

BCTELA

BC TEACHERS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

OCTOBER 23-24, 2025
CONFERENCE

GATHER AROUND!
STORY AS RESISTANCE,
STORY AS HOPE!

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Two Tricksters in the Classroom: Using Story as a Tool for Teaching Healing and Reconciliation

October 23, 2025

Jessica Willows (she/her/hers)
Grades 3-7 Teacher Mayne School





Introductions

- Name, pronouns, where you are from, if you are a teacher, where you teach, and what grades/subjects
- Why you came to this workshop or if you have a question you would like to address in this workshop?

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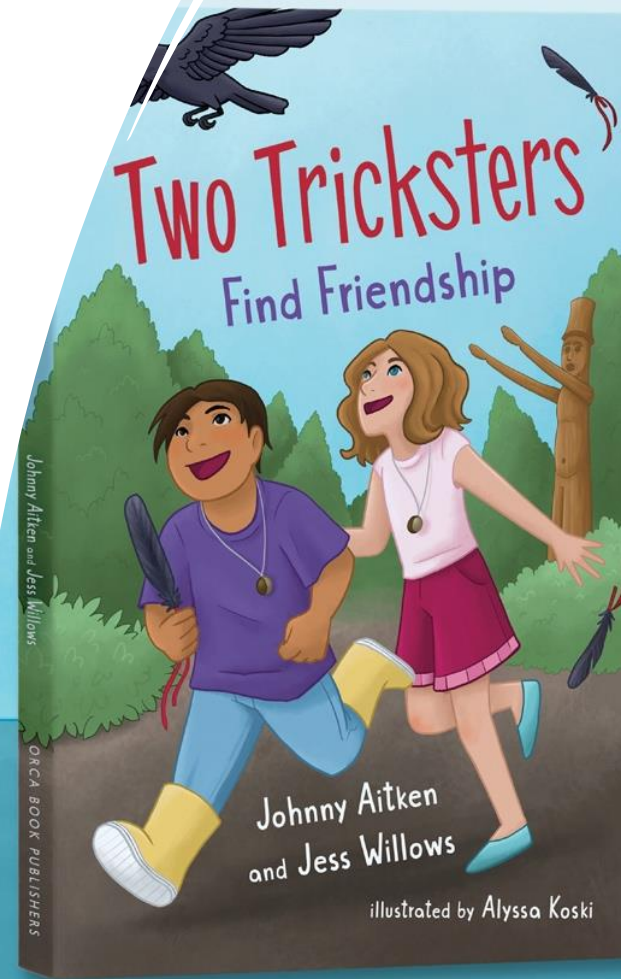
Outline of Session

- Who we are and why we wrote a book together
- Reconciliation work
- Three themes
- Examples

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Our Book

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Inspired by the real-life
friendship between
authors Johnny and Jess!



*Johnny Aitken
age 9*



*Jess Willows
age 9*



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Reconciliation

- “To me reconciliation means healing a relationship that could have been respectful and loving from the beginning. This journey will be long as we walk side by side to find the path of truth and healing. [...] We must do this [work] together.” (p. 85)

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Three Themes of Reconciliation: Going Deeper Through Stories and Storytelling

- **Truth:**
 - Residential schools
 - Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women
 - Unceded, stolen land
 - Language, culture and knowledge
- **Healing:**
 - Personal, collective healing
 - Healing through story
 - Healing through relationship (i.e., friendship)
- **Where is the medicine?**

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-
- What did you notice?
 - How do you think Johnny was feeling?
 - How was Jessie feeling?
 - Why do you think Jim said what he said?
 - What stereotypes could be discussed here?
 - What are micro-aggressions and how do they impact people?
 - How can curiosity help us understand situations such as this?



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- Show don't tell
- The role of reflection
- “We have to do this work together”

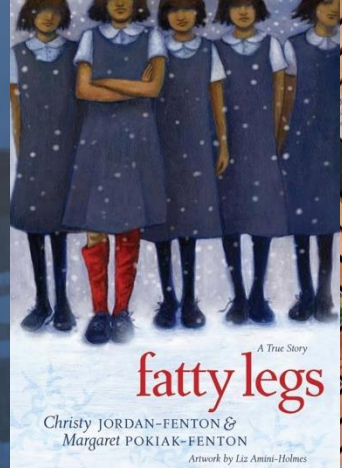
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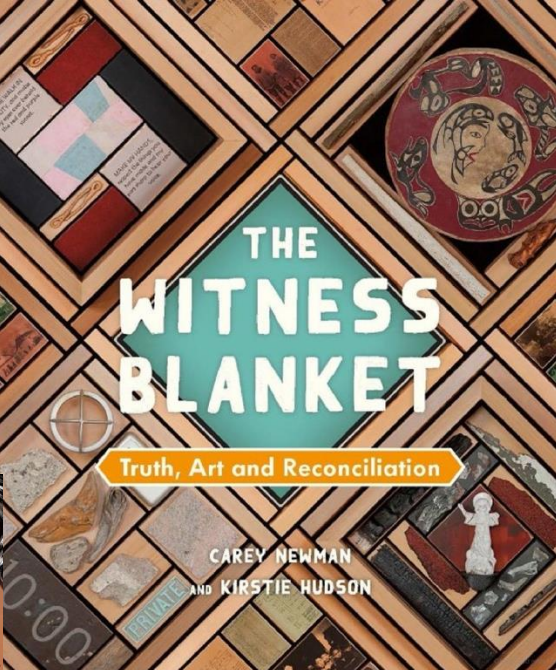
My Name Is SEEPEETZA

Winner: Sheila A. Egoff Children's Book Prize
Shortlisted for the Governor General's Literary Award



fatty legs

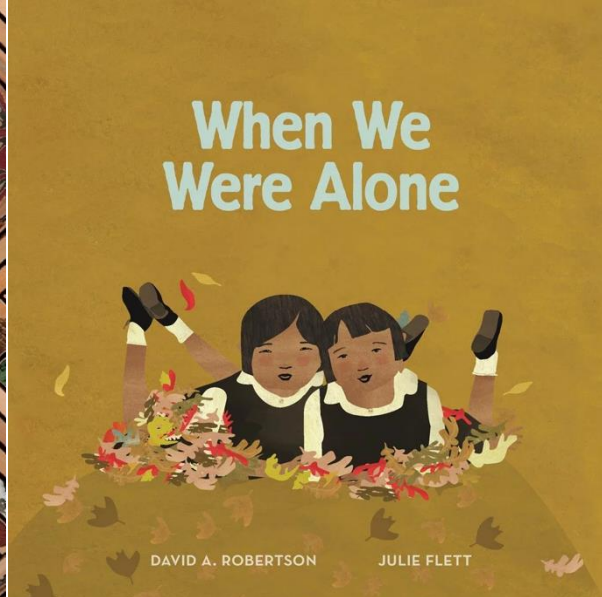
A True Story
Christy JORDAN-FENTON & Margaret POKIAK-FENTON
Artwork by Liz Amini-Holmes



THE WITNESS BLANKET

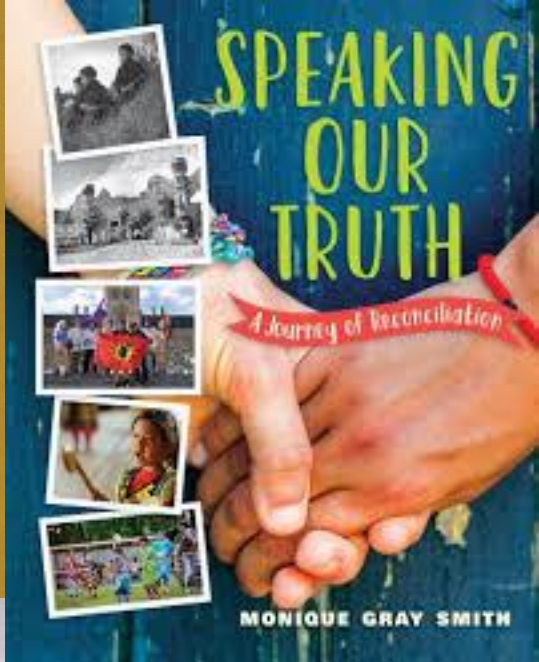
Truth, Art and Reconciliation

CAREY NEWMAN AND KIRSTIE HUDSON



When We Were Alone

DAVID A. ROBERTSON JULIE FLETT



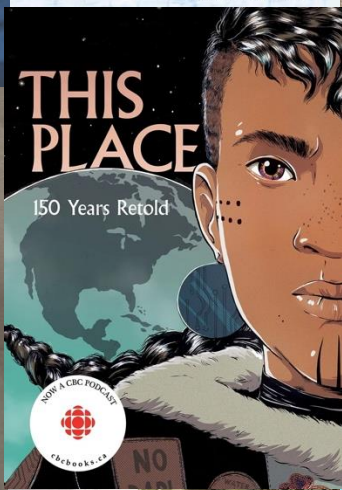
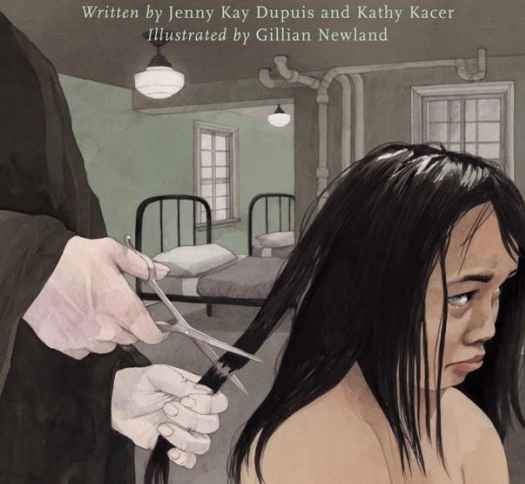
SPEAKING OUR TRUTH

A Journey of Reconciliation

MONIQUE GRAY SMITH

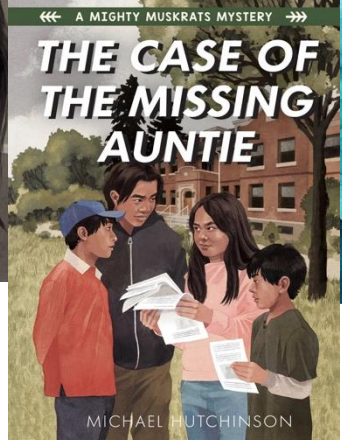
I AM NOT A NUMBER

Written by Jenny Kay Dupuis and Kathy Kacer
Illustrated by Gillian Newland



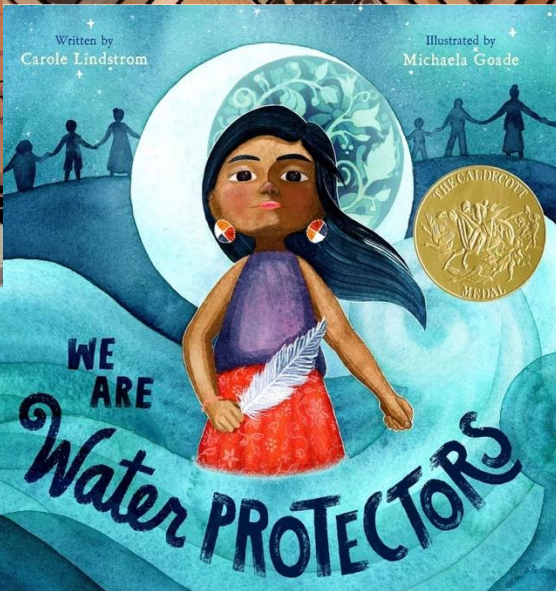
THIS PLACE

150 Years Retold



THE CASE OF THE MISSING AUNTIE

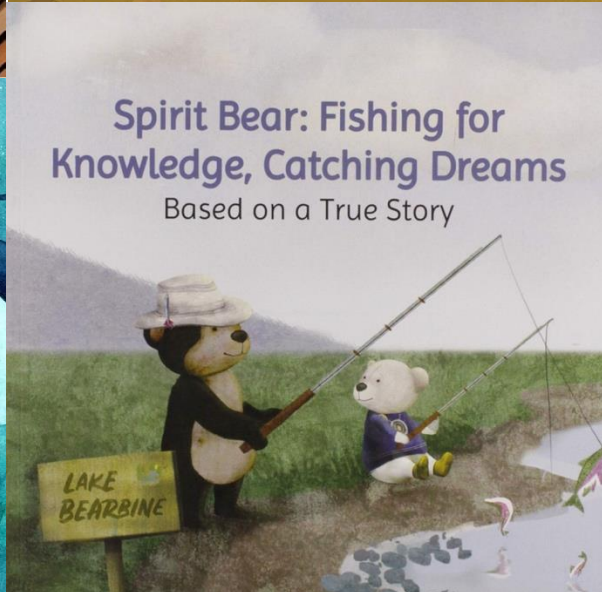
MICHAEL HUTCHINSON



WE ARE Water PROTECTORS

Written by Carole Lindstrom

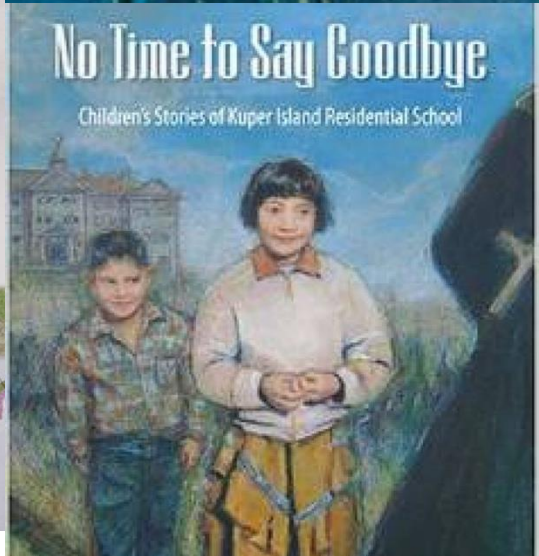
Illustrated by Michaela Goade



Spirit Bear: Fishing for Knowledge, Catching Dreams

Based on a True Story

LAKE BEARBINE



No Time to Say Goodbye

Children's Stories of Kuper Island Residential School

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