

ZHIISHIIB MAKES EVERYBODY LUNCH

One time a long, long, long time ago
there was this old Nokomis
and she was camped by the side of a lake
not too far from here.
In dagwaagin.

Everyone was busy getting ready for bboon.
Fishing.
Hunting.
Moving camps.

Won't be long now.

One day, that old Nokomis was looking after her grandkids.
And it was warm and sunny
so she decided to paddle them to a beach for the last swim of
the year.

She packed their suits
and their towels
and their sand toys
and the sunscreen
and the sun hats
and the bug spray
and the stuffies and the special blankets
and the coats in case it was cold on the paddle home



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and the life jackets and paddles
and that orange bucket with the whistle in it so the boat cops
don't give her no trouble
and the extra clothes for when kwezens falls in.

And then she packed up those kids, and they were off.

Oh, those kids were happy!
Splashing and swimming
in that dagwaagin sun.

“Oh, I've remembered everything,” thought that Nokomis.
“I'm a multi-tasker. No one is more organized than me.”
“I'm Nishnaaabe Martha Stewart.”

And then that little kwezens said, “Kokum, nbakade!”
And Nokomis remembers she forgot to pack that blue cooler
full of lunch.

Nbakade! Nbakade!

Nokomis told those kids to calm down. Calm down.
You won't die because lunch is late.
And she went to sit on a rock.

Pretty soon, she saw Zhiishiib.

And that Zhiishiib had a kettle on the fire.

And in that akik on the shkode were some grains.

And so that Nokomis went over to Zhiishiib and offered some semaa.
And that Zhiishiib showed Nokomis how to knock the minomiin
and parch the minomiin
and dance the minomiin
and eat the minomiin.

And so Nokomis and her grandkids ate big bowls of manoomiin for lunch.

And that Nokomis went back to her camp, and she showed all the Nishnaabekwegag what she had learned.

And so, every year, those Nishnaabekwegag go out onto the lake just like Zhiishiib, and they knock that rice into their jiimaan.

But they're very careful, because that minomiin is very sensitive. They make sure most of it goes back into the water so the ducks and the geese and the Nishnaabekwegag will have enough for next year. And then they share their minomiin, so that everyone can taste the lake all through the bboon.

And then they share that manoomiin, so that everyone can taste the lake all through bboon, right until it's time for Nishnaabekwegag to go and see ninaatagoog.

Nishnaabemowin: Minomiin-Giizis means wild rice moon and is in August or September, depending upon which part of our territory you are in; Dagwaagin means fall; bboon is the winter; Kwezens (ikwezens) is a girl; n'bakade means I'm hungry; zhiishiib means duck; Kookum is another name for Grandmother; akik is pail; shkode is fire; semaa (asemaa) is tobacco; jiimaan are canoes; minomiin (manomiin in other parts of the territory) is wild rice; Nishnaabekwegag is Ojibwe women; and ninaatigoog means maple trees.