



Kataq

Journey of our Eels

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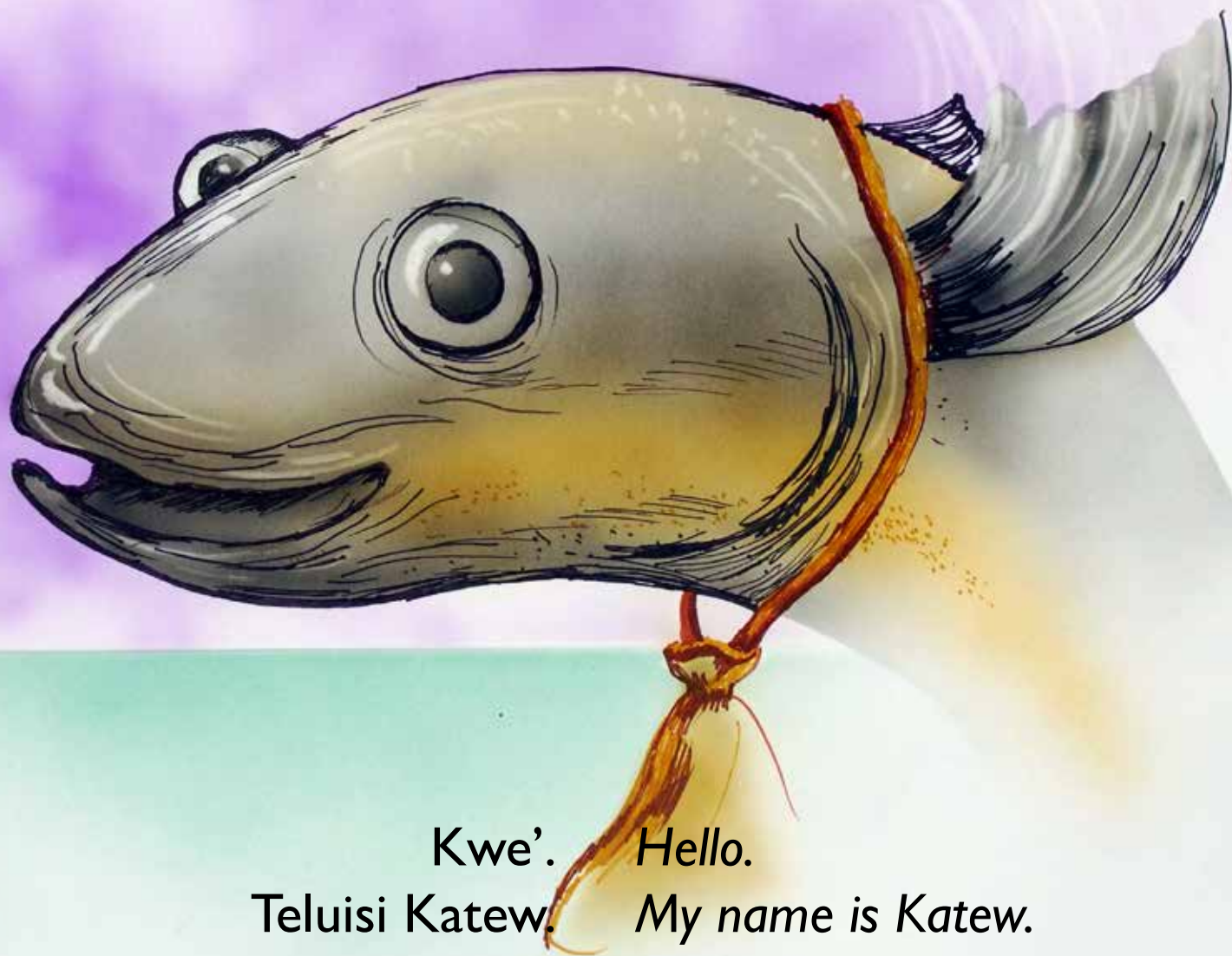
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Kwe'. Hello.
Teluisi Katew. My name is Katew.

Kaqi'sk nemi'wioq.

You've probably seen me before.

Ni'n aqq nikmaq wikultiek
samqwan-iktuk—sipu'ji'jl,
qospemji'jl apaqtuk aqq
ula Pitu'poq.

*I live with my sisters in places where
there is water, like brooks, ponds,
the ocean, and here in
the Bras d'Or Lakes.*

Etli-wskwijinuiap amasek etek
teluisik Sargasso Sea.

*I was born in a place far from
here called the Sargasso Sea.*

Pilui-ankamkusiap tujiw.

I looked very different then.

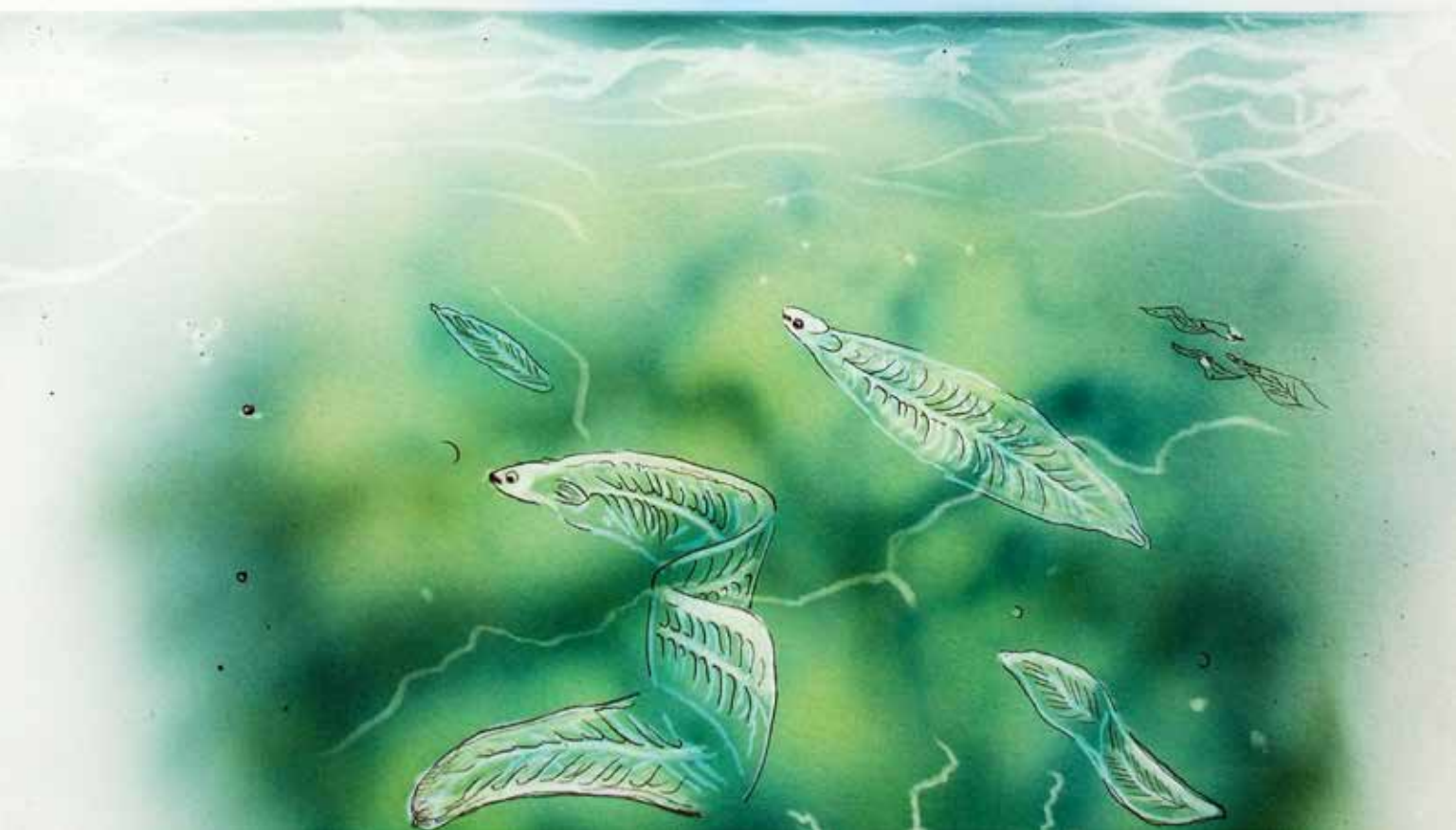
Telikiap staqa nipi'j
aqq saputamuksiap!

*My body was like a leaf and
you could see through me!*

Na'tamiaw newti-punqek
alto'keyap apaqtuk, Siwktip
mi'soqo ikaianek Pitu'poq.

*For about a year I floated on the
ocean's currents before arriving in
the Bras d'Or Lakes in the spring.*





Kkijinu Wsitqamu telimuksiekip.

“Kilew ika’luksioq wsitqamu’k
apoqnmuanew Mi’kmaq.

Elita’sualuksioq wjit mijipjewey
aqq npisunn kulaman tajiko’ltitaq.

Kata’qi ewe’wmi’tij
klpilmnew tami o’plisketesk,
aqq elt keltaqpilmnew
koqoey we’kaw mkisnk.

Kato’mi esmut mijua’ji’j aqq
ika’tumk wen kesnukwaj wsituaqn.

Ta’n tujiw kiskajeyin, asite’lmatesk
natqa’lulinew nikoq-iktuk mita
wela’lujik aqq menaqaj teleyuksioq.

Wjit peketnmatimk L’nu’k
iknmuitaq kun’jewal aqq
eskwa’tasik ktinin.

Telite’lmuksio’q staqa wunijanuaq.”

*Mother Earth told my family
a special story.*

*She said, “You are put here to help
Mi’kmaq people survive.*

*They depend on you for food and
medicine to keep them healthy.*

*Your skin will heal their sprains,
and they can use it for ties, bindings,
and even moccasin soles.*


*Your oil gives nourishment to babies
and treats earache.*

*When you are ready, you let them
take you with spears because you
know your bodies will not be wasted
and they will be thankful.*

*They offer your organs and heads
to Mother Earth as thanks.*

*They care for you as they do
their own.”*





Kis' app ntinin sa'se'wasik,
poqji-tli-ankamkusi staqa
katew katu me' saputamuksi!

Mu pekije'nuk npaqm
stoqnamukwa'sik
aqq nmusti watapta'sik.

Pekiji-tlamuksites na.
Telui'tuksi watapsit katew.

*My body changed again to look
more like an eel but you could still
see through me!*

*This didn't last very long. My skin
darkened to green on my back and
yellow on my belly.*

*I looked like this for many years.
They call me yellow eel.*

Pikwelek wikultiek
msit tami Pitu'poq.

Kesatmek ewipk samqwan ta'n
pikwelkl kata'skwl aqq sqata'ski'l
etlikutikl aqq pikwelkik nme'jk,
sata'siwk aqq nmjinikejk ey mu'tij.

Jipji'jk, nme'jk aqq we'kaw pilue'k
kataq malqumuksie'k!

Mu kesatmuek tekpa'q samqwan,
Kesik ika'q na pijita'yek
sisku-iktuk.

Ne'itaiek ta'n tujiw siwkw
ika'q aqq jijawejk nutujik.

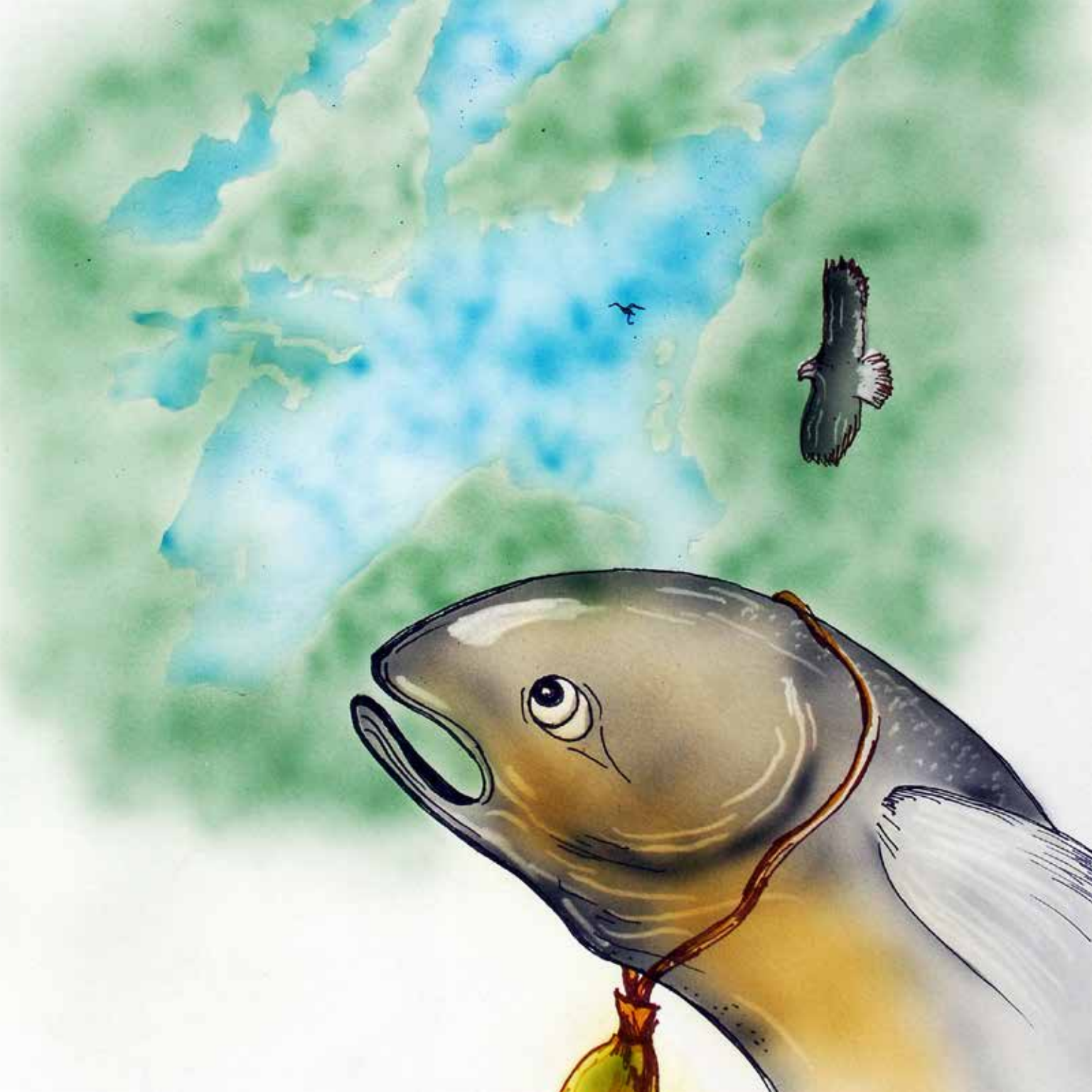
*Many of us are scattered
around the Bras d'Or Lakes.*

*We like calm water with eel grass
and seaweed with many fish,
shrimp and crabs to eat.*

*We are food for birds and
other fish, even eels!*

*In the winter we don't like the cold
water and bury ourselves in the mud.*

*We come out again in the spring
when the frogs sing.*



Pemtaqiey maqamikew-iktuk eliey
piluey qospem kisna Pitu'poq.

Weji-lami na'qik.

Skmoqn nastek na'qimk
kulaman ma' kispata'siw.

Keskmna'q kaqtukewinuk,
nsukuni wenaqtek ta'n tujiw mijisi.

Siwkw aqq Toqa'q,
maw-wije'tultiek wejuow l'ta'nen.

*I can slide over land to get between
ponds and the Bras d'Or Lakes.*

I can breathe through my skin.

*My mucus helps keep
my body moist.*

*Before lightning storms I sometimes
feed with my tail pointing up.*

*In spring and fall, we sometimes
travel short distances in a
big squirming ball.*





Nike' suel a'qatayik kataq
ala'la'tijik weti'k ta'n
ne'pa'kwi'titaq kisna naqa'lukutaq
l'ta'new Sargasso Sea.

Temik na eli'ko'ltijik kataq
toqo ula weti'l ala'laj
mtue'tew teli-wtapiet.

We'koqma'q, Waqmatkuk aqq
Malikewe'jk ajelkik kataq
ala'la'tijik weti'k jel mu kataq ta'n
wikultijik Essisoqnik, Potlotek
kisna tami se'k Pitu'poq.

Ula weti'k kesnukwa'la'tijik kataq
na'sik mu tala'luksiwkik skwijinu'k.

*Right now, almost half of my relatives
have a worm that might make them
die sooner or make travel back to
the Sargasso Sea difficult.*

*We swim very deep and having the
worm may affect how we go up
and down in the water.*

*My family in We'koqma'q,
Wagmatcook and Malikewe'j
have more worms than my family in
Eskasoni, and Potlotek or anywhere
else in the Bras d'Or Lakes.*

*These worms only harm eels,
not people.*



Ta'n tujiw l'uiknek mi'soqo
newtiska'q jel pesqunatek
tewijo'ltiek, na ketanuksiek.

Kate'ket eskmat mi'soqo
kiwto'qipils nikoql
tujiw na'taqma'lit.

Pemi-aji-kisikui na
pemi-aji-ksukulnn.

Te's tapuiska'ql enkatasikl
nikwey, na si'st aji-keskulnn!

*When we are between 7 and 19
years old, we are taken
by your spear.*

*You wait until I wrap my body
around the spear before taking
me out of the water.*

*After I grow larger
I start to get very heavy.*

*For every 20 cm I grow,
my weight triples!*

Pikwelk koqoey teliaq ula
wsitqamu'k ta'n ajkneyuksiek.

Pemi-aji-tekle'jiek.

Keplutasikl nepa'kwi'titl
kataq pem-so'qwita'jik sipu'l.

Mu tetuji-waqme'nuk
samqwan staqa amskwes.

Mu kis-lamultiwek tupkwanpu
wejtk maqamkew-iktuk.

Ne'po'ksiek mjikapu.

Pemi-aji-tkle'jultiek aqq klapis
ma' tepiewek siawi'sultinen.

Me' kisi-kiwaska'ten
ula pem-tla'sik.

Na'sik nutaiek apoqnmuinen.

*There are many things happening
on Earth that hurt us.*

My family is getting smaller.

*Dams kill my relatives as they
travel up and down rivers.*

*The water is not as clean
as it was.*

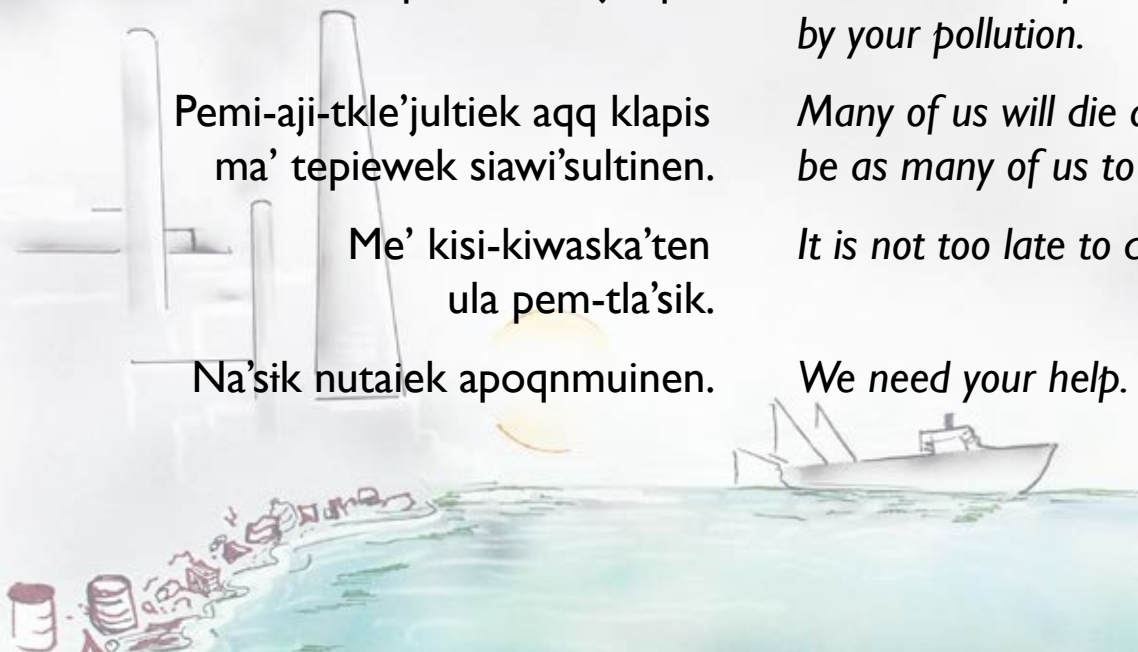
*We choke on dirt that
comes off the land.*

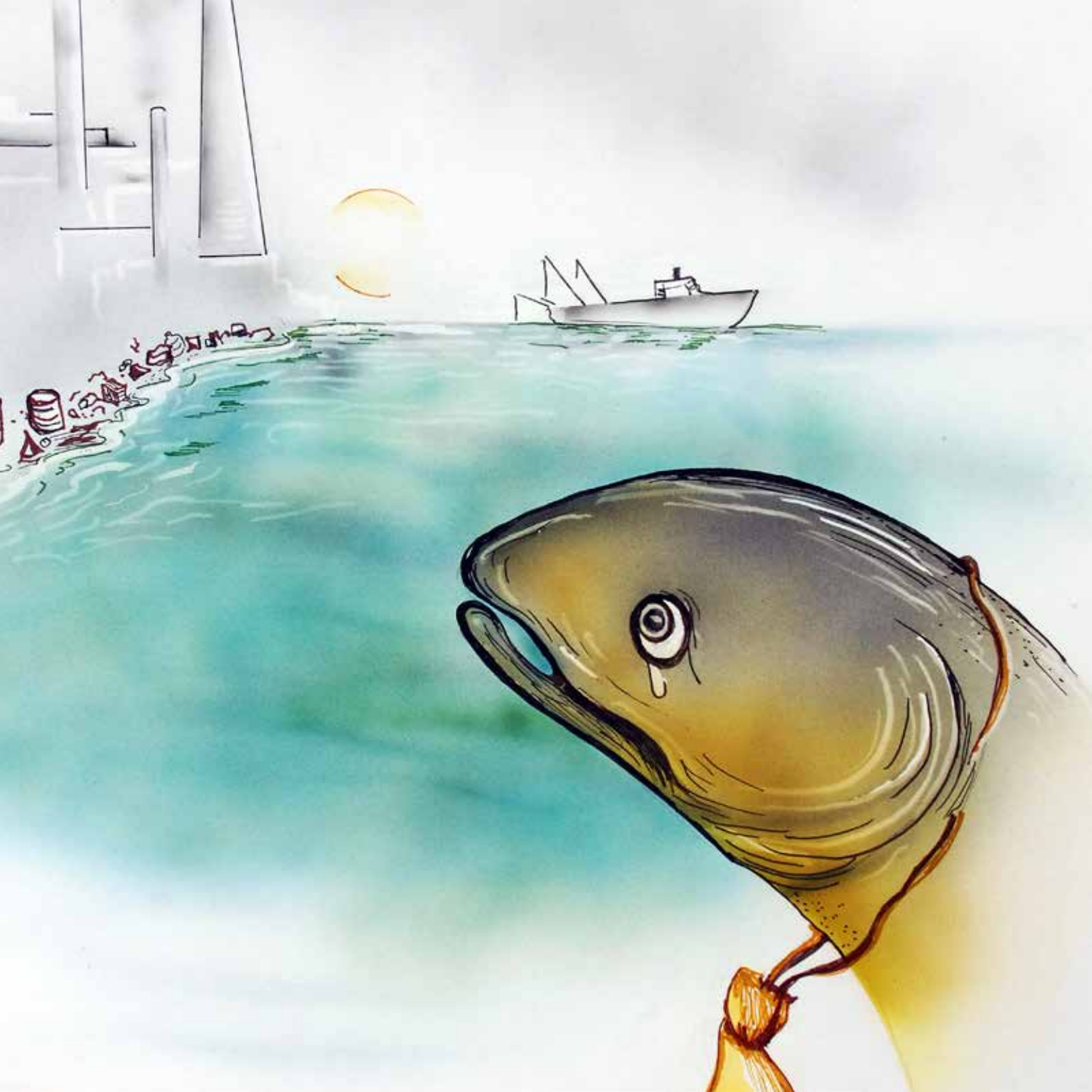
*Our bodies are poisoned
by your pollution.*

*Many of us will die and there won't
be as many of us to have babies.*

It is not too late to change this.

We need your help.







Wlo'tmn Vwsitqamu
apoqnmuitesnen siaw-
mimajultinen.

Mukk we'wmu koqoey ta'n
winamukwa'ttew samqwan aqq
menaqaj jiklo'te'n sikwimknaqn.

Mukk winamuka'tup samqwan.

Kulaman siaw-klu'ktitew
ta'n ey mu'tiek.

*By respecting Mother Earth
you can help us live.*

*Use environmentally-friendly cleaners
and get rid of garbage properly.*

Keep dirt out of the water.

*Doing this will keep the water
clean and healthy.*

Kepmite'tmn teli-l'nuo'ltimk
apoqnmuitiesnen siaw-
mimajultinen.

Mukk wsua'tu ajelk aqq
ta'n tel-nuta'n essmj kikmaq
aqq kwutanmual.

Kina'mulni'tij kikmaq ta'n
menaaj tel-kwitamemk.

Tpi'ketuk ta'n koqoey ne'patuoq
kwutanmuaq, maw-tumk
iknmuatesk kisiku'k.

Te's na'kwek se'k naji-kate'ke,
skma kijka' ke'sk mna'q
apaja'siwun ta'n etl-kwitame'tip.

Tmawey ika'te'n wjit
peketnmatimk aqq apaja'tu
maqamikew-iktuk ta'n
koqoey mu ewe'wmu'n.

*By respecting Mi'kmaq culture you
can help us live.*

*Don't take more than you need to
feed your family or community.*

*Learn the ways of fishing
from your parents.*

*Share what you catch with your
community, especially your
Elders.*

*Spear eels in different areas and
wait a few days before returning.*

*Give thanks by offering tobacco
and returning what you don't
use to Mother Earth.*



Nike' ilaji lien Sargasso Sea
naji-iko'tuann wa'wml.

Ntinin sa'se'wa'sik.

Piluamukwa'sik kulaman kisi-
kasites apaqtuk.

Npaqm maqtewa'sik aqq
nmusti wapa'sik.

Npukikl ajikwekl kulaman
aji-ne'tapites.

Ta'n tel-sa'se'wa'sik ntinin
apoqnमितew sapa'tun
teli-amasek eliey.

Nike' telui'tuksi
sulieweyamuksit katew.

*Now, I am preparing for my
final journey to the Sargasso Sea
where I will lay my eggs.*

My body is changing again.

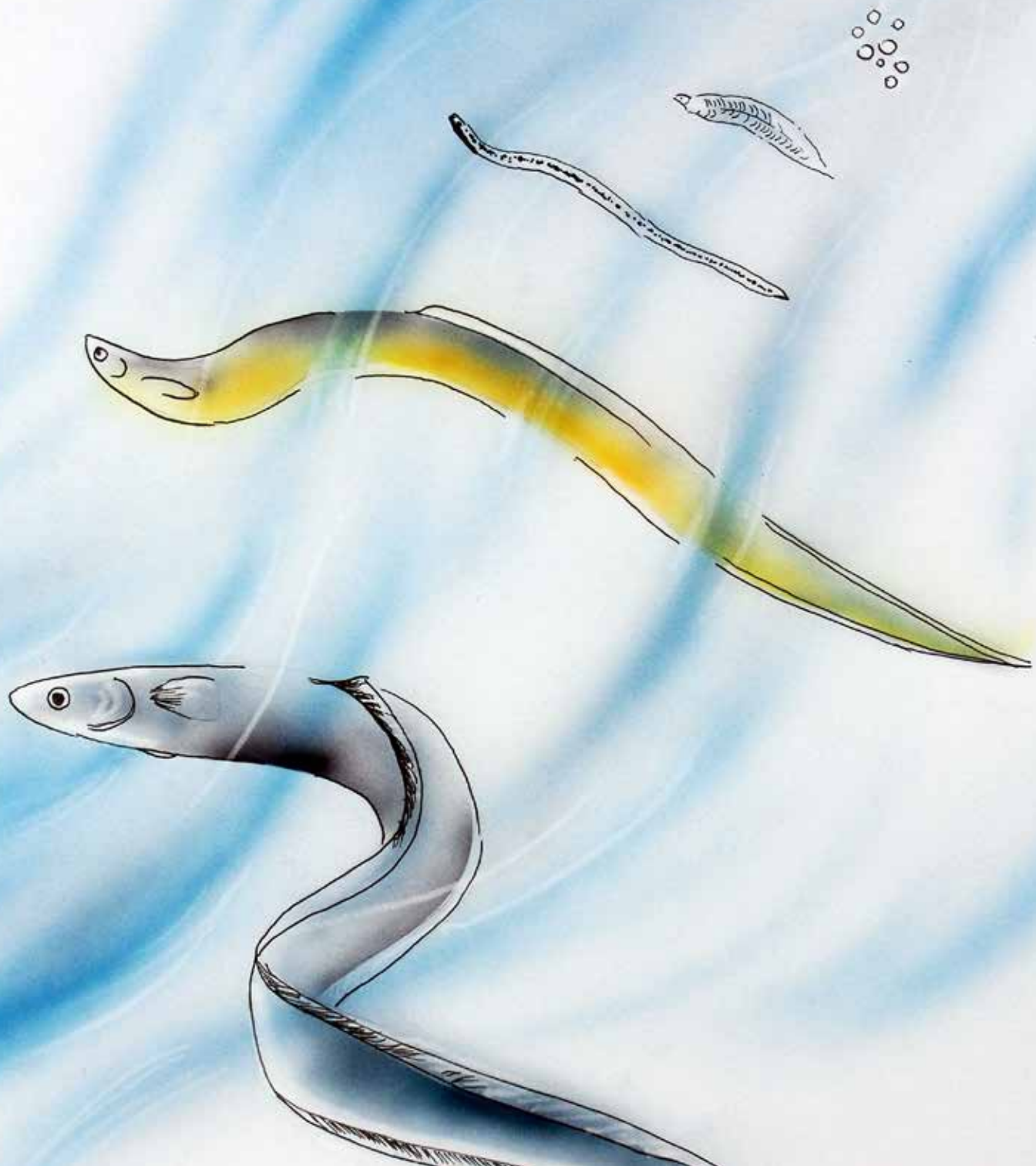
*My color is changing so I can
hide better in the ocean.*

*My back is getting darker
and my belly is turning white.*

*My eyes are getting bigger
to help me see.*

*This is Mother Earth's way of
helping me survive my long journey.*

Now they call me silver eel.





Wijkawi maqtewamukwa'sik aqq
ajikwek apoqnmuin
knekk eli'kweyi.

Ntlamilu apsa'sik mita
wajua'siann wa'wl.

Mu mijisiw teli-pkitteskm.

Ntinin pittaqq aqq melkiknaq.

Kji-pituimtlinaqn te'siek
wije'tultitesnen smaqaiaiek,
na'sik ma' apajita'wek.

Npu'titesnen kisi-wa'wikitiek.

*The fins near my head are getting
darker and larger to help me swim.*

*My stomach is getting smaller to
make room for my growing eggs.*

I won't eat along the way.

My body is long and powerful.

*Millions of us will make the journey
together but it will be our last one.*

We will die after we lay our eggs.



Ta'n teli-pkije'k weleywiek aqq
welo'tmoq ta'n wikultiek,
na kisi-siaw-tkweyultesnen.

Ika'q na'kwek.

Kaqiaq ta'n tel-lukwey.

Wli-ankweyuk nijink siaw-
wije'wmi'tij ta'n tel-mili-ala'si.

Wela'lioq jiksituioq kiskuk.

*As long as you treat us and our
home with respect, we will
always be here for you.*

My time has come.

My voyage is ending.

*Please watch out for my children
as they take the same journey I did.*

Thank you for listening to my story.



Arlene Christmas (Dozay)

spent much of her life cultivating a passion for art. Growing up in western New Brunswick on the Tobique Reserve, Dozay is the middle child in a large family.

At eighteen, she left the banks of the Tobique River to pursue a formal education at Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. Although she always displayed an interest in art, her initial intention was to pursue a career in education.

It wasn't until her third year at NSCAD that Dozay decided to switch to the fine arts program and pursue a full-time career as an artist.

Dozay has created and displayed her work at galleries and exhibits across the Maritimes, Ontario, Europe, Australia and the United States. You can see her illustrations in several publications.



Angela Denny, a Mi'kmaw from the Eskasoni First Nation in Cape Breton, lives and works along the beautiful Bras d'Or Lakes. She is married to Dion and they have a daughter, Bethany and a son, Morris.

After graduating from Cape Breton University in 2006 with a Bachelor of Science Degree she began a full-time position at the Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources as a Research Assistant. She works with biologists, natural resource users and Elders, playing an important role in the collection of traditional knowledge.

Many hours are spent in the lab, in the field and in various Mi'kmaw communities conducting research on the American eel. Her research has led to the development of booklets, posters and best management practices to help others understand the eel's amazing life story and the importance of protecting eel habitat.



Shelley Denny is a Mi'kmaw originally from the community of Potlotek, Nova Scotia. Always fascinated with water and the plants and animals that live there, Shelley pursued an education in biology. After graduating in 2005 with a Masters in Science from St. Francis Xavier University, she began her employment with the Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources.

At UINR, she continues to conduct research and gather traditional knowledge on Bras d'Or Lakes species, especially those that are important to the Mi'kmaq for food, social or ceremonial purposes.

Shelley lives in Eskasoni with her husband Levi and three children Cayden, Levi Jr. (Big Guy) and Isabel.



Barbara Sylliboy is a Mi'kmaq educator from Eskasoni First Nation. She is employed with the Eskasoni School Board as a Mi'kmaq Language Curriculum Developer for the Ta'n L'Nuey Etl-mawlukwatmumk/ Mi'kmaq Curriculum Development Project.

Barbara is a fluent Mi'kmaq speaker and writer, and in her spare time has worked on the translation of various government documents and the Cape Breton CAP site "Work in Our Time" stories into the Mi'kmaq language.



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