

## About the author and illustrator

### **Maria Parker Pascua- Makah**

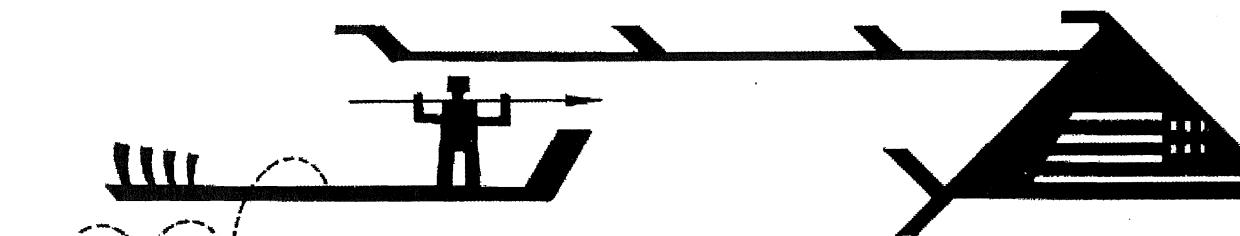
A language specialist for the Makah Culture and Research Center, Maria Parker Pascua is also a cultural arts teacher at Neah Bay High School. Previously, she taught elementary level Makah language classes and was a 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade homeroom teacher.

### **Tyrone Stewart**

Mr. Stewart is a former editor/publisher of *American Indian Crafts and Culture Magazine*. He collaborated with Frederick Dockstader and Barton Wright to create essays for *The Year of the Hopi: Paintings and Photographs by Joseph Mora, 1904-06* for the Smithsonian Institution traveling exhibition service. He assisted in the development of the *Study Guide of the Dakota Collection* for the Smithsonian Institute's National Museum of Natural History. Mr. Stewart is an artist, illustrator, writer and award-winning graphic artist and architectural designer. His Canadian roots include the founders of Quebec City and Chippewa-Cree ancestry.

# Sand Flea In The Side Of A Canoe

By Maria Parker Pascua, Makah  
Illustrated by Tyrone H. Stewart

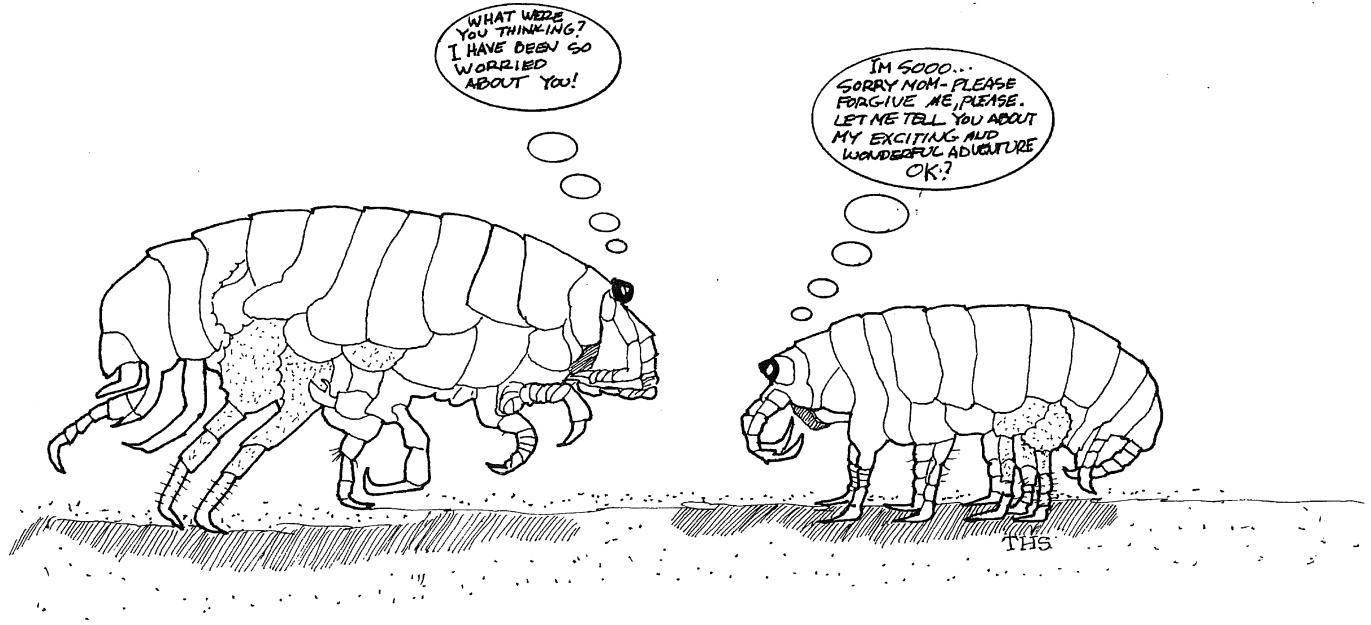


## Glossary of Unfamiliar Terms

- Bone Game: a gambling game. Two teams are each assigned a set of bones made from the foreleg of a deer. The bones fit in a person's hand. One bone in each set is marked, one is unmarked. There are also "tally bones". Traditionally, there are twenty tally bones, split between the teams. Each team assigns a 'pointer'. The purpose of the game is for the pointer to guess which hand the unmarked bone is in as the opposing team sings loudly and manipulates the bones among them. Each wrong guess forfeits a tally bone to the other team, until the one team has all the tally bones. Bets are placed on each round, or the entire game.
- Dentalia: a medium-sized white shell used as a type of currency. Dentalia are difficult to harvest; primarily the Makah and Nootkan gathered them. The shells were strung on a line and measured by the fathom (six feet).
- Dried Berry Cakes: mashed berries spread thinly in a wooden frame and sun dried for winter.  
Similar to fruit roll-ups.
- Name-giving Ceremony: a very important event, usually a type of potlatch. Some names describe the person or their accomplishments, or those accomplishments of their ancestor. Sometimes songs or privileges accompanied the name. The history of the name is explained and special witnesses are selected to remember the name and its details. Usually these witnesses were given a gift or paid for their services.
- Soap Berries: berries that foam when stirred and whipped. Soap berry ice cream is also known as 'Indian Ice Cream.'

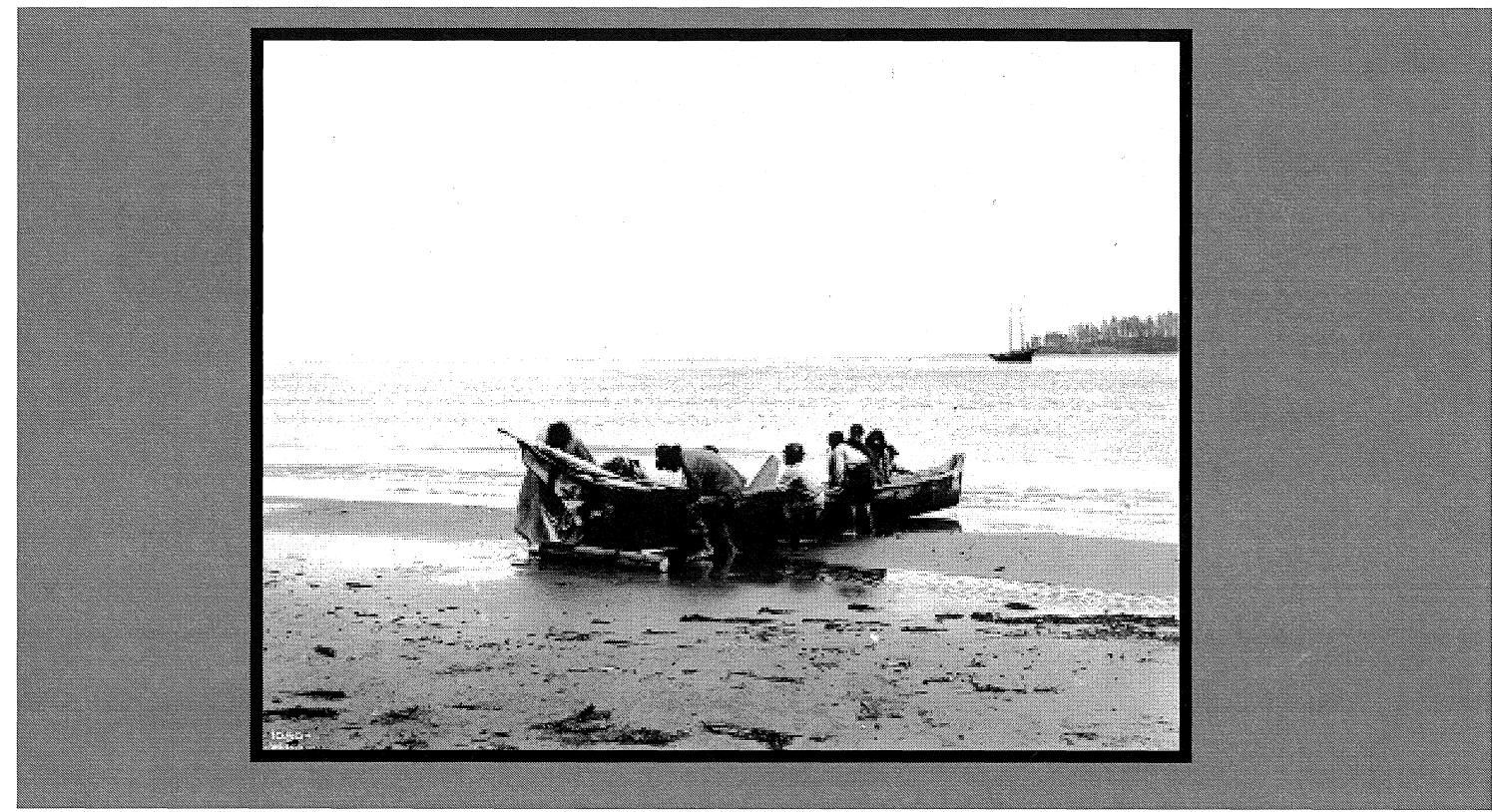
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Of course my mom was right, but I certainly did have some outstanding adventures. In fact, I don't know of another sand flea who has experienced life beyond the beach as much as I have.

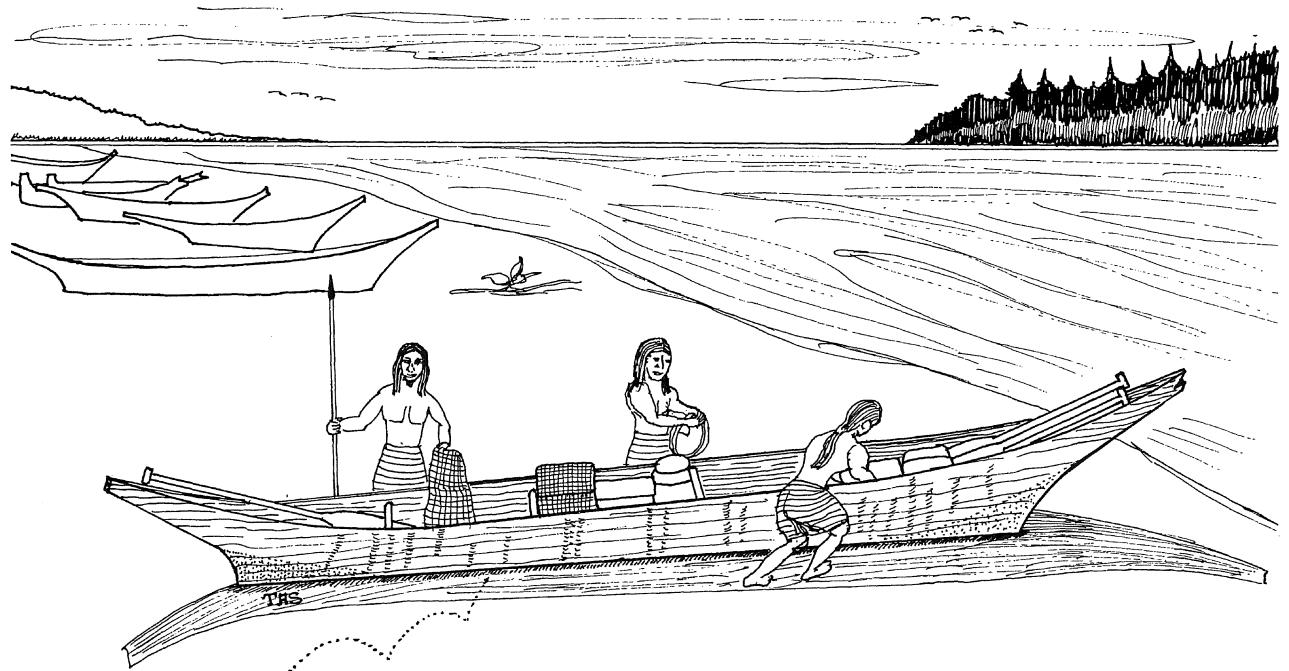
No, I wouldn't change any of my great adventures; and, you know, the whipped soapberry Indian ice cream was worth it! Mmmm, mmm!



The Makah used their large canoes for long-distance travel and for hunting whales. In this photo, taken at Neah Bay, ca 1900, Makah men, women, and children pull their canoe up on the beach on rollers. This canoe also has a cloth sail which is furled in the bow of the canoe. Before European contact, the Makah used cedar bark sails on their canoes.

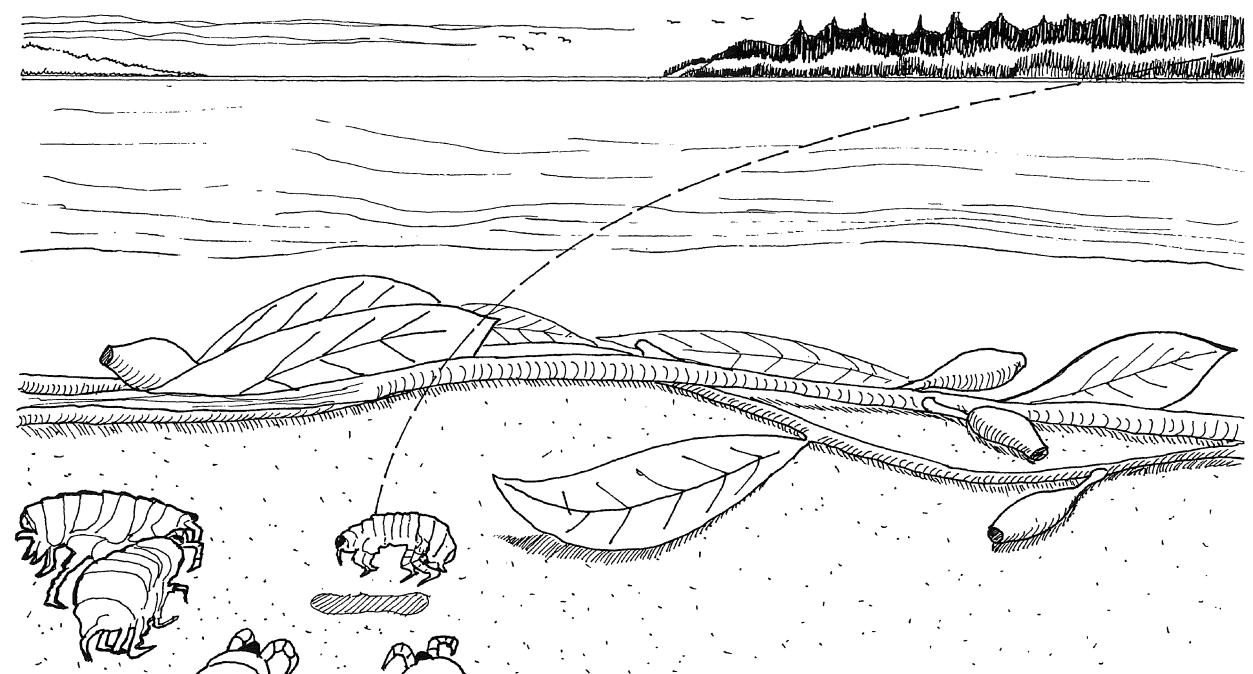
*MSCUA, University of Washington, MOHAI 88.33.113*

## An Exciting Place to Live



Like most sand fleas, I grew up in a big family. I enjoyed hopping around with everyone else, but I also yearned for life beyond the beach.

One day I hopped into a great freight canoe. I knew this canoe had crossed the straits, traveled up the Sound, and had even gone to the outer coast. The owner of the canoe was one of the leading chiefs in the people's village.

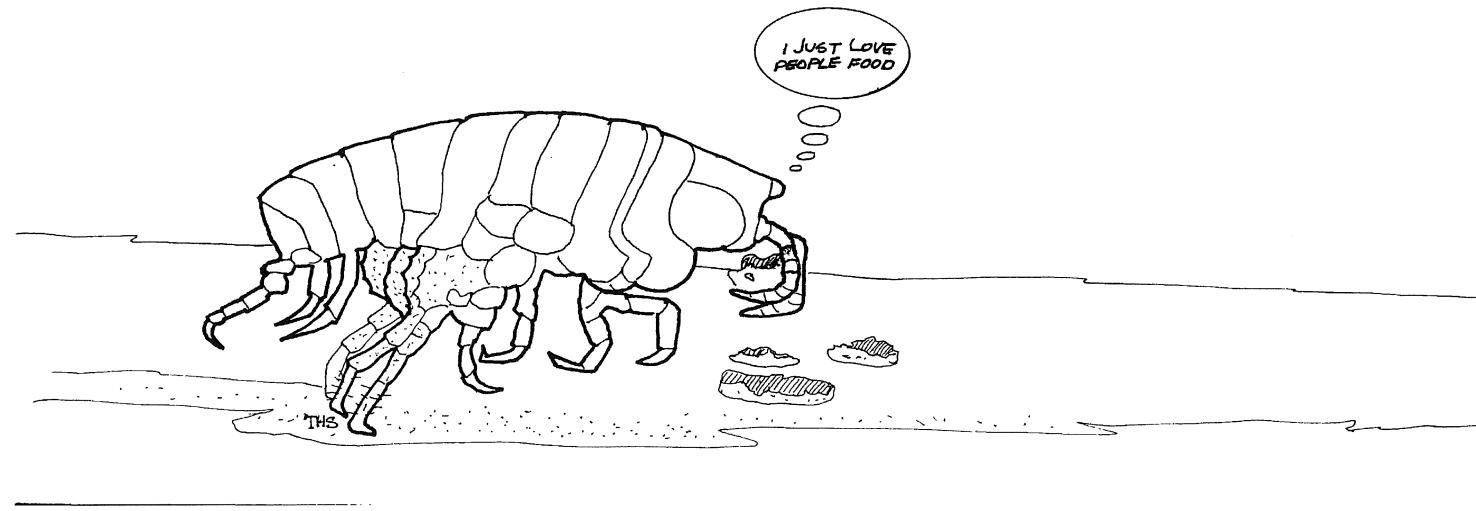


So there I was, back with my great family of sand fleas. And, sure enough, my mom didn't know where I had been. After telling my family all about my journeys in the great freight canoe, my mom gave me this lecture:

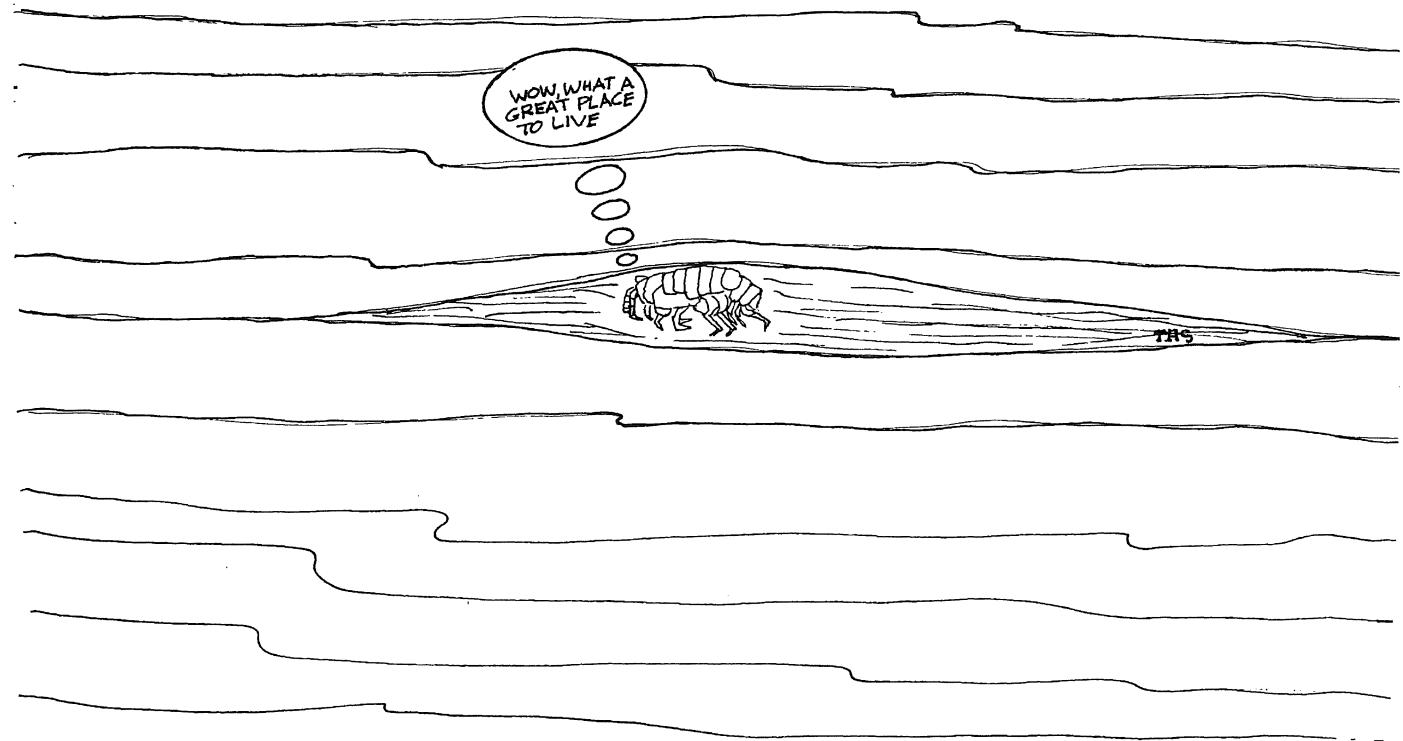
"Don't you know how unsafe it is to live in a canoe crack? Don't you know that the canoe builders repair cracks with melted spruce pitch, flat wooden patches, and ties? You could've been patched into the side of that canoe, and no one would have known where you had gone!"



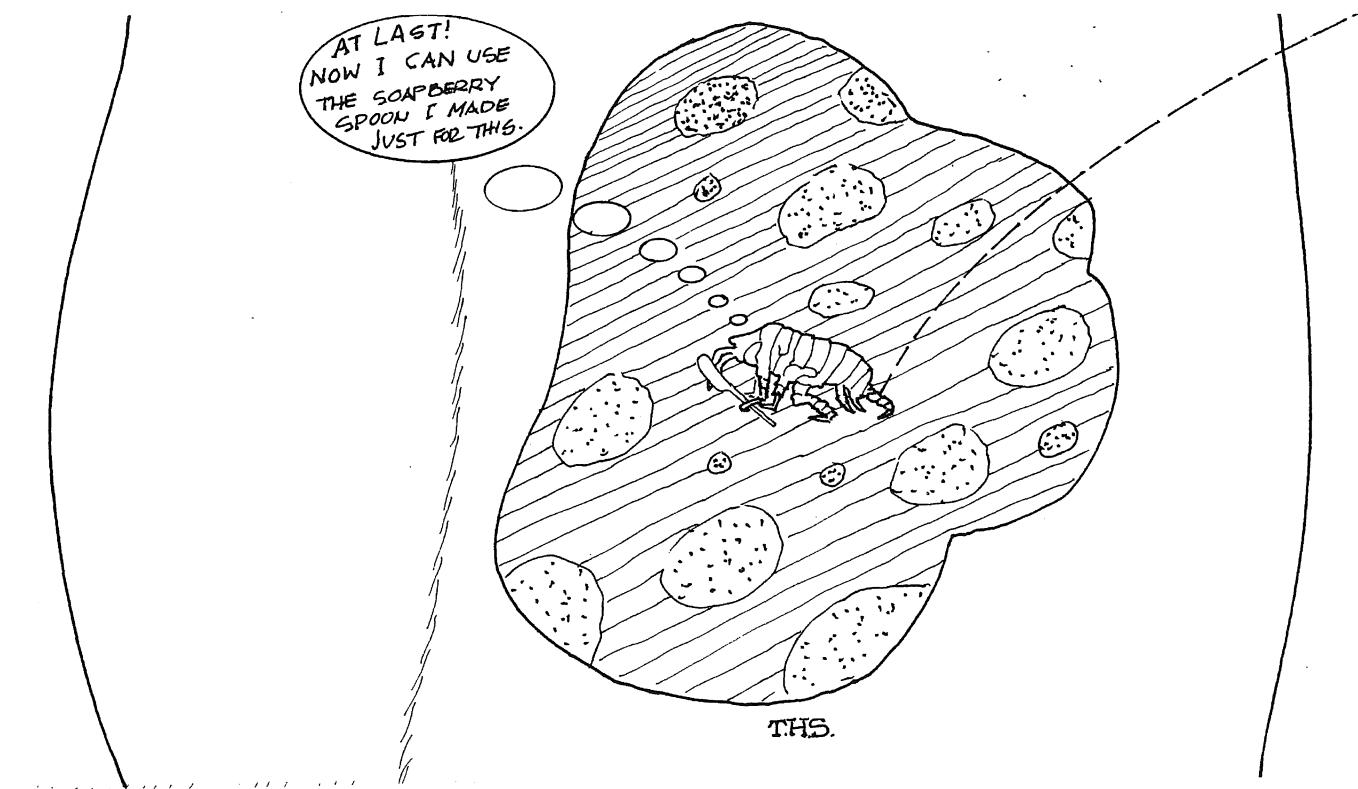
"Hey you!" he said, "You're bugging me. Don't you bite my leg! Does your mom know where you are? I don't think so!" And, without waiting for my reply, he scooped me up and stepped out of the canoe that was now beached on the land. He plopped me in the middle of a clump of kelp.



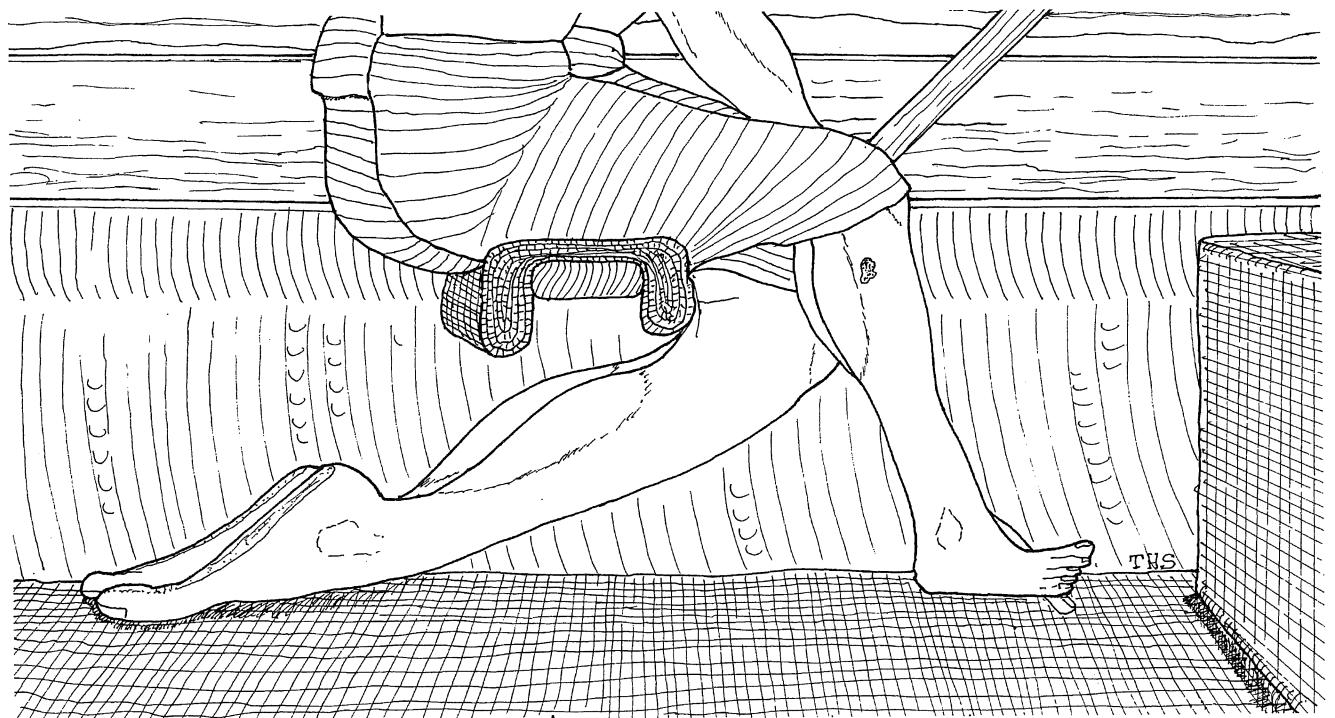
Speaking of people, I just love it when they drop a bit of food. In addition to wanting to see new sights, I also love to try different morsels of food. I have had good luck scooping up a variety of tasty meals, simply by hanging around the people.



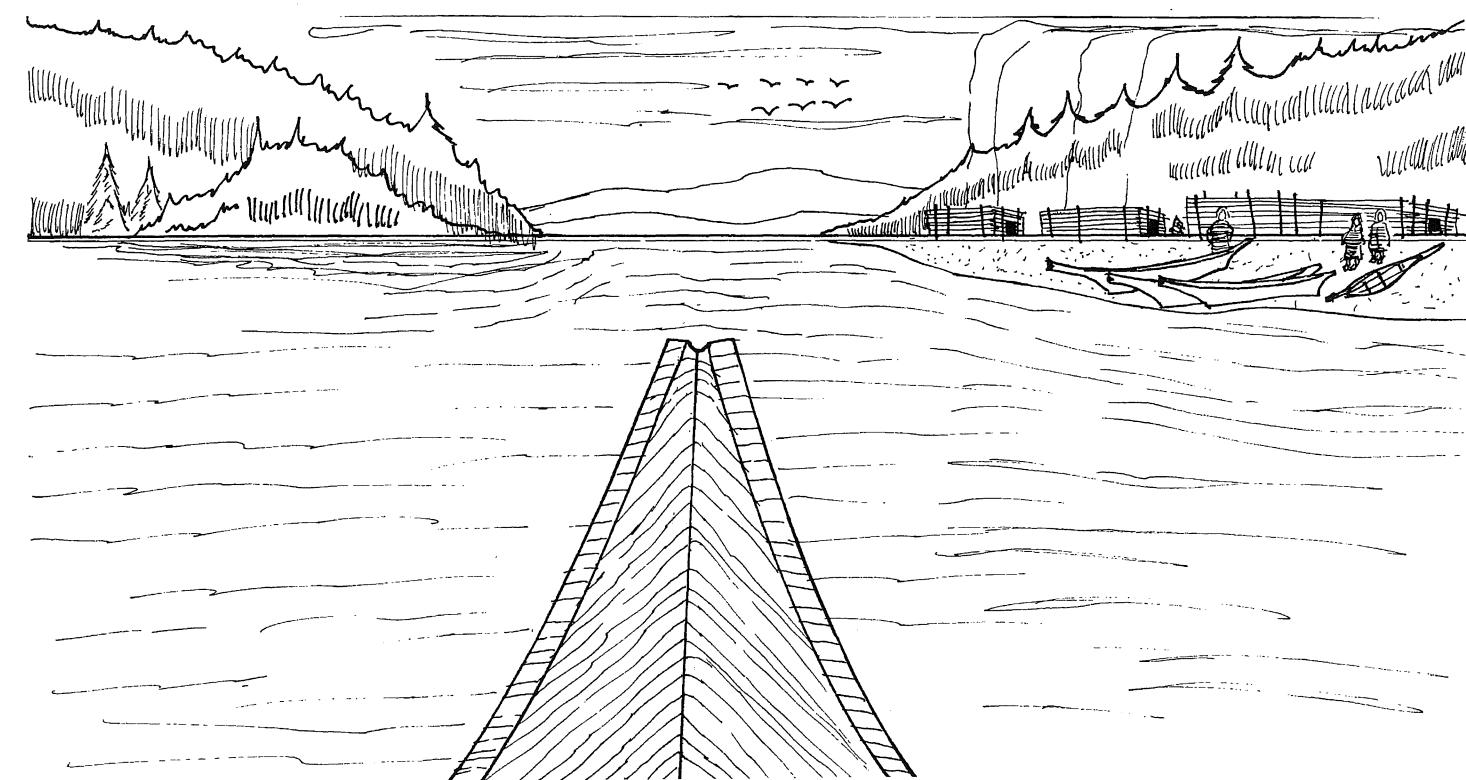
As I was saying, I hopped into the freight canoe and found a small crack in the side of the canoe. The crack was so small, no one had noticed it yet. I liked that little space because it fit me just right. I decided to claim this little crevice for my new home. I could not imagine that anyone would notice me there.



Quietly, I hopped down from my hideaway. I hit my target dead-on! I did not make a sound. But the boy's eyes were quicker than I was. He caught sight of my movement. And there I was, with the undeniable evidence of soap olallie, or soapberries, covering my mouth.

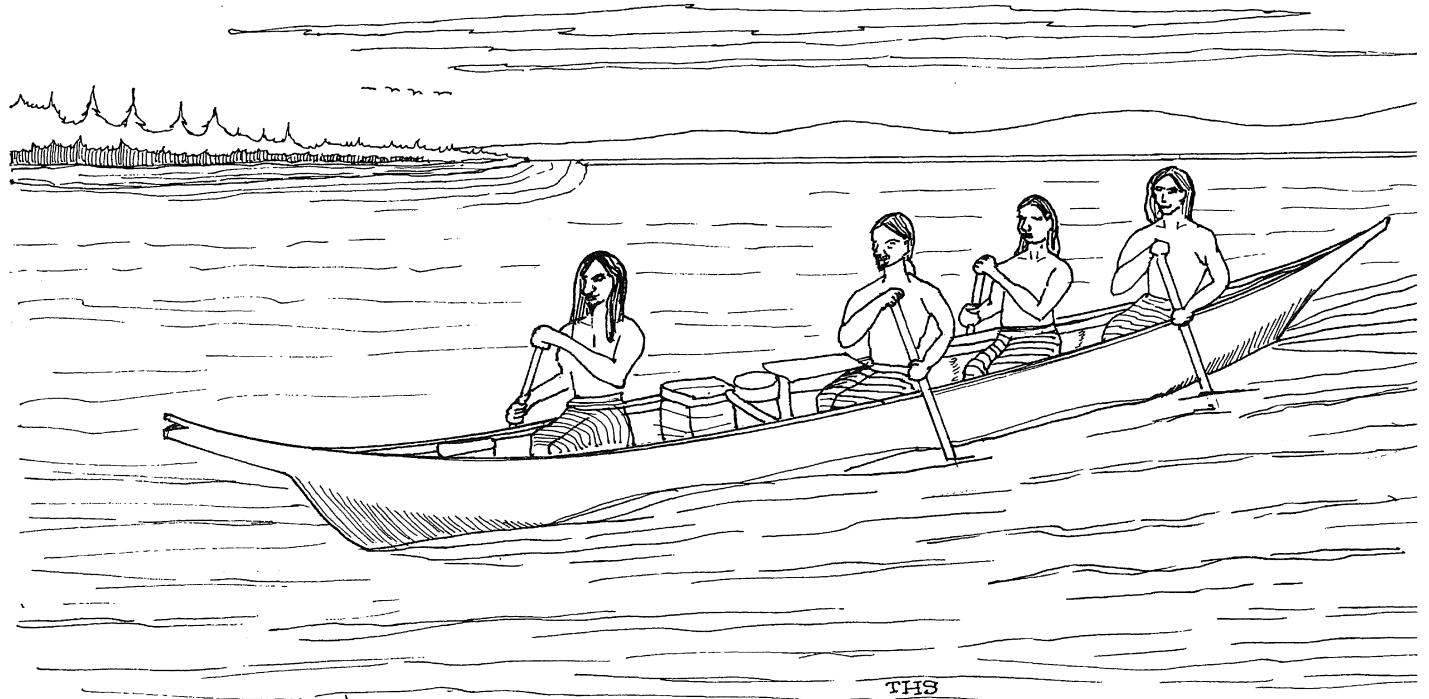


On our journey home, a boy sat by me. I noticed that he had a splotch of soapberry ice cream on the side of his leg. He did not realize the foamy berry smear was there. I could not, however, stop gazing at the splotch. I stared at the splotch all the way home. Just before we reached our shore, I saw my chance. I couldn't resist. My insatiable appetite became my demise.



I couldn't help but feel a part of all the people's activities as I traveled with them to various places. They hadn't discovered that I was there, and that was fine by me. I enjoyed their company, and I enjoyed traveling.

### A Wedding Potlatch



One time, I went to a wedding potlatch. We were transporting the groom. His father owned the canoe. We had to travel far to get a bride from another village.



Two families traveled together on this occasion. So, on this trip, there were kids in the freight canoe. Well, I kind of like kids. They remind me of me—a little bit jumpy at times.



One of our crewmembers was a witness for the naming. Even though everyone boarded the canoe with the potlatch gifts they had received, the witness received a few more items than everyone else. He was given more, because his job required more responsibility. Many people attended the gathering, but he was a *witness*. He was responsible for remembering this name as well as the history and lineages linked with the name. He also must remember how the new recipient had a right to that name.



People weddings can be so complicated. Besides the marriage agreement, a lot of business took place at this wedding. The bride's father gave his daughter and new son-in-law some cherished treasures—he gave them rights to certain songs, dances, and names. The bride and groom were greatly honored.

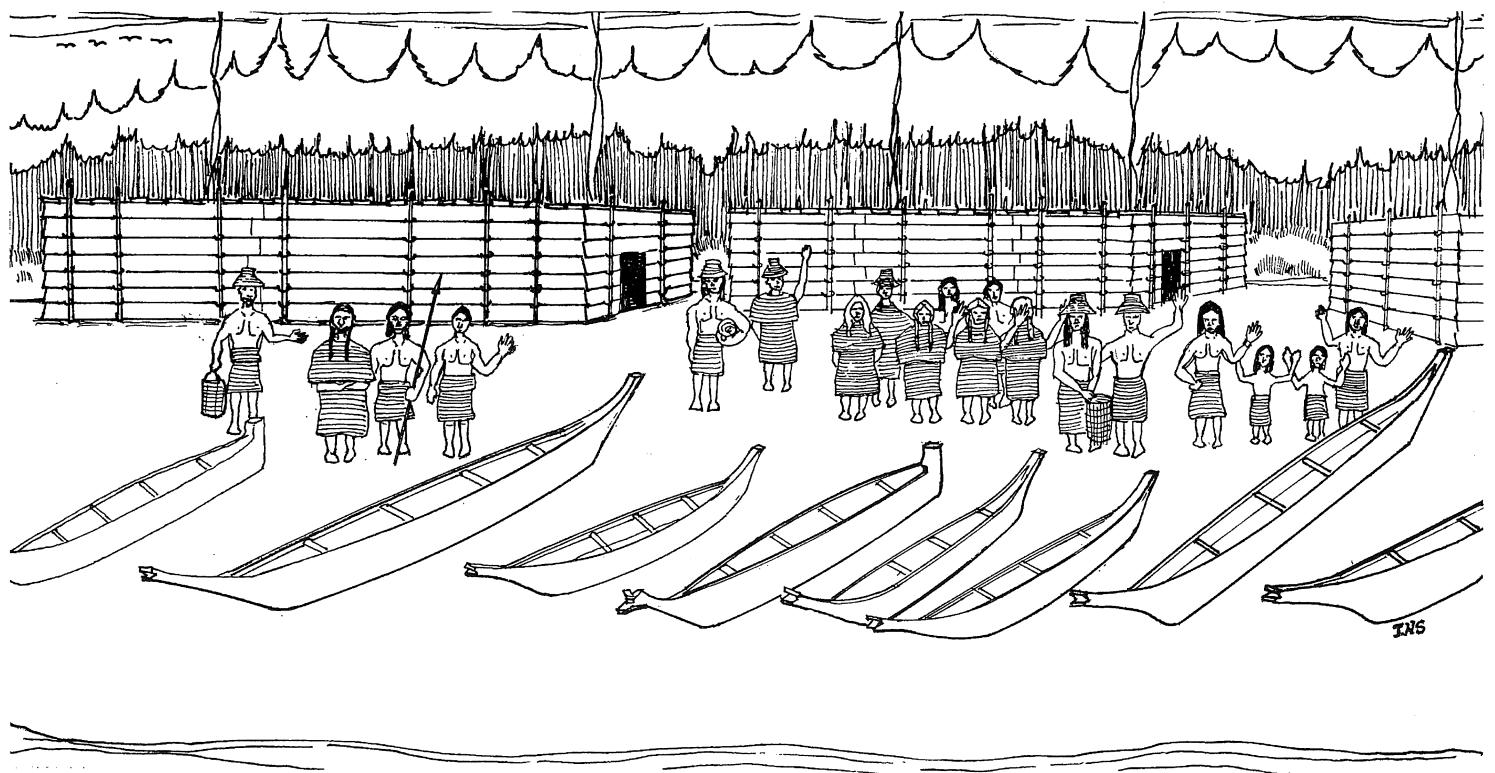


And what an expensive bride! We had to bring a lot of blankets, dentalia, and food to show the bride's tribe that our groom was wealthy and worthy enough to take care of the new bride.



What a feast! I kept jumping up so I could see above the sides of the canoe. I could see all of the activities on the beach. There were dancers wearing masks to represent wolves, eagles, serpents, and even people. It was so awesome to watch all of those dances, and I couldn't take my eyes off those dancers! The songs and drumming echoed in my little sand flea head. My heart felt the love and honor these people had for the one who was getting a family's ancestral name.

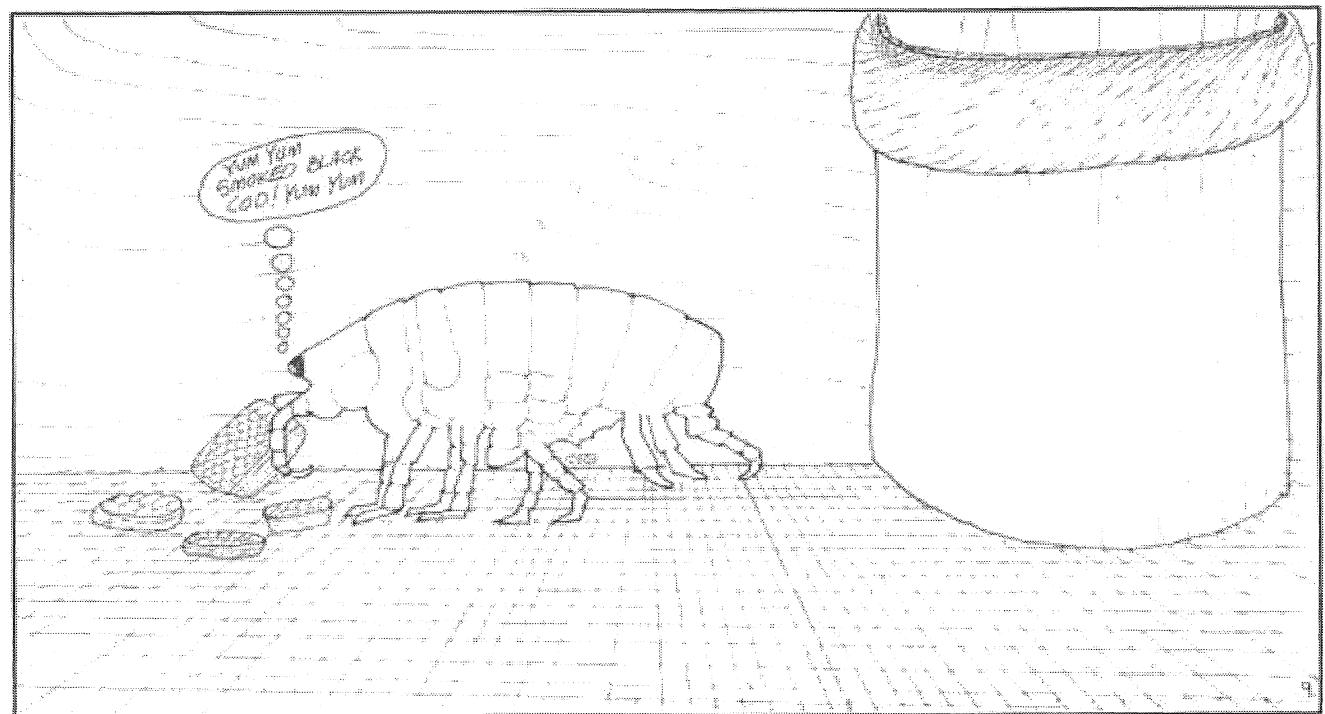
### The Final Voyage



My last voyage was a trip to a name-giving ceremony at another village.

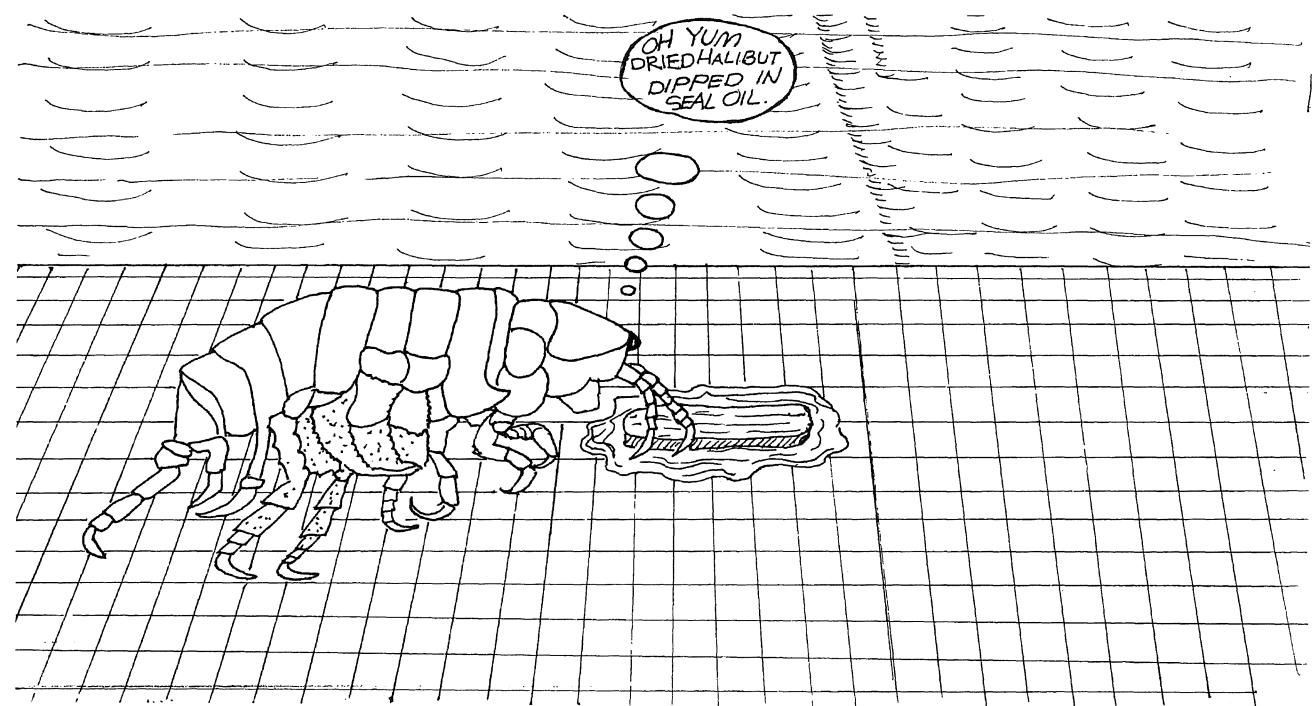


There were gifts galore. When all was said and done, we went home, still with a loaded canoe. Not only did we carry our young man's bride, but we also took a great pile of gifts that the bride's tribe gave to us!

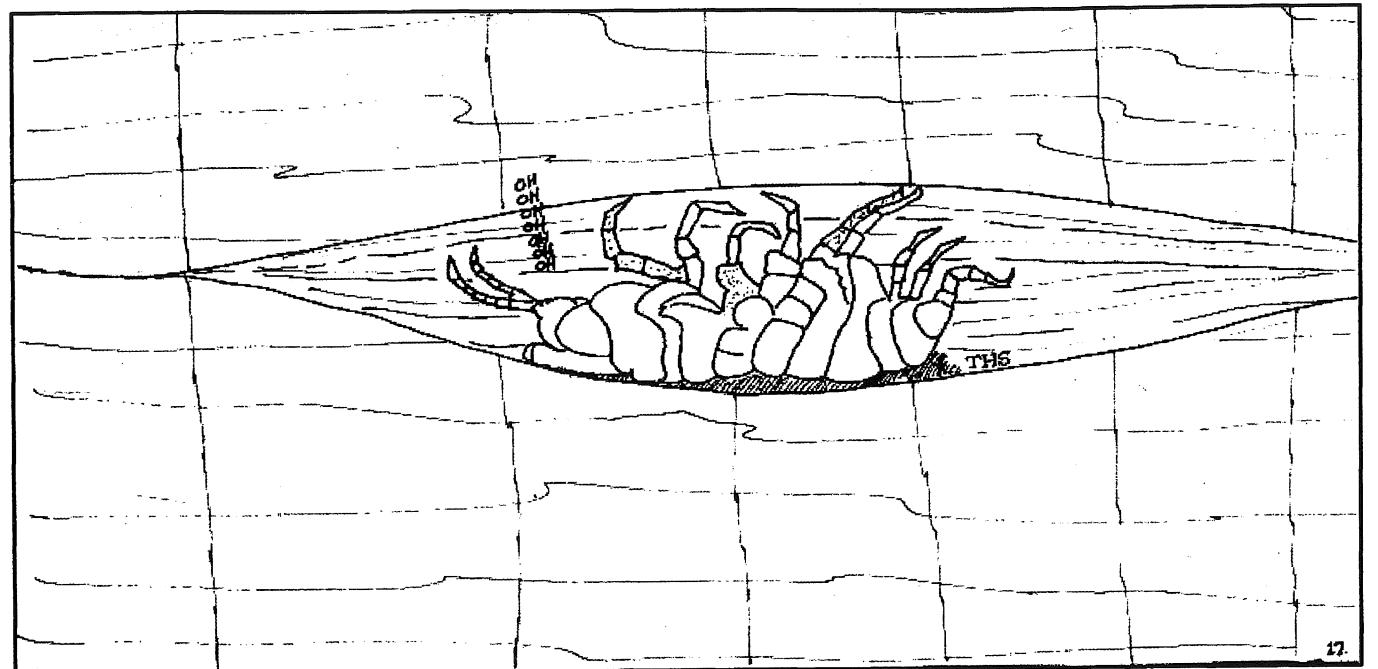


Did I mention the food at this wedding feast? There was so much food, and the hosts gave us food to take home and share with our families.

My favorite morsel from this trip was the smoked black cod crumbs. Mmmm, mmm!

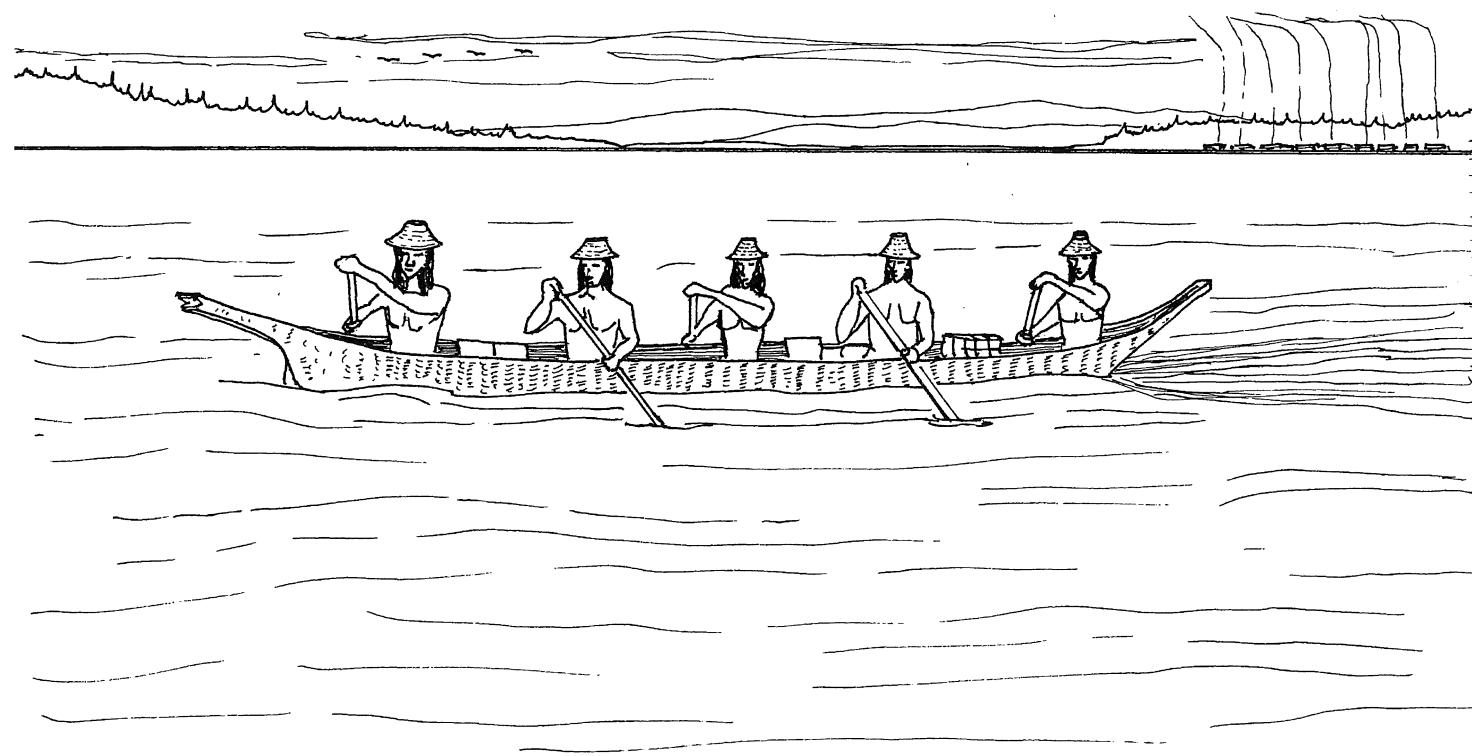


When we returned, we brought back with us dried seal meat, seal oil, and dried halibut. We had traded our dogfish oil and smoked clams for these new things. Ah yes. Variety is the spice of life. How I appreciated sampling this delicious fare on a nice, calm day. No longer seasick, I helped myself to a bit of dried halibut dipped in seal oil. Mmmm, mmm!



Have you ever heard the expression "green around the gills?" When fish are green around the gills, they are very sick. Well, sand fleas are not even remotely related to the fish family. Still, I was "green around the gills"—I was very sick. I laid for a long time in my freight canoe crack. The harsh waves gradually subsided. Soon the canoe was only rocking gently—relief at last! All cargo was secure in the lidded boxes. The top layer of canoe mats got wet, and so did we. The storm now behind us, we went on to our destination.

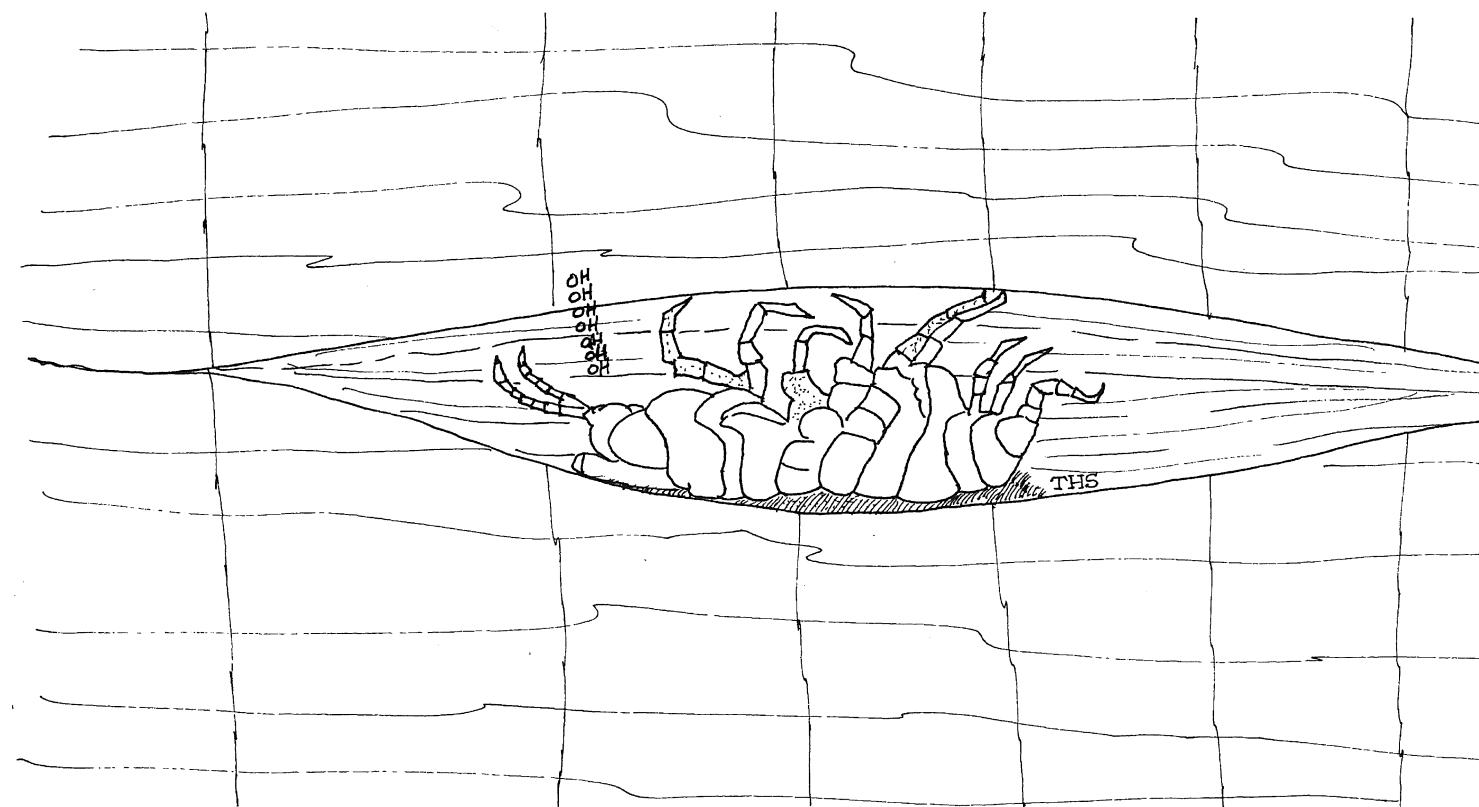
### A Bone Game



There was another memorable trip when the men went to the bone game. I kind of liked being "one of the guys." There was an electrifying excitement in the canoe. Everyone expected to have a good time.



Sure enough, our expectations were met. The bone game turned out to be quite an exciting event. When we arrived at the other village, it was different than when we landed for the wedding potlatch. No one dressed in special clothing or made lengthy speeches. Don't get me wrong—people were excited to see our canoe crew, but they were more excited to play the game!



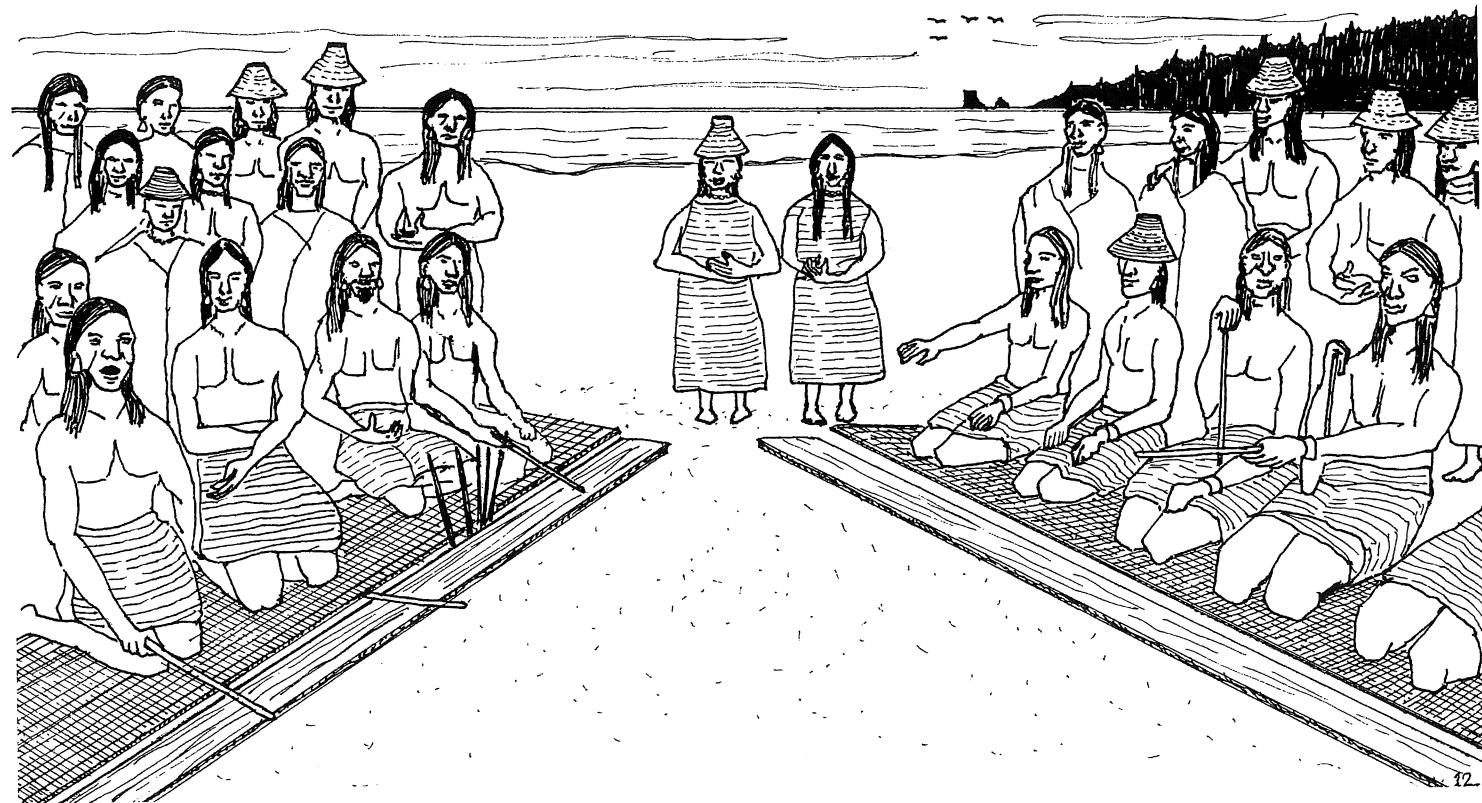
Fortunately, the crew was so skillful, they were able to slice through the rough waves and paddle on until a shelter could be found. We finally pulled in to a secluded cove to wait for the storm to pass.

### The Storm

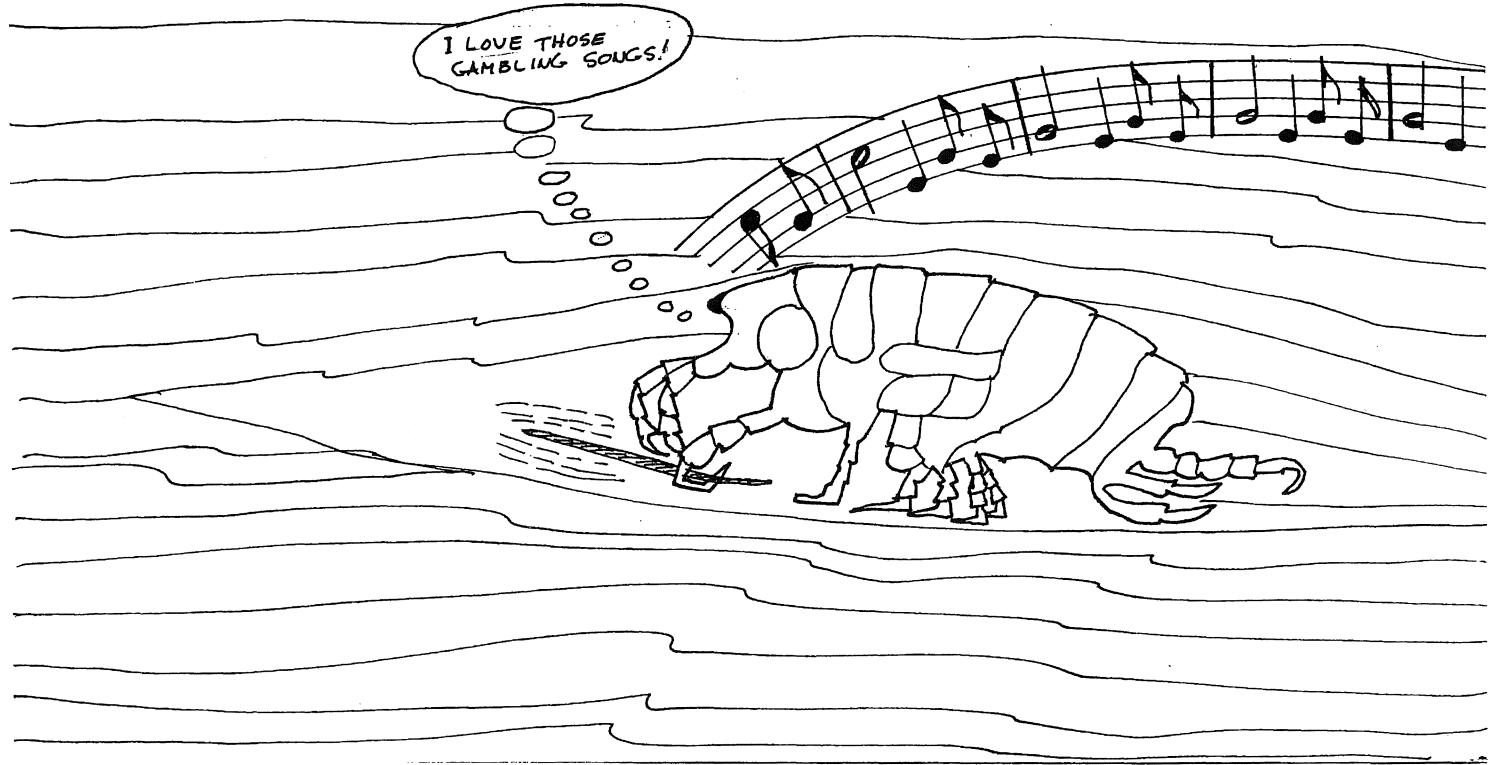


My most terrifying experience was a storm at sea.

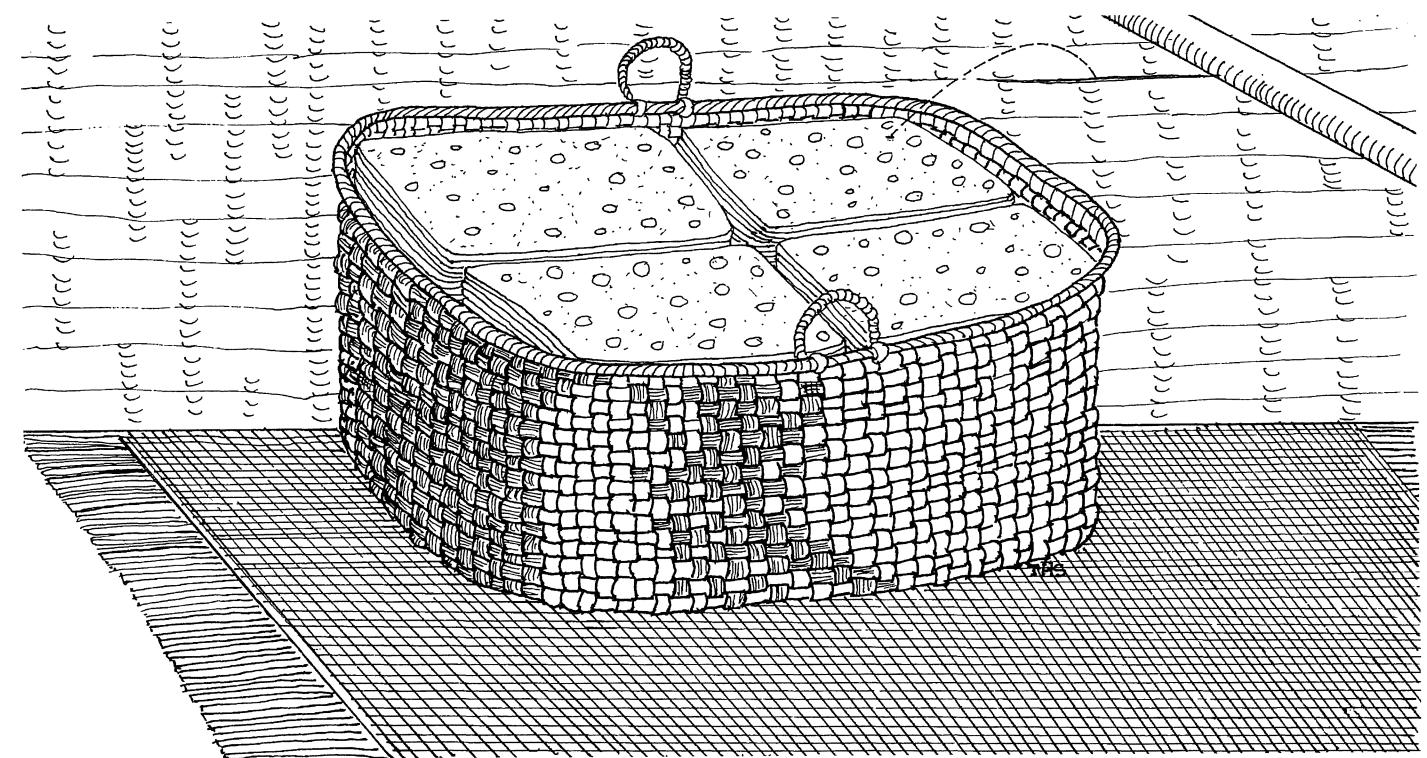
We were going on a trading trip. We carried smoked clams and dogfish oil to trade. A wind began to pick up, and a horrible storm blew in. I was almost sloshed overboard by the bailer! What a close call. I almost lost my life.



They set up on the beach, with each tribe sitting across from each other. What songs! What drumming! What a din! Bones were flying, bets were wagered, tally sticks were thrown.



The songs vibrated through my little home in the canoe crack. I just couldn't help singing, drumming, and making my own lucky guesses too. I really pounded hard with a splinter on the side of the crack, as though it was the gunnel of my own little canoe.



It was fun to stay up later than usual—these games can be very long. Of course, we won.

One of our winnings was a basketful of dried berry cakes. I crawled out of the side of the canoe and rode in the berry cake storage basket just long enough to get my fill. Mmmm, mmm!