

Thu 'E'uhwiin' Swew'tu¹
The Little Sweater

Story by Sally Hart

Hul'q'umi'num' translation by Ruby Peter

'Aaa 'im! 'Uy' nu shqwaluwun kwunus 'i' lumnamu.

Oh, granddaughter. I'm happy to see you.

'Umut lhu, 'imuth, nem' 'u tthu shts'e'nutstun.

Come sit down, granddaughter.

'I tsun tsxwi'em' kwunus hwun' 'uhwiin' 'i' 'iilh 'ehwe'thelum 'u kwthu syuxtsa'.

I have a story to tell you about a gift I was given when I was very small.

Kwunus 'i hwun' 'uhwiin' 'i' nilh tsun ni' 'u kwthu shni's tthu kw'a'mutum' stl'ul'iquh, hwswenum.

When I was a small, I was at a place where they have foster children, for orphaned children.

'I' nilh nilh 'uw' nu shhwuw'weli, nilh nuw' nu s-hun'ut kws nilhs nu me' 'i' te'.

That was where my parents were, and I called them "dad" and "mum".

Niilh tsun 'uw' ni' 'u tthu lelum's 'eelhtun ni' 'utl' Mutouliye'.

And I grew up in their house in Victoria.

'I' wulh ni' tthu yey'sul'u stl'ul'iquh ni' hwu nu squle'uq.

And there were two children that became my younger sisters.

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Sutst 'uw' hwu lhhwelu.

There were three of us.

Yuse'lu shhw'a'mut ni' 'u tthu nets'uw't-hw.

There were two beds in our room.

Ni' tsun 'uw' ch shhw'a'mut 'i' hay tthunu squle'uq, hay ni' 'u tthu nuts'a' shhw'a'mut.

I had my own bed and my sisters shared a bed.

Tl'im'ulh tst nuw' 'iyus ni' 'u kwthey' lelum'tst.

We had a very happy home.

Mukw' skweyul kwutst hun'umut kwutst nem' skwulookwul' 'i' wulh saay'st-hwus thu tentst tthu s'ulhtun ni' sxlhastaalt, sqaal'muhw 'i' tthu kwoukis.

Each day when we came home from school, our mother would have ready a little snack to feed us, milk and cookies.

Kwutst wulh hayuqun 'i' ni' tst nem' 'utl'qul 'i' huw'a'lum'.

We would finish eating and then we would go out to play.

Nilh tthuw' sht'es tthu skweyul, niis 'uy' skweyul 'uw' niis lhumuhw, 'i' ni' tst 'uw' 'utl'qul nem' huw'a'lum' ni' 'u tthu s'e'tl'q, tthu suw'a'lum' 'i' nilh tthu kwe'kwulool', ts'uhwle' 'i' ni' tst kw'ukw'i' 'u tthu thqet.

Whether the sun was shining or whether it was raining, we would go outside and play, games like hide and go seek, and sometimes we would climb around in the trees.

Kwutst wulh hayuqun' 'i' hwune'untqun 'i' ni' tst hwi' shakw'um.

After we finished dinner, we took our baths.

Ts'uhwle' 'i' nuw' ni'stum tthu m'i tst t'ukw'stuhw tthu syaaystst
 tun'ni' 'u tthu skwoulew't-hw 'i' nilh ni' yaaysmutut.
 Sometimes there would be work that we brought home from school and we
 worked on it.

Kwutst wulh 'itut 'i' nilh thu tentst nilh ni' 'itutstal'hw.
 And when it was bedtime, Mum would put us to bed.

'I' yath 'uw' qwiil'qwul'.
 And she always talked.

Ts'uhwle' 'i' tun'ni' 'u tthu poukw tthu ni' shxwi'xwi'em's 'i'
 ts'uhwle' 'i' 'uw' nilh tthu swe's qwul'qwul's ni' sxwi'em's.
 Sometimes she would read us stories from books and sometimes she would tell
 her own stories.

Tl'lim' tst nuw' tatul'nuhw kwsus tl'i'stalam, kw'e'lus tthu
 shqwaluwuntst.
 We felt very treasured and we were warm and snug.

Nuts'a' skweyul 'i' nuw' wulh nem' yuw'en' 'utl'qul' kwthunu
 squle'uq huw'a'lum'.
 One day my sisters had gone on out to play.

'I' thut thunu ten, " 'I tsun kwun'et kwthu syuxtsa' nu
 s'amusthamu.
 And my mother said, "I have a gift for you.

'I ch yuse'lu sil'anum' 'i ch hwu'i 'utl' lhnimulh.
 You were two years old when you came you came to live with us.

Ni' ch tun'ni' 'utl' Duncan kwun's 'i tetsul 'utl' lhnimulh.
 You came from Duncan to be with us here.

'I' tun'ni' lhun' ten 'utl' Quw'utsun'.
And your mother was from Cowichan.

Tl'e' ch kwu'elh 'uw' Quw'utsun' hwulmuhw.
So you are also a Cowichan First Nations person.

Nilh kwu'elh kwun's Quw'utsun' 'i' nilh ni' kwu'elh shtst
s'amusthamu 'u tthu syuxtsa'.
You are from Cowichan and this little gift is from Cowichan too."

Kwus wulh hwyuxwutus tthu xi'xthum' 'i' wulh wil' thu swetu suw'
se'tus 'i' shhwulmuhwa'lh swetu.
So she opened up the little box and held up a Cowichan sweater.

Hay 'ul' mul'ul 'i' plhet 'i' tun'ni' 'u tthu lumutoul'qun.
It was soft and thick and made out of wool.

Ts'q'ix, p'uq', 'i' tthu tshwikw' nilh ni' sxul's.
There were black, white, and grey designs.

Tthu ni' 'u tthu 'ethuquns 'i' tthu sxul's 'i' shxun'utun 'utl'
stqeeye'.
On the front were wolf footprints.

Tsq'ix tthu s'ulnuts, sisuw' tsxul' 'u tthu st'ee kw' ha'yul'uq, tsq'ix
ni' 'u tthu t'eluw's tthu ha'yul'uq 'i' tthu tupsums tshwikw'.
It was black on the bottom with a wave-like design, and the sleeves had this
same black wave design, and the neck was grey.

Hay tthu ni' tthu slhuq'we'lhs hay stqeeye' 'uw' sxuxil' tthu
lhqelts'.
On the back it had a wolf and a moon.

'Uy'uy'mut thu swetu.
It was a beautiful sweater.

Nan' 'uw' nu stl'i' thunu swetu.

I really loved my sweater.

Mukw' skweyul 'i' 'uw' ha'kwush tsun thunu swetu.

I wore my sweater every day.

Kwunus ni' wulh hun'nuw' 'u thu lelum' 'i' 'uwu nu stl'i'us kwunus me'sh.

When I came inside, I did not want to take it off.

Suw' xut'us thunu ten, "Me'sh thun' swetu!"

My mother would say, "Take off your sweater."

'I' 'uw' thut-stuhw tsun 'ul', " 'Uwu."

I would say, "No."

Tl'e' wulh qul'et qwal thunu ten, "Me'sh thun' swetu!"

She would tell me again, "Take off your sweater!"

'I' ni' tsun tl'e' wulh qul'et 'utl'qul' nilh kwunus 'uwu kws stl'iin' kwunus me'sh thunu swetu, nus nuw' 'utl'qul.

I would just go back outside so I wouldn't need to take to take it off; so I'd go outside.

Mukw' skweyul 'i' 'uw' ha'kwush tsun thunu swetu.

I wore my sweater every day.

Sht'es kwunus 'i ts'its'usum' 'i' 'uw' nilh 'uw' ha'kwusheen'.

I was growing and kept wearing it.

Hwun' xut'u 'i' ni' wulh hwu ts'umiil' thu lumutoul'qun kwunus ni' yu ts'its'usum' 'i' yath tsun 'uw' ha'kwush.

Eventually, the wool began to stretch and get pulled thin, as I was growing and was always wearing it.

Kweyxthut thunu ten sus'uw' 'iluqutus thu lumutoul'qun 'i' tthu
chikmun kws yu they'tus yu tl'atl'um'uthe'lum'.

But my foster mother bought wool and a needle and repaired it for me.

'I' ni' tuw' hwu kw'am'kw'um' thunu swew'tu kwus yu they'tus yu
'a'thutus.

She made my little sweater strong again.

'I' kwunus 'i wulh ts'isum 'i' ni' wulh tl'lim' 'uw' hwu tuqw thunu
swetu.

When I grew bigger, my sweater became too tight for me.

Nan 'uw' 'ulh hwu 'uhwiin'.

It had become too small.

Nuts'a' skweyul wulh kweyxthut thunu ten susuw' le'shum thunu
swetu, nuw'ushum 'u tthu xi'xthum', susuw' le'shus.

One day, my foster mother put it in a little box and packed it away.

'I tsun wulh ts'isum kwunus 'i wulh hwu q'emi'.

Then I grew older and became a young woman.

Wulh tuw' wulh hith 'i' ni' tsun kwunnuhw kwthu syaays, suw'
lum'tul' 'u kwthu swuy'qe' sutst tuw' mulitul.

I got a job and then I met a man and we got married.

Tl'lim' tst 'uw' 'iyus 'ul' kwunus ni' wulh hwu sta'tul'us.

We were very happily married.

Hwun' xut'u 'i' tst wulh tsqeq 'i' tl'uw' shelhni'alh, 'i' 'iyas
shelhni'allh.

Soon we had a beautiful baby girl.

Nuts'a' skweyul 'i' wulh tetsul tthu 'imushne'tuntst.
One day we had a visitor.

Wulh tetsul thu 'iilh kw'umutham'sh.
My foster mother arrived.

'I' yu kwun'etus tthu syuxtsa' swe'stuhws thu qeq.
She brought a gift for our baby.

Suw' 'amustham'shus 'u tthu xi'xthum' syuxtsa' hwyuxwut nus
'uw' lemut, lemut 'i' quy'e't tthu sun'iw' 'u tthu xthum.
She handed me a gift box, and I opened it and looked to see what was inside the
box.

'I' nilh thunu swew'tu!
It was my little sweater!

Kwunus ni' wulh kwunut sht'es kwus mul'ul 'i' ni' tsun he'kw' 'u
kwthunu s'a'luqw'a', kwutst 'ulh tthu hay 'ul' 'iyus kwutst yu
ts'its'um's.
I touched it and the soft wool reminded me of my sisters and how happy we
were when we were growing up.

Ni' tsun he'kw' tthu sht'es kwsus yath'ulh 'uw' kwe'lus, yath tsun
'uw' ts'uyhw, he'kw' 'u tthu ni' sht'es kwusulh yu they'tus thunu
ten kwus yu 'a'thutus, he'kw' 'u tthu ni' sht'es kws haysulh 'ul'
tl'i'stelum kwunus 'i' yu ts'its'usum' 'u thunu ten.
I remembered how it kept me warm and dry, and how my mother mended it
when it got stretched, and how loved my mother made me feel when I was
growing up.

Hay 'ul' 'uy' nu shqwaluwun kwunus ni' lumnuhw they' nu swetu
ni' s'amustheelt.
I was very happy to see that sweater that was given to me.

Nus nuw' kwunut thu xi'xthum' nem' le'sh nemustuhw 'u tthunu shhw'uwkw'elu nu shni'stuhw tthu tl'i'stuhween', nilh ni' nu shnemustuhw kwunus ni' le'sh.

I took the box and put it in the closet along with my other precious things.

Kwus wulh ts'isum thunu swe' nu mim'ne' st'e 'uw' niis tl'am 'u thu swetu, nus 'i' m'i 'uw' quy'e't nus nuw' 'amust 'u thu swew'tu nilh ni' hwu swe's.

When my child grew bigger and the sweater fit her, I took out the little sweater and gave it to her for her own.

Nu suw' yuthust thunu mim'ne' tt hu ni' sht'e's kwunus ni' wulh kwunnuhw tthey' swetu.

And I explained to my child how I got that sweater,

Kws hays 'ul' ni' tl'i'stelum 'u thunu ten 'i' yath 'uw' 'uy' shqwaluwuns, tl'i' shqwaluwuns, kw'e'lus 'u thu swetu kwunus ni' ha'kwush 'uw' yath.

how I always felt loved by my mother, and how happy and warm I always felt wearing the sweater.

Nus 'uw' hwi' 'a'must thunu mim'ne' 'u tthu niilh sht'es thu 'i' 'u tthu Quw'utsun' sht'es kwus yaay'usth thu swetu.

What I gave my child was a Cowichan sweater.

Nu suw' hay' thust kwunus hay 'ul' tl'i'stuhw kwunus Quw'utsun' mustimuhw.

I was telling her that it was important to know that I am Cowichan.

Suw' yaths 'uw' 'uy' shqwaluwuns yath 'uw' hwya'num'us thunu mim'ne' 'u kwus ha'kwushus they' swetu.

And my child was always happy and smiling when she wore that sweater.

Ni' tsun 'uw' shtatul'stuhw kwsus hay 'ul' 'uy' shqwaluwuns kwus
hwu ha'kwushus they' swetu.

I know how happy she felt wearing that sweater.

Ts'isum thunu mun'u ni' hwu slheni' 'i' tl'uw' wulh tsqeq 'i'
slhelhni'.

My daughter grew to be a lovely young woman who also has a daughter now.

Hee', 'im'. 'Uw' nilh p'e' lhun' ten nilh nilh swe's swetus.

Yes, granddaughter. Your sweater is indeed the one your mother had.

'I' ni' kwu'elh wulh tus 'utl' nuwu.

And so now it's come to you.

Ha' ch tse' hakwush 'i' ni' ch tse' 'uw' shtatul'stuhw kwun's ni'
hays 'ul' tl'i'staam 'u tthun' shhwuhwe'.

When you wear it, you know that you are treasured by your relatives.

'i' yath tse' 'uw' 'uy' 'un' shqwaluwun 'uw' niihw tse' hwu
ha'kwush.

And you will always be happy when you wear it.

Yath ch kwu'elh 'uw' he'kw' kwun's tun'ni' 'utl' Quw'utsun'.

Always remember that you come from Cowichan.

Nilh tse' they' swetu nilh tse' ni' he'kw'sta'mu.

And this sweater will remind you.

Ni' hay.

The end.