

NAAAHSA IS AN ARTIST!

HALI
HEAVY SHIELD



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Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

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Edited by Jordan Wheeler

Printed and bound in Canada

Second Story Press gratefully acknowledges the support of the Ontario Arts Council and the Canada Council for the Arts for our publishing program. We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Book Fund.



Conseil des Arts
du Canada

Canada Council
for the Arts

Funded by the Government of Canada
Financé par le gouvernement du Canada

Canada

Published by
Second Story Press
20 Maud Street, Suite 401
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
M5V 2M5
www.secondstorypress.ca

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Naaahsa is an artist.

She says making art can happen anywhere at any time. “You can always make something out of nothing. Just use your imagination!”


Sometimes we draw.
Sometimes we bead.
Sometimes we sing.
Sometimes Naaahsa tells stories in Blackfoot.



My favorite stories are about Naapi, the Trickster.



Naapi is always getting in and out of trouble just like my cats.

An illustration of a woman and a young child walking away from the viewer across a vast, yellowish-brown prairie. The woman is wearing a long, dark purple dress and has her hair tied back. The child is wearing a patterned dress with blue and red flowers and a wide-brimmed hat. They are walking towards a range of blue, rounded mountains in the distance under a pale sky. The foreground is filled with tall grass and some dark, spiky plants on the right. Small yellow arrows are scattered across the prairie, pointing in various directions.

Naaahsa likes to go for long walks. We pick berries and gather twigs and rocks.

The prairie grass stretches all the way to Chief Mountain.

Going for walks inspires us. And so, I give Creator thanks.

Sometimes we cook.
Sometimes we paint.
Sometimes we take pictures.
Sometimes we cut paper dolls.



Naaahsa encourages me,
“Stamoomaanistai yiikakimaat.
Keep doing your best.”

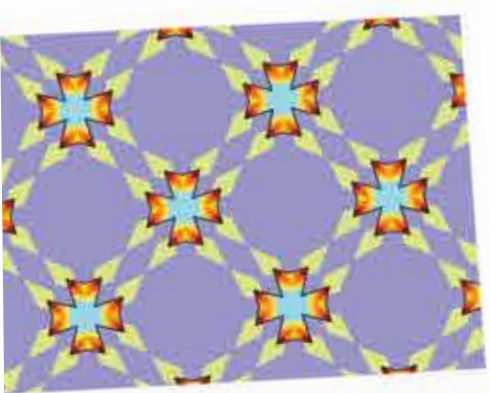


Naaahsa went to a residential school when she was my age. Blackfoot was the only language Naaahsa spoke as a child.

But it was against the rules to speak Blackfoot at residential school. So Naaahsa whispered to her brothers and sisters in secret, “Kitsiikákomimm. I love you.”

She was sad to be away from home. But making art made her feel better.





Naaahsa says, "Art is a language everyone understands."

"Use any color of the rainbow."
"Choose different materials."
"Play with shapes."
"Make mistakes."

"Sometimes making art makes me feel like a kid," Naaahsa says.
"But it's also hard work."

Naaahsa has an art show at the National Gallery, and I get to go with her.

We ride on a plane and Naaahsa lets me doodle in her sketchbook. Naaahsa says, “You never know when an idea will come to you, so always be ready with your sketchbook and pencil!”





The airplane ride is like riding the Ferris wheel at the Kainai Fair and Rodeo. It gives me butterflies.

Naaahsa squeezes my hand and I feel safe. Naaahsa offers me bubble gum and my ears feel better.

Naaahsa hums a song and I rest my head on her shoulder.

Naaahsa gives me the window seat, and I pretend to be a hawk flying in the clouds.

We stay at a fancy hotel, and Naaahsa knows
where all the good places to visit are.



We take a cab to the market and eat pastries
and drink hot chocolate.
We hop on the bus and stop at the bead store.
We count the ducks near the canal.

We walk and walk and walk, then rest at the
park.



At the opening exhibit, I wear my prettiest dress and stare at the giant spider sculpture outside the gallery.



We meet a lot of interesting people. They mostly want to talk with Naaahsa, but I don't mind. People use big words like "Fascinating! Beautiful! Remarkable! Extraordinary!"

It makes me feel proud. "That's Naaahsa, the artist," I think to myself. Someday I want to be an artist just like her!

After the show, Naaahsa lets me stay up late. We order pizza and she reads to me until I fall asleep.

Everyone loves Naaahsa's art....





But I love her hugs best.

Hali Heavy Shield is a member of the Blood Tribe of Southern Alberta. Her first book for children was inspired by the many adventures she's had with her mom, Faye, who is also an artist. Hali loves to draw, read, and snuggle her cat, Poos.

NAAHSA SAYS ART IS A LANGUAGE EVERYONE UNDERSTANDS....

Winner of the
Second Story Press
Indigenous Writing
Contest

*Sometimes we draw.
Sometimes we bead.
Sometimes we sing.*

Sometimes Naaahsa tells stories in Blackfoot.

A young girl celebrates her grandmother's art
and the wonderful connection between them.

October 2023 For ages 6-8

Publicity contact: emma@secondstorypress.ca

For Canadian orders: UTP 1-800-565-9523

For US orders: Orca Book Publishers

1-800-210-5277

ISBN: 978-1-77260-346-0

\$21.95



Second Story Press