

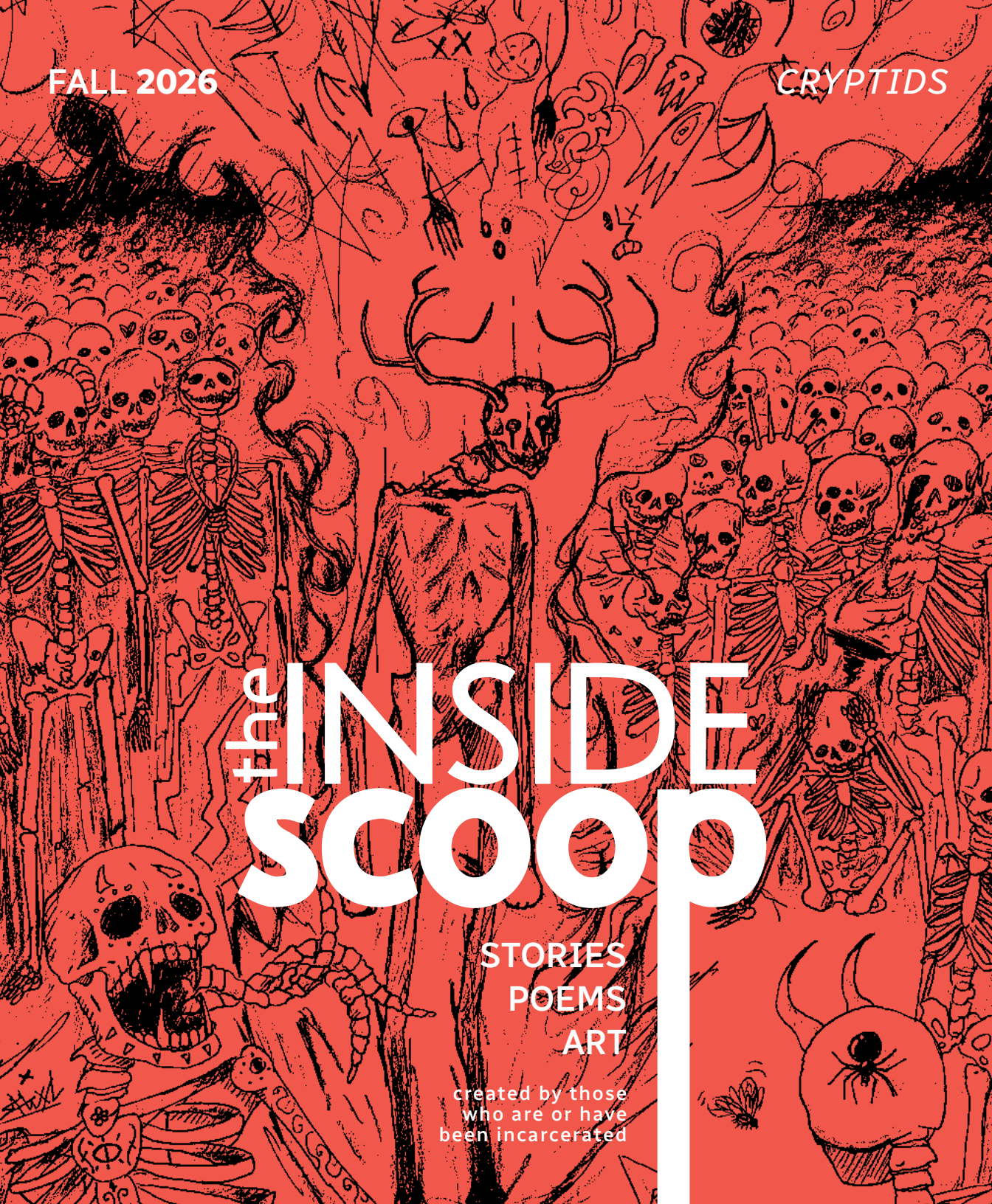
FALL 2026

CRYPTIDS

the INSIDE SCOOP

STORIES
POEMS
ART

created by those
who are or have
been incarcerated



the INSIDE SCOOP

FALL 2026

EDITOR

Anna Sigrithur

COVER ARTWORK

Cyril P.

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Brandon Ehinger

LAYOUT

Samantha Klassen

VOLUNTEER EDITORS

Malak Abas, Ashton

Bonkowski, Brooke Fehr,

Chanelle Lajoie, Megan

Ronald, Thea Sheldon-

Samuelson, John Samson

Fellows, Ben Waldman

CONTRIBUTORS

Todd I.

Melodie B.

Eric G.

David G.

Lee M.

Myron M.

Craig T.

Cyril P.

J. Chartrand

Adrian A.

Allora

Nicole L.

Destiny M.

Jessica G.

Twynette S.

David B.

Damian D.

Geordie D.

Dustin B.

Mathias K.

Frank W.

Raymond M.

Greg H.

Alfred M.

Curtis L.

Janine D.

Eddie V.

letter from the editor

Dear reader,

Last year for the 2025 fall issue of The Inside Scoop, we decided to do a Halloween theme. The issue was called Hauntings, and it featured writings on ghosts, spirits, and entities beyond the veil. This theme was popular and submissions flooded in, but unfortunately, due to the Canada Post strike, many arrived after our publishing deadline.

One of the submissions that didn't make it last year has become this issue's cover art. The Scoop editorial team was so intrigued by Cyril's monster that we wrote back to him, asking him to send in its backstory. And what that he sent back perfectly illustrates something that literary scholars have pointed out about monsters: that they act as "mirrors," revealing a side of ourselves that we pretend isn't there or don't allow ourselves to see. Monsters can be ugly, but they can be truthful, too.

To narrow our focus, we made the issue about a particular kind of monster known as a cryptid. A cryptid is a creature often featured in folktales or legends. Some of the most famous cryptids include the Loch Ness Monster—named after a lake in Scotland—West Virginia's Mothman, and the Bigfoot of the Pacific Northwest, also known as the Sasquatch or Yeti. Because cryptids are monsters that are hard to catch a glimpse of, maybe they represent the things we hide from ourselves—the things we're most afraid of.

You'll find a bunch of cryptids in this issue, some well-known and others documented here for the very first time! In "Monster Mashup," you'll be among the very first to see some new Manitoba cryptids, described by the Winnipeg Remand Centre literacy class. This month's "Right to Know" borrows inspiration from the teachings of the Sabe, or Sasquatch, who carries one of the seven teachings – honesty. Our legal editors explored the "Big Steps" being taken in federal and provincial courts right now as Canada gets more honest about its commitments to documents like the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

So, dear reader, we hope you enjoy this special issue. And remember: if there's one thing we can draw from the teachings of Sabe, it's that getting honest about the things we're afraid of is the first step to overcoming fear itself.

In literacy and solidarity,



Anna Sigrithur, Editor

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The John Howard Society of Manitoba operates on Treaty 1 Territory, the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene peoples, and on the homeland of the Métis Nation.

We acknowledge that the ongoing effects of colonization have resulted in the criminalization and over-incarceration of the Indigenous community. As an organization, we recognize that understanding this connection is essential to our work as we move towards reconciliation.

PUBLISHED BY

John Howard

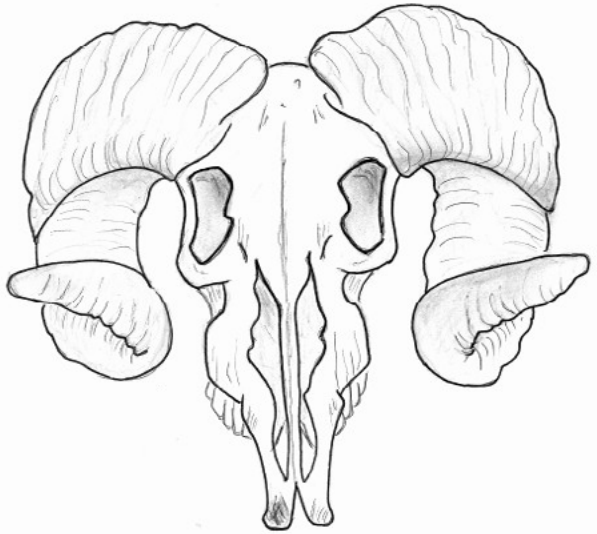
THE JOHN HOWARD SOCIETY OF MANITOBA

583 Ellice Ave. T: 204-775-1514
Winnipeg, MB F: 204-775-1670
R3B 1Z7 E: office@johnhoward.mb.ca

Mayhem

BY TODD I.

In the middle of May
 To my dismay
 I'd nowhere to go
 And not a friend or foe
 I honour the things
 to the King of kings
 My wife I lost
 To Satan's frost
 I love her still
 But she's broken my will
 (and was one hell of a thrill)
 So rememb'ring her as I take these pills
 And here I lay
 To rest the following May
 My heart filled most
 With the Holy Ghost



"RAM" BY MELODIE B.

Postcard from the Inside

Draw your best friend and tell us how you became friends.
 We will publish your story in the Summer Inside Scoop!

Submit your artwork and written submissions along with the waiver (see back cover)

I ATE A BUG

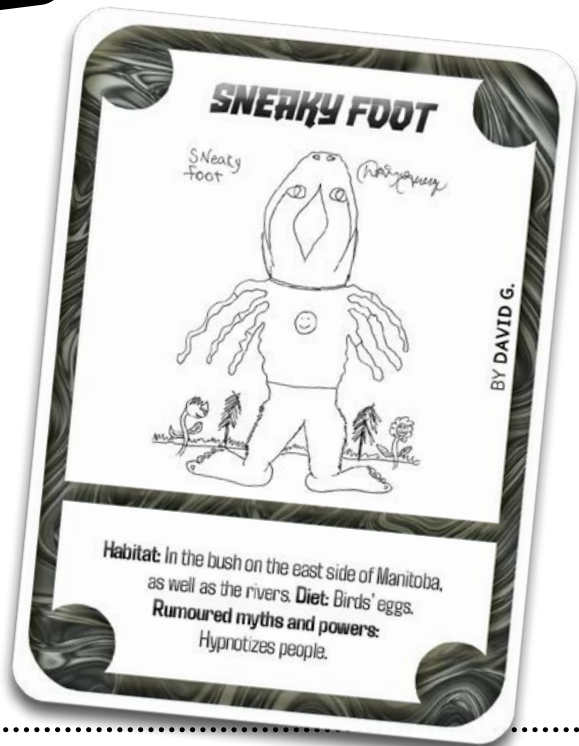
BY ERIC G.

I remember eating a bug;
It was an accident, of course;
But it sparked thoughts of my life,
And more importantly, its source.

What is the reason we exist?
Merely for the creator's pleasure?
There must be more to it,
Mysterious purpose, I'm sure.

Does our pain amuse him?
Our foolishness make him chuckle?
At times it seems he's against us,
Like we're living under his knuckle.

Part of me wants to believe this;
Making me sad and needing a hug,
Of course, we'll never know.
I just remember eating a bug.



The Inside Scoop Waiver

Please attach this to any artwork or writing you submit to The Inside Scoop.
Mail to: Anna Sigrithur, John Howard Society of MB, 583 Ellice Ave. Winnipeg, MB, R3B 1Z7

Name: _____

Title of piece: _____

I am open to discussing edits to my work (circle one): Yes No

I give permission for my work to be printed in *The Inside Scoop* and confirm that I am submitting my own authentic original work. I understand that my work may also be used in other John Howard Society publications such as workbooks and facilitation materials, as a handout in group classes, or for future promotional or fundraising projects. I understand that all rights to my work remain with me.

Signature

Date

Mailing address: _____

Where would you like
edits and/or copies of The
Inside Scoop mailed to?

Note: We reserve the right to edit submissions, and may contact you about edits to your work. We will not print anything containing sexism, racism, homophobia or transphobia, gang symbols, or that glorifies violence, drug use, or gang involvement.

It's the smaller things

WHO'S AFRAID OF A LITTLE MICRO FICTION

I entered the graveyard reluctantly, taking my usual shortcut. I was reluctant because tonight seemed darker than usual, with an almost sinister bite to the cold fall air. I quickened my pace, stumbling over the loose stone path. Distant hoots seemed to surround me as if owls were watching my every step. Were they talking to each other, or sending me a warning?

Either way, their calls grew louder as I neared that one grave stone, the one I feared. I dared not look at it as I passed by – but I couldn't help myself. I glanced just long enough to read the name.

My name.

– LEE M.

Late night, 2 am.

It's cold and the neighbourhood has an eerie feeling as Joey walks to the store. When he comes out of the store, there is a person watching him from across the street. It's a man wearing a mask. It looks realistic, with blood and flesh hanging off of it.

Joey laughs as he walks down the back lane, the man following him. Joey starts walking back towards him and sees him in the light. Joey then realizes the man is wearing his friend's face over his, who went missing long ago. He shows Joey the face before he can yell.

–CRAIG T.

There were three boys chillin' in the neighbourhood playground. It was getting dark and late. They heard loud screaming in the woods next to the playground. One of the boys wanted to check it out while the other two wanted to go home.

– MYRON M.



the **FEATURESCOOP**: ABOUT THE CREATURE

Observations and how to Fight Escape it

BY CYRIL P.

This is a warning about a strange creature encounter, the aim is to spread awareness so no one else gets hurt. Now I know, this isn't the first time you've heard a wild story from some lunatic. But this time, I am asking you to hold your judgement and bear with me, at least until this story ends. Keep in mind this request is about a serious matter, coming from a desperate man.

First of all, the creature depicted is only one of many, many others. They are dangerous, unpredictable beings.

They behave like parasites, and gradually take over every hidden corner until it is safe for them to come out from all over the place. I drew this specific one for a reason; it is, in a way, "tamed" (even if, with them, you can never truly know). I was at first fascinated by them, but the deeper I got into my observations, the more I felt disturbed by what I found.

Their purpose goes against the laws of nature; in a sort of masochistic, hive-like mentality, they

Note from the writer:

This is Cyril, writing about the deer-antlered-zombie-demon drawing that came in late due to the Canada Post strike. I like writing but I'm bad at it. I wrote [this] anyway, to have fun. It's disorganized, edgy, cocky, and it has a swear word in it. When I re-read it, I was like, "Who wrote that piece of crap?" And then I remembered it was me.

all hurt each other, in such a way that each member inflicts various forms of violence upon others. Some even hurt themselves on their own. This explains the appearance of this specimen—its skinniness. Other animals who get to such a point would be dead—parasites are resilient. Not all of them are skinny, but all of them suffer in one way or another. Although self-weakened and fragile in appearance, their strength is unnatural. They can bend others to their will, which is arguably, the

greatest of their strengths. But let's talk about the specimen again, why I "picked" it for my depiction. I was able to put aside my repulsion by seeing it so often.

In fact, I see it every day, whenever I look at a mirror, or a reflective surface. I realized only now I forgot to tell you the name of those creatures. I call them "humans."

Now you may think, "What an exaggeration, this surely isn't what humans look like!" Well, let me effing finish, won't you?

No other animal can be permanently bipedal like that. Humans excel in the art of tricking and deceiving, so much that other documents about them cannot be trusted. Only I could make sure this report would not be contaminated by them; by paying a price. I am becoming one of them. You see, the human depicted is myself (not in a metaphorical way, or what I merely think). It's who I am.

If one were to place this drawing next to a photograph of myself, and ask me to pick which one is me, I would pick the drawing. The photograph only

captures the limited things the eye can see. It cannot depict what humans are really about, because it's so vile.

Once you know that, you look at them the same way you would at a rotting carcass; wanting to leave, but too captivated to do so. While this happens, they suck you in, and you join their circle of violence and horror. I witnessed that they take the worst of their kind and put them all in the same place to see what kind of ☐

I have no use for writing this anymore. Just stay away from humans!

THE TADPOIL



BY J. CHARTRAND

Habitat: The bushes in Sandy Bay.
Diet: Goats, sheep, cows.
Rumoured myths and powers:
 Spies on pigs and can turn things into ice.

THE WOLF PENG THANG



BY ADRIAN A.

Habitat: Hecla Island. **Diet:** Fish guts.
Rumoured myths and powers:
 Appears after fishermen dump fish guts in illegal dump zones and steals truck beers.

TOILET BIGFOOT



BY ALLORA

Habitat: Remand plumbing.
Diet: Towels.
Rumoured myths and powers:
 Passes messages through the toilets for you.

Learners in the Winnipeg Remand Centre literacy program created their very own cryptids together. First, they played the "exquisite corpse" drawing game together as a group – in which one person draws one part of the creature, folds the paper to hide what they've drawn, passes the paper to the next person to add to it, and so on.

MONSTER CRYPTID COLLECTOR

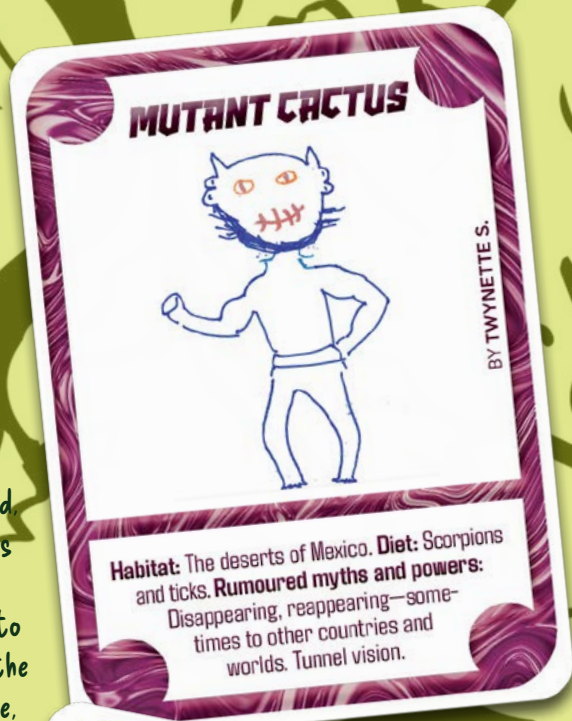
THE THREE-HEADED WEASEL



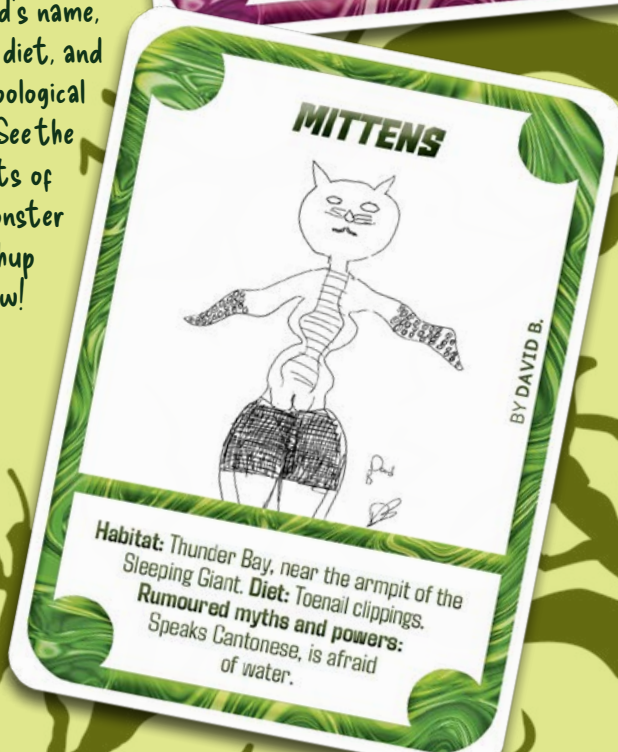
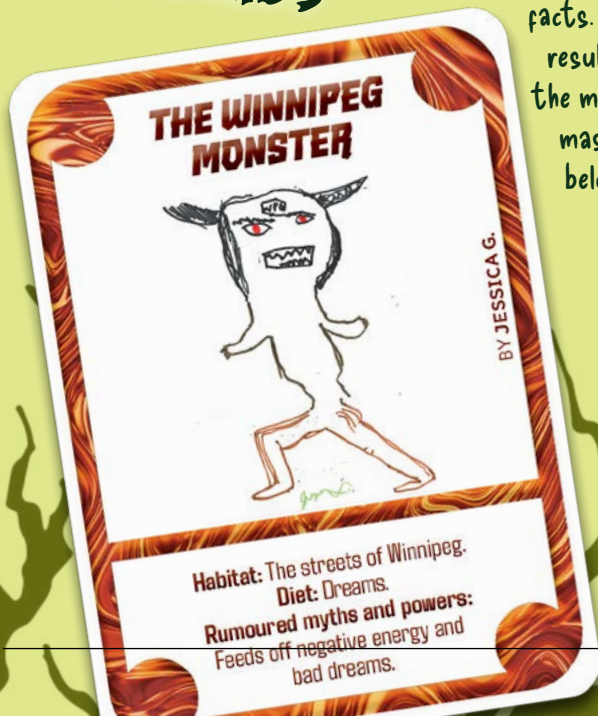
BY NICOLE L.

Habitat: Swamps.
Diet: Seaweed and other slimy things in the water.
Rumoured myths and powers:
 It can change you into whatever it wants you to be.

R MASHUP LECTOR CARDS



After the final drawings were revealed, the students used their imaginations to come up with the cryptid's name, habitat, diet, and cryptozoological facts. See the results of the monster mashup below!



THE UNKNOWN



BY DAMIAN D.

Habitat: In the forest, in Manitoba.
Diet: People.
Rumoured myths and powers:
 Stalking, teleportation, hiding.

THE LARCH



BY GEORDIE D.

Habitat: The desert around Las Vegas sewers.
Diet: Cats, dogs, birds, sewage.
Rumoured myths and powers:
 Steals people's pets (kittens, puppies),
 stalks people from the sewer system.

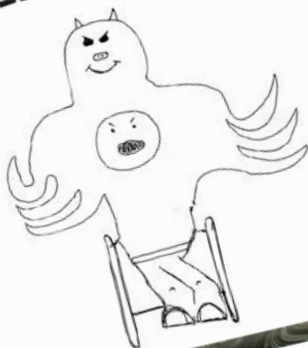
SLIZ HORSE



BY DUSTIN B.

Habitat: In caves in the Rocky Mountains. **Diet:** Chickens and pigs—loves protein. **Rumoured myths and powers:**
 Loves to burn its food before eating it. It has to eat over-cooked food. It makes huge holes in the rocks and leaves leftover bones with charcoal ashes of what it can't finish.

CRYPTID PIG FACE



BY MATHIAS K.

Habitat: The farm.
Diet: Slop, grain, pepperoni sticks.
Rumoured myths and powers:
 Tells the future.

WOLF-HOG



BY FRANK W.

Habitat: Southern bushes of Long Plain.
Diet: Bush berries and deer. **Rumoured myths and powers:**
 Shows up when you're being attacked by wild dogs and lures them to a den where it eats them.

HAIKUS OF TERROR

BY RAYMOND M.

A haiku is a short-form, minimalist style of poetry with origins in Japan. While a haiku often stands on its own, Raymond's collection of fifteen haikus offers a journey through the topic of fear, each capturing a slightly different facet of the powerful emotion.

The fear of autumn
Wonder if I'll hit bottom
Or just keep falling

My fear of you man-
ifests into palpable
Visions of horror

Fear, of what you say
To ev'ryone, that ain't nec-
essarily so.

The hole in my foot:
Self-inflicted: pen, gun; ink,
Bullets; paper, flesh.

As if it matters—
What you gonna do? Destroy
My reputation?

Fear, I'll never find
A reason to praise the gods
For this prison life.

My fear of you is
Something which haunts my dreams. Last
Night. You were. So mean.

My fear of what you
Do, what I can't imagine
Anyone doing.

Fear, like a phantom
Which haunts and possesses you—
Belief makes it real.

My fear of what you
Did to me, as if you can
Do it once again.

See, the walls I build—
You who don't even know me—
Safeguard all the loss.

My fear of the safe-
ty I feel away from you—
As if I chose this.

Fear, another year
Will whittle by, and... nothing
Does that make you shake?

Scared of phoning mom
No news ain't always good news,
It's an arcane hope.

Fear, not only mine
Anymore; though I live it,
You, too, must face it.

Editor's Note: Want to try your hand at a haiku? The basic formula is simple: five syllables on line one, seven syllables on line two, and five again on line three. (A syllable is a 'beat' in a word – for example, the word 'pear' contains one syllable, the word 'apple' contains two syllables, and 'banana' contains three.)

RIGHT TO KNOW

“Big Steps” in Canada’s Courts

Telling the truth—and acting on the truth—in a court setting can take many forms. It can sound like a lot of different things—an explanation, a confession, an apology, a commitment to change. Ideally, when the truth is told, it allows everyone involved to move forward in a more educated way. Those truths can help inform future cases and answer difficult questions, too.

This was the hope when the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, or UNDRIP, became law in Canada in 2021. The Act includes a number of legal rights meant to bolster the self-determination and rights of Indigenous people.

But, what has that actually looked like in practice? In recent years, Canadian courts have made decisions on major cases with the guidance of UNDRIP, along with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action.

Here’s a few examples:

- **Decades after a hydro development** built on Lac Seul First Nation’s reserve lands for the benefit of Manitoba and Ontario caused severe flooding, destroying homes and forcing residents to move away, the First Nation filed a claim for damages in 1985.

In 2021, the Supreme Court held that Treaty Rights require meaningful financial compensation, and reconciliation includes restoring the value of reserve land. So, in 2024, 39 years after the claim was filed, the settlement was finalized, with Lac Seul set to receive \$234 million.

- **That same year, Quebec appealed** Bill C-92, a Canadian law that outlines the rights of Indigenous communities to hold jurisdiction over their own child and family services programs. Quebec’s appeal suggested the law was unconstitutional.

However, the Supreme Court unanimously decided to uphold the law, and specifically cited the TRC Calls to Action, including the call to adopt UNDRIP in Canada, as part of its reasoning.

- **Also in 2024, a member** of Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation who was living in Whitehorse, Yukon, wanted to run for a councillor position in Vuntut Gwitchin, which is in northern Yukon and requires elected officials to live in the community. She argued that under the Charter, the requirement discriminated against her non-resident status.



The Supreme Court, looking at Indigenous justice and governance systems across Canada—section 25 of the Charter’s commitment to protecting Indigenous rights and TRC Call to Action 42, which calls on Canada to recognize and implement those systems—decided in the First Nation’s favour.

- **In 2025, the Canadian Nuclear** Safety Commission approved the expansion of a nuclear waste disposal site near Chalk River, Ontario.

Kebaowek First Nation fought the expansion, arguing that the consultations and eventual decision by Environment and Climate Change Canada to allow the site expansion had not considered UNDRIP.

The Federal Court sided with Kebaowek First Nation. That was the first time the Federal Court made a decision interpreting UNDRIP, moving it out of the realm of symbolic legislation and into a tool for government enforcement.

- **Another example of UNDRIP in** action happened in Gitxaala Nation in northern British Columbia in 2025.

The B.C. Court of Appeal found the province’s mineral tenure regime—which previously permitted mineral claim registrations by the B.C. government without prior Indigenous consultation—was inconsistent with UNDRIP.

The province has appealed this decision, and the issue is headed to the Supreme Court of Canada.

- **Also last year, Walpole Island** First Nation went to the Ontario Court of Justice in a dispute with Linck Child, Youth and Family Supports, over the disclosure of Indigenous children’s records.

Linck was required by the court to provide access to the children’s information to Walpole Island. In its decision, the court referenced the negative impacts of colonization, including the residential school system and ongoing harms caused by the child welfare system. The TRC Calls to Action were also cited.



“TWO-SPIRITLY SASQUATCH” BY ALFRED M.

QUOTES & QUOTIENTS

The U.S. states with the most reported cryptid sightings are: Texas, Florida and California.

**"The world is full of magic things,
patiently waiting for our senses to
grow sharper."**

-W.B. Yeats

Cryptid-related tourism in the United States
has grown to a \$140-million-per-year industry.
That's a lot of blurry pictures!

**"Sometimes human places
create inhuman monsters."**

*-Stephen King, *The Shining**

Did you know? Sasquatch or Sabe isn't the only such
creature of legend: giant, hairy wild men appear in
Indigenous folklore across Turtle Island under a variety
of names including Windigo among the Cree and Ojibwa
of the Hudson Bay area; Chenoo to the Mi'kmaq of Nova
Scotia; and Tornit to the Inuit of Labrador and Nunavut.

**"Isn't it splendid to think of all of the
things there are to find out about? It
just makes me feel glad to be alive –
it's such an interesting world."**

-L.M. Montgomery

Cryptid-related tourism in the United
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year industry. That's a lot of blurry pictures!



Gwekwaadiziwin

Honesty

Chippewa Ojibwe

INSIDE JOKE

*What does the Loch Ness monster
eat? Fish and ships.*

*What do you call a Loch Ness monster who lives
near Selkirk? The Lockport Monster.*

*Did you hear that Bigfoot can grow up to 15 feet? But
they usually only have two.*

*What do you call a South American goat-
killing monster with a cold? Achoo!-pacabra**

**Chupacabra is a Central American cryptid, thought to suck the blood of goats*

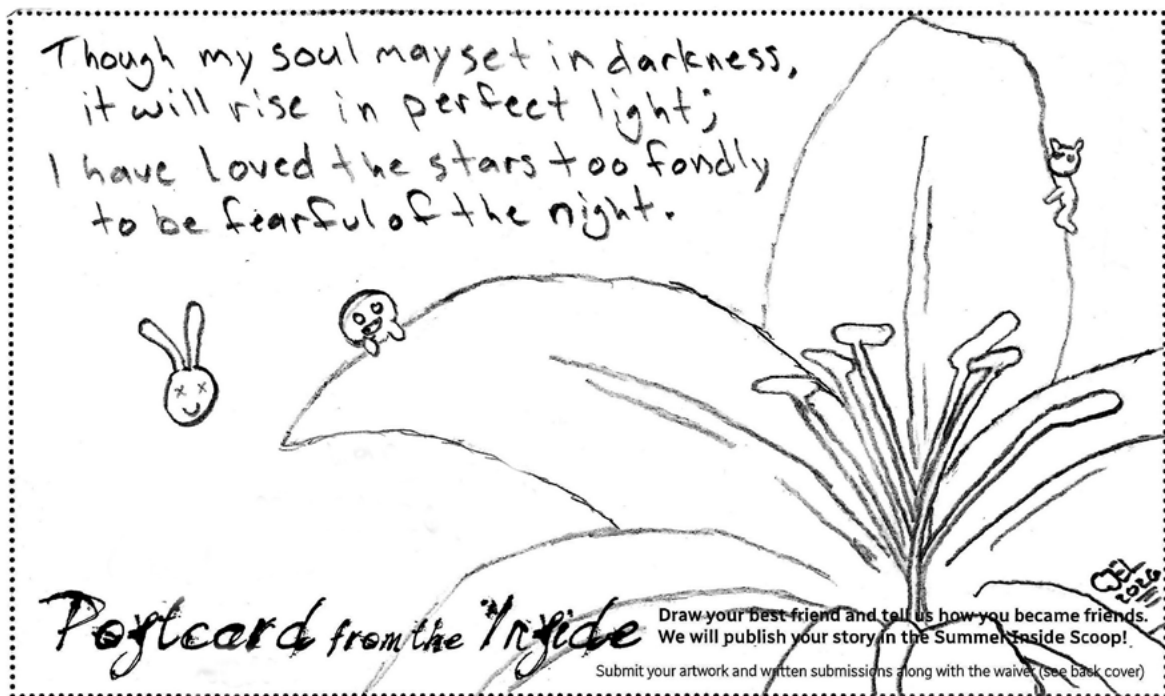
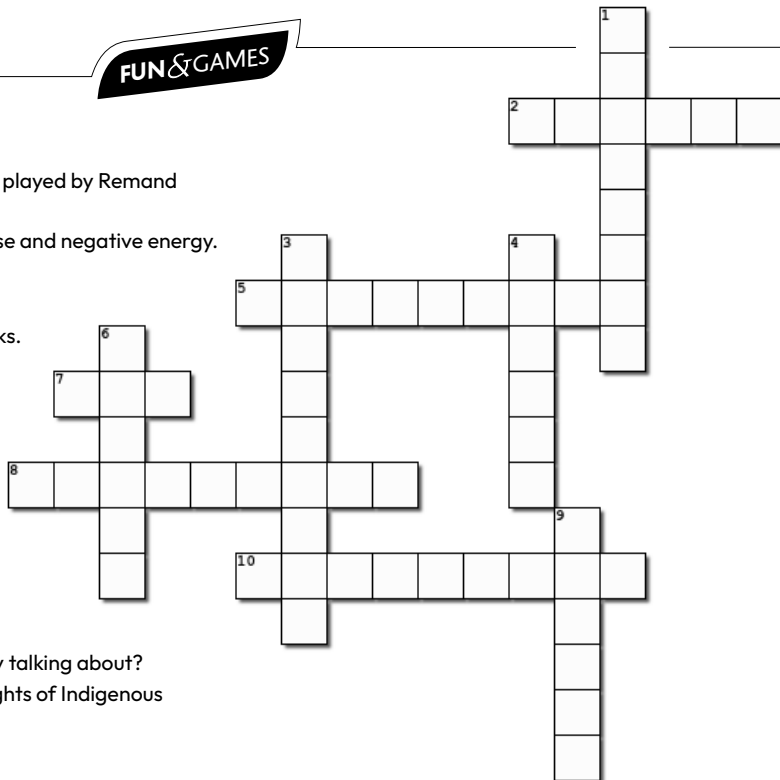
*Do you have an Inside Joke you'd like to share
for the next issue? Write it or phone it in.*

ACROSS

2. "Exquisite ____"—the drawing game played by Remand students.
5. The Winnipeg Monster feeds off these and negative energy.
7. Eric ate it.
8. Lee's character is in one.
10. Twynette's cryptid eats these and ticks.

DOWN

1. The subject of Curtis's love.
3. Another name for Yeti
4. The title of Todd's poem.
6. Who are the creatures Cyril is actually talking about?
9. United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, abbr.



Call for Submissions



"BAT" BY JANINE D.

Editor's note: Eddie submitted this Postcard from the Inside– and you can, too! Check out page 3 for a place to draw and send in your own. We might just print it in the next issue.

the INSIDE SCOOP

FALL 2026

We welcome your submissions of writing and artwork! **The theme for the Winter 2027 issue is SCHOOL**—from going to school to getting schooled, what does education mean to you? We're looking for submissions on lessons you've learned – in the classroom or outside of it – or how you'd share those lessons or teachings with others.

Submissions for the winter issue close on Monday, December 28th.

Send submissions and a signed waiver (below) to:

Anna Sigrithur, John Howard Society of Manitoba, 583 Ellice Ave, Winnipeg, MB, R3B 1Z7

Or, email them to

asigrithur@johnhoward.mb.ca

Did you know? If you are incarcerated in Manitoba, calling John Howard is a free phone call. So give us a shout if you have any questions.

(204) 775-1514

ext. 112 (Anna) or ext. 113 (John)

Not incarcerated? You're still welcome to call with questions, of course!



"SKIN WALKER" BY EDDIE V.