



Maureen, Christine, Eva, Lisa

An Asinabka true story, as told by Grandmother Christine Vincent, July 2015, at Asinabka.

In an open clearing with an unobstructed view of the Canadian Parliamentary Library and the city of Gatineau, a small group of grandmothers, an Off-Reserve Chief and a settler woman: Alma, Dianne, Christine, Roger and Maureen met at the newly planted white pine Peace Tree at Asinabka. Two weeks earlier, as about 100 people from all over North America stood in sacred witness; the young white pine was planted, symbolizing the return of the original White Pine Peace Tree.

Centuries earlier, Indigenous people of many nations had come together and collectively buried their weapons under the canopy of a towering majestic White Pine and thereafter referred to it as the Peace Tree. It stood for hundreds of years, signifying their relationship to this land and water and to each other, as a place of shared commitment to growing and maintaining peaceful relations.

This new planting of the little tree, fulfilled a prophesy of the Rainbow Warrior. It signified the arrival of the time, when all people were called to recommit themselves to shared nation-to-nation peace-building as was done by many nations hundreds of years earlier, by burying weapons at the Peace Tree.

Once this small group of traditional grandmothers and friends had checked on and cared for this newly planted Peace Tree, they moved on to another part of the Island. One of the group however, stayed behind to spend more time and carry more water to the little tree.

An Austrian tourist Eva and her niece Lisa then happened upon the little Peace Tree and asked what this area was. Thus began a conversation about the history and prophesy of the Islands and the water; the little tree's big purpose and the current socio-political context surrounding its location. The tourists were wide-eyed by the information shared.

The tourists then shared that they had just had an unusual experience. They had found a wounded Canada Goose who was dying nearby in some bushes. This little group then joined the other grandmothers who were at a sacred fire being kept in ceremony by Sue, a Lakota Cree, where they told all gathered about the wounded goose.

Immediately upon hearing the Austrian women's story, grandmother Christine recognized that indeed the goose needed to be collected and given honourable recognition as a significant part of the re-commitment by all life forms to sharing the task of re-building the purpose of peace at Asinabka. She followed Eva and Lisa to collect the young goose, and returned with it cradled in her arms, still warm.

Grandmother Christine's story:

As I walked with Eva and her niece Lisa to where the goose lay, I asked that they tell me the story of how they found the goose and how they came to Victoria Island.

I was told, as we walked together, that they found the goose, still living but wounded at the monument in honour of our Navy Veterans, that I call the Golden Globe. They spotted the wounded goose on the edge of the grass. They asked for help. No one knew what to do. They went to the nearby Mill St. Brewery and still could not find help. Returning to where they last saw the goose they found that she had managed to scramble into the nearby bushes. They followed her into the bushes and saw that she was gasping for her last breaths. In love and compassion, Eva cradled her in her arms. The young goose took her last breath, and Eva laid her down as gently as she could.

This was an overwhelming outpouring of love. These two tourists, Austrian women, selflessly gave to one of the Creator's precious gifts. That she did not die alone, is a simple reminder of human compassion between man and animal. This reminds us of the simpler things in life and not the hustle and bustle of the disconnected world we live in today. It caused me to step back in time and take a deep breath of fresh air. Ancient respect for all life took over me as the goose lay there. I picked her up gently, in my arms as a mother would her small child or in my case a grandmother her grandchildren. Lisa, as previously instructed by Grandmother Alma, put a tie of tobacco on the ground where the goose had lain.

People stared at us as we made our way back to the Sacred Fire on Victoria Island where moments earlier, we had first met. As I carried her, I had no pain. I found as well that instead of her body feeling cold; it was

in fact still very warm. I felt the goose's spirit filling me with her love and gratitude. As well, I felt the spirits of the ancestors of Asinabka walking with us in sacred prayer. All this reminded me of a time when all life was regarded as having a sacred purpose, and was treated as deserving of shared love and respect, rather than being objectified through greed and our ignorance of our own indivisible oneness with it.

As I cradled her in my arms, my prayer of: "What do I do with the goose?" was answered. It was as if the little Peace Tree spoke to me. Here, beside the little tree, where we had gathered earlier, the goose was to be buried. By laying the goose beside the tree, she could give herself, body and spirit, to the goal for the return of peace. She could give nourishment to the tree and help us to accept and remember the wisdom of the Canada goose. She could offer herself once again as the messenger of shared leadership. Laying beside the tree, deep in mother earth the gift offered by the goose would indeed be a gift from the Creator. For here, two women, tourists from Austria, were chosen as the messengers, which is part of the great prophesy. Already nations were starting to meet under the little Peace Tree. Now I understood the sacrifice of the goose.

In a prophesy, the Rainbow warrior, foretold of a time when there would be a green space for all to enjoy at Asinabka. All people would meet there in peace. The roots of the tree of peace would go deep in mother earth and her branches would come out in an umbrella shape for all people to meet underneath. I laid the goose down before the sacred fire and prayed for peace and guidance for the huge task ahead of us.

Later we dug her a place of honour beside our little tree of peace. We gently laid her in the ground with offerings of tobacco and

sage, her head towards the trunk of the tree and her body towards the northern and eastern doorway. North represents the grandmothers, grandfathers and elders known as wisdom keepers. East represents the newborn and children, signifying rebirth.

As we buried the goose, we were honoured by the presence of a young Indigenous father, Stacey and his 6 year old Indigenous son Taylen from Victoria B.C. Also present was a young friend of mine. We all prayed and laid tobacco both under and on top of her resting place. We sang a song to the tree's spirit and to her spirit. The young father patiently explained to his young son the importance of our culture's use of tobacco. He shared how we pay honour and respect for all the creatures that live on mother earth and how the Creator gave us a great **gift** to live in harmony with all living things around us.

We were given a great task by the Creator. Our task is to be care-takers of mother earth, father sky, and all living creatures. Our task is to do this, and thereby educate others. This young boy represented the re-birth of shared peace through commitment to shared respect. He is one of the future generations to come who will one day be able to gather in love, peace and harmony. Also present were the spirits of our ancestors. I saw a vision of Grandfather William Commanda, as spirit, sitting beside us as he often did, with that ear-to-ear, all knowing smile. Also surrounding him were 12 other ancestors.

The bounty of unconditional love was wrapping us all in a shawl of spiritual wellbeing. After the goose was buried, my young friend pulled out her phone, and showed Taylen a small clip of a mother goose in the water with her goslings, stirring up the bottom of the river so that her little ones could feed. She explained to him how

beautiful and important a mother's love is, and how we benefit from the lessons that all creatures teach us each and every day. All we have to do is open our eyes as well as our hearts to receive the gifts that are all around us. As Taylen listened intently, his father then spoke to him and told him this would be a day he would never forget, a day he would be a part of forever, if the prophesy prevails and is fulfilled.

If this could be a world for all, what a marriage we could have with all nations gathering together once more at Asinabka. Since the Canada goose represents shared leadership, are you ready to step up and share this vision of all nations with us, in a shared leadership role here on Turtle Island? Are you ready to jump on board the train and lay the tracks for a better future? Can we all rise in unity to this vision for all nations? Or, do we fall on our knees and worship false idols and hide our faces from our neighbours in shame and disgrace?

What are you prepared to do? Is it a question of David vs Goliath? Are you David or are you Goliath? It is your choice. Can you open your heart again, and learn from the wisdom of the Canada goose?

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