining streets at dawn . . . You knew me as I learned my blood. Out on the bluff. Gouged by rocks. And you told me to taste it. To know it. After all, that was life . . . And, you knew me through parent night. Sitting across from Mr. Landry, silently nodding as he droned on. Wondering how I put up with him, and buying me ice cream on your way back . . . You knew me as we stood by her grave, reading her name over and over, repeating it out loud so we would remember what it was like just to say it . . . You knew me the morning after. Still drunk with memory gaps. Trying to piece it all together as we

headed back from Whistler . . . And, you knew me when Theresa died. In a landslide somewhere near Golden. As I crumpled to the floor and you told me that you'd been here before . . . Now, I know you. I know you with chest aches. With red eyes and flasks. With stiff knees and impossible sleep. Tearing down curtains and bathroom mirrors. Fast asleep and smouldering. Terrors of midnight collapse. Just waiting waiting waiting. For tomorrow to stop coming. But, you are here. Like you have always been. Hands on my shoulders. Forehead pressed against me. Showing me the way.

Cut to:

Int. Skai's Apartment – Day

Skai is sitting on the couch.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)

What about racism? That's a huge topic in Aboriginal literature.

SKAI

I've experienced it before. But, why don't I write about it? That's the question, right?

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)

Yes.

SKAI

Well, I do. I write about it sometimes. But, I don't like to. When you write something, you live it. At least through your writing. In the case of racism, I re-live it. It's not a pleasant experience.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)

Would you describe your writing as Canadian Aboriginal writing?

SKAI

I don't know. Yes, because I am an Aboriginal

Canadian. No, because I don't always write about the things that other Aboriginal Canadian authors write about.

Cut to:

Int. April's Car – Night

Skai is driving. The windshield wipers are going and the rain is coming down in sheets.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)
Thanks for driving.

SKAI
Not a problem.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)
It's just a left turn here.

SKAI
Where are we going again?

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)
I signed you up for a reading.

SKAI
Really?

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)
Really.

SKAI
Awesome.

Cut to:

Int. Auditorium – Night

SKAI
I've got one left. It's called "The last totems at Yan."

Skai taps his papers against the podium.

SKAI (CONT'D)

Sing of silent wind at your back. Of the sun creeping behind the trees. Let's spill your soft notes into the sand. Trace out your cedar vibrations with our fingertips. Now, that's the taste of sound. A dissonance from the roots of glass. Lost on your wooden ears. On that deer brushing against you. But, not one hears the sky shudder, like you do. Or, the restless earth, shifting in her sleep. . . Stand tall and stiff like those dead rocks. Stand buried in your ocean of sky . . . Thank you.

Applause echoes through the auditorium and Skai makes his way off stage.

Cut to:

Int. April's Apartment – Night

Skai is lounging on the high-backed chair. The window behind him is dark and closed.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)

So, what are you going to do from here?

SKAI

I'm going to keep writing. I'm going to keep working. Hopefully, something good will come of it.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)

Congratulations, by the way. The people at the reception said some very nice things about you.

SKAI

Thanks.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)

Do you have any advice for the aspiring writers out there.

SKAI

I do . . . Please, keep writing. No matter what anyone says; no matter how hard it

is; you have to do what you love. No matter what. Your words and your thoughts are important.

Cut to:

Int. Skai's Apartment- Dawn

Skai is fast asleep in the bed. The covers on one half of the bed have been pulled away. There is very little light, but the closet and dresser are visible.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)

This is Skai when he is asleep. He snores sometimes. But, he's a heavy sleeper.

The camera pans out and moves into the hallway. The living room is dark, but April flicks on a light. On the couch is a laptop and a paper notebook.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)

He usually writes his poems down in the notebook first, and then copies them onto the computer. He says he likes to do that, because he can re-think certain lines.

The camera moves back down the hallway towards the kitchen.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)

This is where he toasts his bagels for breakfast. He uses plain cream cheese.

The camera returns to the bedroom and focuses on Skai again.

APRIL (OFF SCREEN)

This is where he does all his dreaming.

Cut to black

AUTHOR'S STATEMENT

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I've been thinking about a topic for my contest entry for almost a year now. And, every time I think I've decided on a direction, I realize that there is another issue that deserves attention, too. When I wrote "In the Endless Circles of Wood," I

wanted to convey all of these issues. After all, it is not just one event in our lives or in our pasts that define us, but a sequence of events both personal and historical.

I chose to write the narrative in the form of a short documentary screenplay, because I felt that the format would allow the reader to get a complete picture of the main character. While I attempted to write a narrative that ties together several historical events and themes in Aboriginal literature, I also wanted to write an honest story about a person struggling to do what he loves. And, even though the story is specifically about one art form—poetry, in this case—I wrote it in hopes that the emotional experience would be accessible to everyone.

I am very thankful that the Our Story writing challenge exists, and that every year this contest encourages me to continue to write and to dream. I have deeply enjoyed reading all of the finalists over the last few years, and I hope that we all continue to write about the issues that are important to us.