

# 4 Long Walk

I created *The Long Walk Home* because I remember it as a time of determined silence and ever changing color. The winter sun sank beneath the horizon well before we reached home and painted pictures on the drifting snow — yellows, pinks, and red, to midnight blue and the blackness of a starlit night. When the snow fell and the wind swept it across the land and buried the homestead fences, we nestled our faces into our scarves and watched our feet walk home.

On the coldest of nights the smoke from the chimney in our home would rise straight up into the sky. The light from the windows welcoming us was a comfort I shall never forget. I never understood until I was much older what Dad meant when he referred to the lighted windows as “the golden orbs of welcome”. Now I know that beneath his farmer façade lurked the heart of a poet. 🌸



**Long Walk Home**

acrylic / canvas

44 x 60 cm





# 5 Trap Line



**The Trapper**

acrylic / canvas

51 x 66 cm





Several times a week my sister, Blackie, and I would check our trap line on the way home from school. I was reminded of this a few weeks back when my seven-year-old grandson, Danté, asked, “What did you do, Grandma, when you were a kid that you wished you had not done?”

I knew he must be guilty of something. But I didn't dwell on it because I was suddenly back a half century ago standing beneath the dense spruce that surrounded our farm taking careful aim at a small red squirrel.

I told Danté about the squirrels I used to shoot and catch in my leg hold traps and how I am still sorry that I killed all those little animals. He looked at me and I knew that he had just seen a side of me that he didn't understand or like very much. I tried to explain that it was our way of life; that I had shot prairie chickens for food and trapped weasels, mink, and squirrels for money. He could not understand how I could do such a cruel thing. We ended our conversation with him declaring, “Boy I could never do that,” and me thinking, “Why the hell didn't I just lie?”

Our conversation ended but my thoughts carried on. My sister and I, like most farm kids in the area, had an unregistered trap line, which meant that we staked out an area around our homestead and set traps. It was considered less than honorable to rob anyone else's traps; however, if I recall correctly, our trap line honor slipped once or twice. We learned how to bait traps and to remove small frozen bodies from their cruel leg holds without damaging the fur. We took our catch home, thawed it out by the wood stove, then skinned and stretched our pelts.

The time I remember with the most remorse is when, upon checking a trap, I found only a small weasel leg, chewed off by its owner, at the edge of steel that had held him prisoner.

