

Our Makoonsag

West of watchful Mishe-Mokwa, lay the cold and lonely Islands
on the slate and restless waters, 'neath the clouds that darkly threaten,
warning boats to stay at bay.

Hosting now the north winds only and the snows its gales blow fiercely
into fields and woods and ruins, drifting over trails and pathways
where our feet oft found their way.

Out of season and abandoned, save for tiny beasts and migrants,
islands where we once made merry; silent now and solitary
on this wintry New Year's Day.

On the mainland we now frolic, having moved across the Passage,
seeking fortunes then elusive (never found on either Island) ...
lighter work for greater pay.

But quiet moments bring to mind the warmth of simple village folk,
faithful kin and caring neighbors, farmsteads once so full of laughter;
journeys made by horse and sleigh.

Dauntless seamen making crossings challenging the angry billows,
worried wives a'watching seaward, catching ropes upon deliverance.
Voyagers back, now home to stay.

Sands still warm on summer evenings soothing bare feet of the children,
racing beams around the lighthouse, finding shapes in starry heavens.
Bath and bedtime after play.

Sought we all for "something better", fooled by fickle expectations,
one by one the Islands leaving. Dreaming then, now sadly knowing,
the better life we'd cast away.

While coldly we forsook our Islands, steadfast they to our hearts cling,
fostering such recollections! Absence hindering not remembrance,
pictures saved there oft replay.

Save we facts and share we fables of our much revered makoonsag;
generations hence might know them as have we, their privileged stewards,
passing on our legacy.

Gene Warner
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