



## *My Heart Is for My People*

Here is a fancy Shawl Dancer. She dances and prays for the healing of her people and family. With every drumbeat she mimics the flight of the butterfly, flying delicately, displaying beauty and wrapped in the wings of Love. Love is in every step she takes.



## *The Sacred*

The Pipe was a gift to all brought by the White Buffalo Calf Woman (Lakota). The Pipe is a means of conveying prayers to Creator and other sacred beings. The Drum is the heartbeat of Mother Earth. As a baby we hear our mother's heartbeat for the first nine months of our lives. We use Song and Drum to celebrate and rejoice in life and all of Creator's blessings. Sweetgrass is the hair of Mother Earth. One strand of grass alone is not strong and is easily broken. But, when braided together, it is strong, and represents each of us with our family, friends and community. Together we are strong.



## *Connected and Protected*

The buffalo provided for the people. The buffalo is Respect in the Seven Sacred teachings. We have the utmost respect for the buffalo — he fed us, clothed us and gave us shelter. Women are the life-givers in the community, so we should hold them in the highest regard with Respect and Love.



### *Look to the Future*

Life was not meant to be a constant struggle. The ancestors of our people pray for you, guide you and give you strength. Hold your head up and look to the future. Good things will happen to you.



### *Her Inner Light*

I lost my mom when I was twelve. I have always felt her with me. When I got my Colours, I knew it was her who had given them to me in the ceremony. She spoke to me through the Medicine Man. At that time, a light began to glow inside me. I never felt alone. I felt the loving wings of my mother around me ... I still do.



### *War Pony Spirit Guide*

Indigenous people have always had a close relationship to horses. They fought alongside us in battle. We used them to hunt and travel. We shared our homes with them. Horses were treated with the respect of an equal. Here is the spirit of our woman warriors and the horses who guided them.



## *Tobacco Women*

Tobacco (Semah) is the first medicine given to the people by Creator. Here we have four women from the four directions, four seasons and four races. Tobacco is the east direction and the mind. It is one of the most sacred medicines. Giving tobacco is a beautiful way of our people. It connects our prayers as the smoke rises to Creator.



## *Teach Your Children to Pray*

Sharing the knowledge of our sacred medicines and teaching our children to pray gives them the strength they will need in difficult times. They will possess strength and always have prayer to turn to. I have seen this firsthand and as a child — I have lived it. It was prayer that saved me and brought me here.



## *To My Baby*

Before you were conceived, I had you in my soul. I knew your spirit and I loved you. When you were born, I felt my reason for being. You made my life complete. I am your mother and I will love you forever.



## *Grateful*

I am grateful for my life. All that I've been through has made me stronger and I have learned so much. I am grateful for all of life's lessons because now I can teach you, my little butterfly.



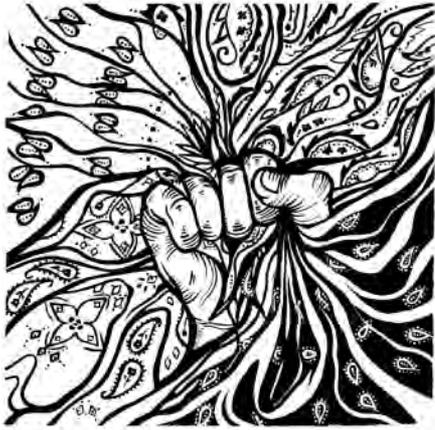
## *Prayers for Our Sisters*

I pray you make your journey safely. I pray you are safe in the arms of Creator. I pray for your family's hearts and that day we meet again.



## *The Sacred Bond*

Their bond is unbreakable. Their love is unconditional. Twin flames and soulmates, together as one, just as Creator intended.



### *Ties That Bind*

So many of our youth are being pulled in two directions. They want to have and need connections. But their connections to family, culture and spirit are damaged. They want to go in a good way and live a good life, but urban life, the Sixties Scoop and child and family services has stood in their way. So, they are pulled in another direction by the ties of gangs, which is not a good way.



### *Winter Spirit Woman*

Winter Spirit Woman is a woman who got her name late in life. She recently started to drum and do ceremony. I was honoured when she asked me to interpret her name in a painting.



### *Eagle Woman*

When I was a young girl in junior high, an Elder came into our school to do some teachings. I had never seen a traditional woman before because I grew up in foster care and was not exposed to my culture. Her name was Eagle Woman and I'll never forget her in my mind's eye. I imagined her like this.



## *Sharing Knowledge*

Elders are respected in Indigenous communities. They are the keepers of oral traditions, songs and medicine. To be chosen and taught by a medicine woman is a great honour.



## *Grandmothers' Guidance*

Grandmother has a world of wisdom that she will share with you. Honour and respect her. Let her guide you. She has lived a hard life but her blessing is you.



## *My Love for You Grows*

My love for you grows with each new day. We keep each other grounded firmly into Mother Earth, and with each new day my love for you grows.



### *Grandmother Bear*

I honour you, Grandmother, in the songs I sing. I honour you, Grandmother, with each day you bring. Your wisdom and teachings will forever remain. You have the courage of Makwa (Bear) and your guidance is medicine. I honour you, Grandmother.



### *Water Carriers*

Breathe new life into this world. I am connected. My tears flow back into the Earth. I am connected to the Tree of Life. I have strong roots and my branches are high. I am connected.



### *Love*

The Eagle is the first of the Seven Teachings of the Anishinaabe. The Eagle can fly to heights far greater than any other bird. He is closest to Creator, and he can carry our prayers the farthest. To know love and to lead with love is to truly know Creator.



### *Called to the Drum*

My niece recently learned our songs. I had a drum made for her, and when I gave this gift to her she sang me a song. As she sang I saw four little girls dancing at her feet. My niece was pregnant at the time. When she had her baby, it was a girl.



### *Grandmothers of the Yuwipi*

Yuwipi is a traditional Lakota ceremony. It is for healing. The Healer is tied up with a special blanket and ropes. The Healer and his supporters pray and sing. The Healer travels to where the ancestors are and the Grandmothers and Grandfathers speak through him. I saw the Grandmothers in Yuwipi. They were gathered amongst the stars and they were waiting for us.



### *Water Song*

In this image, women are praying for water. Women are the water carriers. We are life-givers. We carry our babies in water. Without water we would perish. The human body is composed mostly of water. Water is life. Water is Spirit, and without Spirit, we have no life.



## *Courage to Be the Woman I Am Meant to Be*

At times during my life I have been lost. At times I have resisted the path I was being led to. It was the spirit and teachings of Makwa that gave me the courage to walk my walk and be the woman I am meant to be.



## *Tree of Life*

We are interconnected. Everything in the universe is connected. Everything has a purpose and a place in life. We are connected to the plants, trees, animals and all living things in this world. The Tree of Life has its roots planted strongly into our Mother and its branches reach high into the sky. "All my relations" means I am related to all living things.



## *Truth*

Understanding the importance of your journey and your destination is trusting your path and teachings, and being sincere and truthful in everything you say and do. Grandmother Turtle was given the teaching of Truth to ensure the Seven Teachings would never be lost. On the back of the turtle are thirteen markings, each representing the full moons of the year, and on the outer part of the shell are twenty-eight markings to represent a woman's moon cycle. Live truthfully.



### *Life-Giver*

Women are the life-givers. The privilege of carrying a life within our womb was given to us. What a blessing to birth new life into this world and into eternity.



### *Sage Picking with Nokomis*

Grandmother (Nokomis) taught me all the sacred medicines and their uses. It was our special time together. She possessed so much knowledge. When I light my smudge, I am reminded of her. I miss you. I pray for the day that I am with you again picking sage in the fields with all my family.



### *Contemplation*

A pause during my song, I look back at my past and realize I am strong.



### *White Buffalo Calf Woman*

White Buffalo Calf Woman brought the Pipe to the People. With the Pipe she taught them to pray to Creator. She prophesized that one day she would return in the form of a white buffalo and that she would end all suffering and that paradise would be restored.



### *Hope*

As I release these butterflies my heart fills with hope. Hope for the day when our women will walk this earth and truly know their worth. You are beautiful. Kwe, I had to tell you.



### *Memengwaak*

The metamorphosis of the caterpillar into the beautiful butterfly is truly an inspiration, as this is the transformation that all young Kwe go through. Fly free in beauty in all that you do.



### *Thunderbird Woman*

I hear you approaching through the bold sound of thunder and the light in the sky. You bring the waters that cleanse the Earth and, after you've gone, beautiful flowers remain.



### *Megwech*

Creator, I thank you for a new day. The smoke from my sage carries my prayers up to you. I am surrounded by beauty in all your creation. The sun kisses my face and I know that you are shining down on me — Megwech.



### *Solace*

Today, as I smoked my pipe and said my prayer, a butterfly visited me and I knew that you were here. Mother, I take solace in knowing you are near.



### *Angel*

My mother is an angel. I feel her presence as I walk through life's journey. The comfort brought to me allows me to push through life's obstacles for I know my mother is with me.



### *Four Little Drummers*

When I was a little girl, I was told not to go into the bush alone because the little people would take me away. Through the years I have heard many stories about them. They say little people like to sing songs so they arouse our curiosity and we look for them.



### *Little Dancers*

Again, this is how I envision the little people. They do ceremony, feasts and pow wow. Just like us here, they have danced until their hearts' content, dancing and praying for the Anishinaabe.



### *Sweetgrass Picking*

Harvesting sweetgrass begins in late June to early July. Sweetgrass is sacred to the Anishinaabe. It is the sacred hair of Mother Earth. It is braided in three sections representing mind, body and soul. Some believe it represents love, kindness and honesty. When sweetgrass is picked, tobacco is offered as gratitude.



### *She Prays for Others*

Women are the backbone of the community. We are life-givers, caregivers. We hold our families together. In our prayers, we pray for strength, guidance, for the sick and the lost. We pray for others.



### *Leona*

I had a dear friend I grew up with as a child and youth in care. She was the kindest friend I ever had. She was wise beyond her years. This is a tribute to her. She left to begin her journey home way too early. Till we meet again, Leona.



### *You Are My Sunshine*

This is me and my daughter Cheyenne. When she was a little girl, I would sing, “You are my Peanut” in the same harmony as “You are my Sunshine.” When I was done the song she would say “button nose.” Then I would sing “You are my Button Nose.” We would go on back and forth like this. It was always our special time together. This painting is very special to me; it reminds me of my little Cheyenne.

EXCERPT



## *Jackie Traverse*

Jackie Traverse is Anishinaabe from Lake St. Martin, First Nations. She graduated from the School of Fine Arts at the University of Manitoba in 2009. A multidisciplinary artist, Jackie works in many mediums from painting in oils and acrylics to mixed media, sculpture and stop-motion animation.

Jackie's work is very women-centred. Her paintings, drawings, documentaries and sculptures speak to the realities of being an Indigenous woman. She has created stop-motion animation on missing and murdered Indigenous women in Canada, another on the Sixties Scoop entitled *Two Scoops*, and *Empty*, a tribute to her estranged mother.

The injustices faced by Indigenous peoples are integral to Jackie's art, leading her to be deeply involved in her community. She was instrumental in developing Winnipeg Indigenous Rock the Vote (for the 2015 federal election) and, on January 31, 2016, she founded IKWE Safe Ride: Women Helping Women. Through her art Jackie expresses her ideas and opinions while striving to inspire dialogue on addressing her people's social issues.

"I can be inspired by ceremony and prayer, as well as kind and moving words. I love the culture of my people and this is where most of my inspiration comes from." Stories and art help us express complex ideas about who we are, what we value and how we should

behave. The teachings, values and beliefs that shape our lives are passed down through oral tradition, religious teaching, literature and art. Other art inspirations come from family anecdotes, dreams and things from the media that help frame our experiences. Combined traditional teachings, everyday landmarks and life experience become symbolic signposts in the stories we tell about ourselves. To Jackie, painting is truly where her heart lies. Her happiest moments are when she is painting.

Jackie is known at the national and international level as an amazingly gifted artist. She was selected as one of eight Indigenous artists to represent Manitoba for the 2010 Olympic Games. Jackie is dedicated to giving back to her people in as many capacities as possible.

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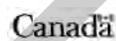
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