

Why do you walk like that? Tanihki ekusi ka sipimohtiyeen?

A story about MS and
the Métis Sash



Story by Dr. Rheanna Robinson and Laura Thevenaz
Translated to the Michif language by Annette Maurice
Illustrations by Sean Robinson

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Why do you walk like that? Tanihki ekusi ka sipimohtiyen?: A Story about MS and the Métis Sash

Written by Rheanna Robinson and Laura Thevenaz.

Translated by Annette Maurice.

Illustrations by Sean Robinson.

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Rheanna Robinson

Dr. Rheanna Robinson is an Indigenous scholar and a member of the Manitoba Métis Federation. Diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 1997, Rheanna has lived with an evolving lens of MS-related disease and disability for almost 30 years. Rheanna was inspired to write this story after her niece, Audra, started asking questions about her disability. She wanted to find a way to share her experience of living with MS in a more relatable way that celebrates her identity and honours the love she has for her family.



Laura Thevenaz

Laura is Métis and a member of the Manitoba Métis Federation. As Audra's mom, and Rheanna's sister, being able to talk about disability is important since having family members living with disability affects everyone. This story represents a strong message of inclusion, belonging, and family.



Annette Maurice

Annette is a Métis Elder from northwest Saskatchewan who lives in Prince George, BC. She was raised speaking the "y" dialect of Michif which includes the Cree language and some French nouns. The translations offered in this story are a phonetic representation of her language. While translating this story from English to Michif, Annette had fond memories of conversing in Michif with her mom.



Sean Robinson

Sean Robinson is a student at the University of Northern British Columbia. In his free time, he enjoys writing, fishing, and reading.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

This book was created as part of the Hearts-based Education and Anti-colonial Learning H.E.A.L. Healthcare project (www.healhealthcare.ca). The goal of H.E.A.L. Healthcare is to use the arts to address oppressive behaviours and attitudes that we all hold and that permeate healthcare systems and culture. Please consider and respond to these questions after reading this story.

1. Being a confident and curious child, Audra directly asked her Auntie/Ma'tante Nan why she walks the way she does. How do you think the conversation between Audra and Auntie/Ma'tante Nan increased Audra's awareness and understanding of persons living with disability?

2. Individual threads woven together make a Métis Sash. How can the Sash serve as a representation for why it is important our world has a diverse representation of people with different abilities and experiences?

3. What are some ways you can show your support for family, friends, or other community members living with disabilities?



“Swish clump”
“Swish clump”
“Swish clump”

"Auntie Nan, why do you walk like that?" asks Audra.

"Walk like what?" replies Auntie Nan.

"Like this..." Audra says as she imitates Auntie Nan walking. "Swish Clump, Swish Clump, Swish Clump"

"Oh, Audra!" says Auntie Nan, "That's because I have a disability."

"Ma'tante Nan, tanihki ekusi ka sipimohtiye?" asks Audra.

"Omsisi ka sipimohtiyaan?" replies Ma'tante Nan.

"Omsisi..." Audra says eenaspitawat sa'tante espimohtiyit. "Swish Clump, Swish Clump, Swish Clump"

"Oh, Audra!" says Ma'tante Nan, "Osamemask-isiyaan."



**“What’s a disability?”
questions Audra.**

**“A disability is when someone’s
mind or body might do things
differently” explains Auntie Nan,
“and I have a disability because
I live with multiple sclerosis.
But you can just say MS”**

**“Kekway akwinima
maskisiwin?” questions Audra.**

**“Owiyak omamtunihts-
tchi kan ekwa wiyowpetus
eesoweemakahk” explains
Ma’tante Nan,**

**“ekwa niya ni maskisiwin
osamtapitow ni moosihtaan.
MS kakee sihkateen.”**



**Audra is curious. "MS!!!!
What is MS?" asks Audra.**

**Audra is curious.
"MS!! Kekway
akwanima MS?"
asks Audra.**



Auntie Nan sits down
and explains,

“Audra, MS is something
happening inside of my
body that makes it hard
for me to walk, use my
arms, and MS makes
me very, very tired.”

Ma'tante Nan sits
down and explains,

“Audra, ni maskisiwin
ayiman, ta pimohtiyan,
wiya niya niyuw
maskisiyaan, n'spituna
tapatsihtayaan osam
oma MS kakwayaki
n`dayeeskusin.”



“Is that why you use a walker, Auntie Nan?” Audra asks.

“Yes, Audra. I use a walker to help me walk and so I won’t fall down” Auntie Nan replies.



“Akustchi ka patsihtayen epimohtaakiyen, Ma’tante Nan?” asks Audra.

“Aanha, Audra. Intapitstchitan oma ekatapamsiniyaan” Ma’tante Nan replies.

Audra exclaims, “I don’t want you to fall down, Auntie Nan!”

“I don’t want to fall down either” says Auntie Nan.

Audra exclaims, “Moya nidawihteen ta pakamsiniyen, Ma’tante Nan!”

“Moya neesta nohti paksinin” says Ma’tante Nan.

Audra asks Auntie Nan, "Does your disability hurt?"

Auntie Nan replies, "No, my disability does not hurt me. But living with MS and having a disability is different for everyone." Auntie Nan explains, "Some people are born with a disability and others, like me, may get a disability later."

"Oh" Audra says softly.

Audra asks Ma'tante Nan, "Kiwesakihteen tchi kiya oma maskisiyen?"

Ma'tante Nan replies, "Moya niya no-wasakehteen, petus kahkiyow maskisowuk.

Astchi MS akwanima tahyahk" Ma'tante Nan explains, "Ekwa niya m`weestas ka pi maskisiyaan."

"Oh" Audra says softly.



Audra thinks about this and says, "so having a disability from MS makes you different. Because you walk differently. Not like me, or my mom, or grandma."

Audra thinks about this and says, "Ekusi, ayayen maskisiwin MS ostchi kiya petus. Moya taskoots niya ni Mama, ahpo Nookum."



**“Ekusi maka, Audra,
kahkiyow petus kiyanow”
Ma’tante Nan responds.**

**“Well, Audra, we
are all different”
Auntie Nan
responds.**

**“See how many
different colours
are in our Métis
Sashes?” Auntie
Nan asks Audra.**

**“Kitapahta oma
apihtowkosan la-sancirr
tanmatahto petus
itasinastewin?” Ma’tante
Nan asks Audra.**



"Yes!" Audra replies happily.

"Well, each colour in the Métis Sash is very, very important" Auntie Nan says softly.



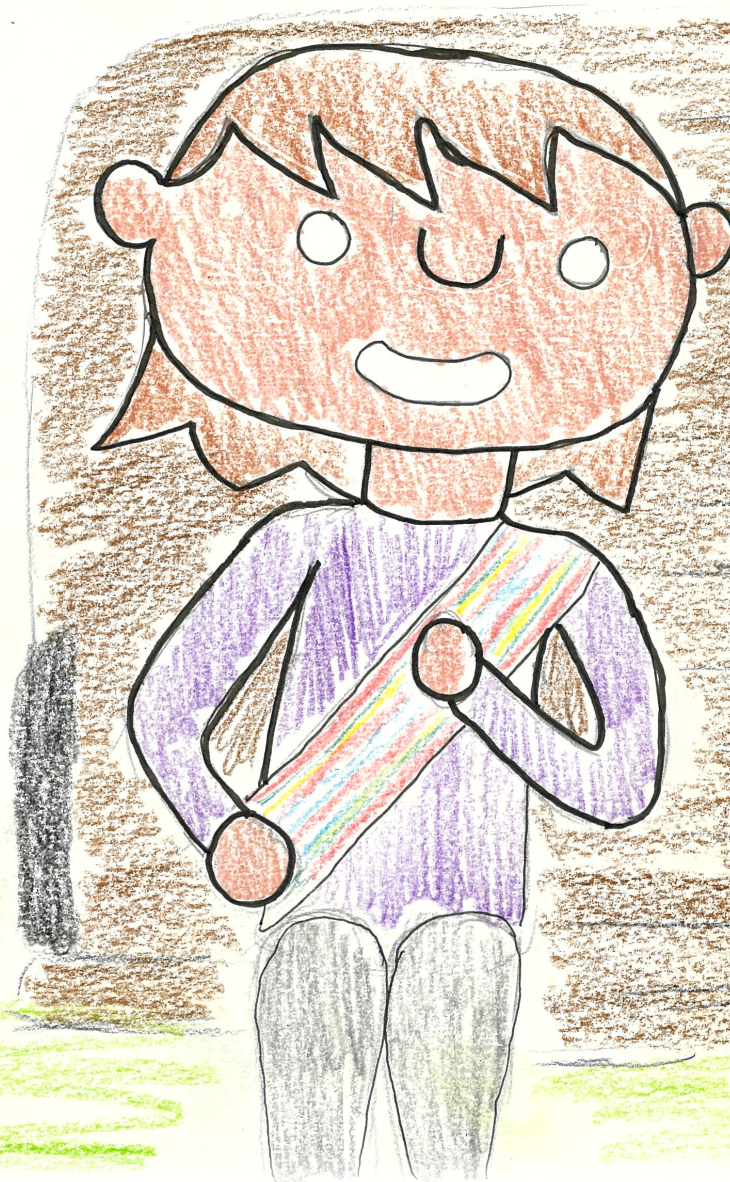
"Aanha!" Audra replies happily.

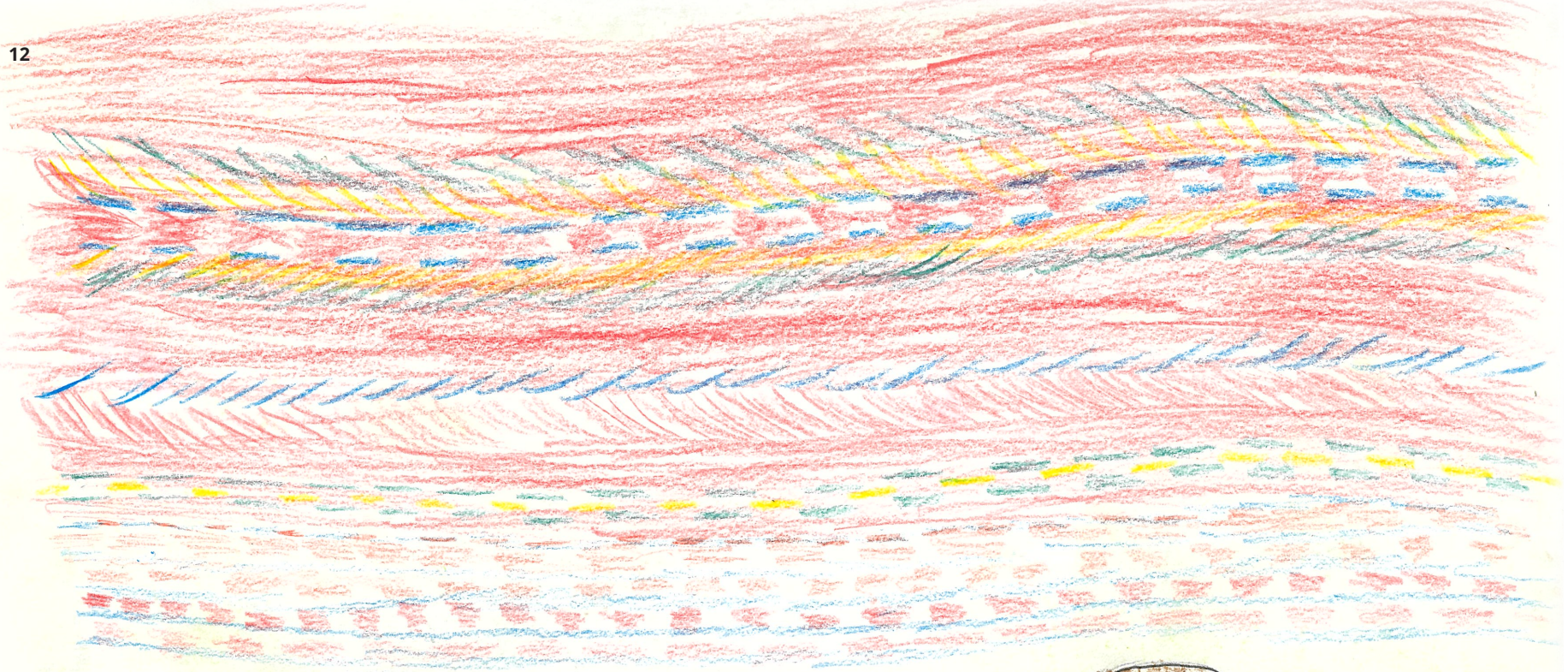
"Tahto ekusi oma apihtowkosan la-sancirr,ki-tasinastewin kakwayaki mistaha sohkihtin" Ma'tante Nan says softly.

“And we need different threads with different colours to weave a Métis Sash” explains Auntie Nan. “And just like the threads in our Sashes, the world is woven with many different people!”

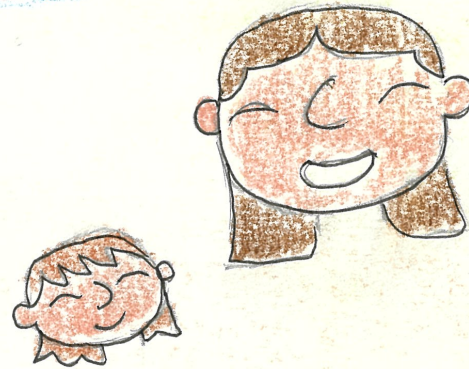
“Kinda-weemanow meeschat li fil, mina astchi meeschat itasinastewin towseehiht apihtowkosan la-sancirr” explains Ma’tante Nan.

“Taskoots le fil cuwseehiht apihtowkosan la-sancirr, askey mina oksesi meeschat petus ayesinow!”





**Auntie Nan continues to say,
“Every thread in our Sash is unique
all by itself, just like me and you,
but when the threads are woven
together, it becomes a Sash that is
stronger and more colourful.”**



**Ma’tante Nan continues to say,
“Kapiyakut la-sancirr li fil petus
sinaksuw. Taskoots kiya, ekwa niya,
maka mamawi, li fil ta-patssit, kwayes
maskowseew la-sancirr mina miyosuw.”**

**“Are we stronger
together, Auntie
Nan?” Audra asks.**

**“Yes, we are!” exclaims
Auntie Nan.**

**“Kahkiyow tchi ki
maskowsanow,
Ma’tante Nan?”
Audra asks.**

**“Aanha tapwe!”
exclaims
Ma’tante Nan.**



Audra hugs Auntie Nan and says, "Thank you for teaching me about MS and your disability, Auntie Nan. I love you".

Auntie Nan gently replies, "I love you too!"

Audra hugs Ma'tante Nan and says, "Marcii kakskinamoyen kekway oma, MS ekwa astchi ki maskisowin, Ma'tante Nan. Kisikihitin." Ma'tante Nan gently replies, "Neesta kisakihitin!"



**Go to HEALhealthcare.ca to learn more about
*Why do you walk like that? Tanihki ekusi ka sipimohtiyen?:
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and to find other books and learning activities.**

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