

ANIMAL MOTHER'S MOUNTAINS

Angela Sidney

After those animals were born,
she made a big swing for them, a trampoline.
She called it *akeyí*, that's *den k'e*, Tagish language.
She made big sport day for them because she's going to leave them.
Falltime, she made it from bull moose skin.
There's no moose before that! Where she got that, I don't know!
Anyway, that's the story. It was bull moose skin.
She put it up right in the middle of Bennett Lake.
It had four strings.
One went to Grey Mountain, *Takaadí T'ooch'*. That means "Charcoal Mountain" in Tlingit.
One went to the mountain behind Chooutla school, *Métáatl'e Shéch'ée*.
That means "wind on the forehead" in Tagish language.
One went to Fourth of July Mountain: *Médzih Dzéle'* – that means "Caribou Mountain" –
and one went to that mountain we call *Chílih Dzété'* – "Gopher Mountain."

They walked out on that line that ties the swing.
The first one to come is moose. Even that narrow, they walk on it!
Bull moose sings his song first:
"What is this they put out for me?
I'm walking on it, look at me."

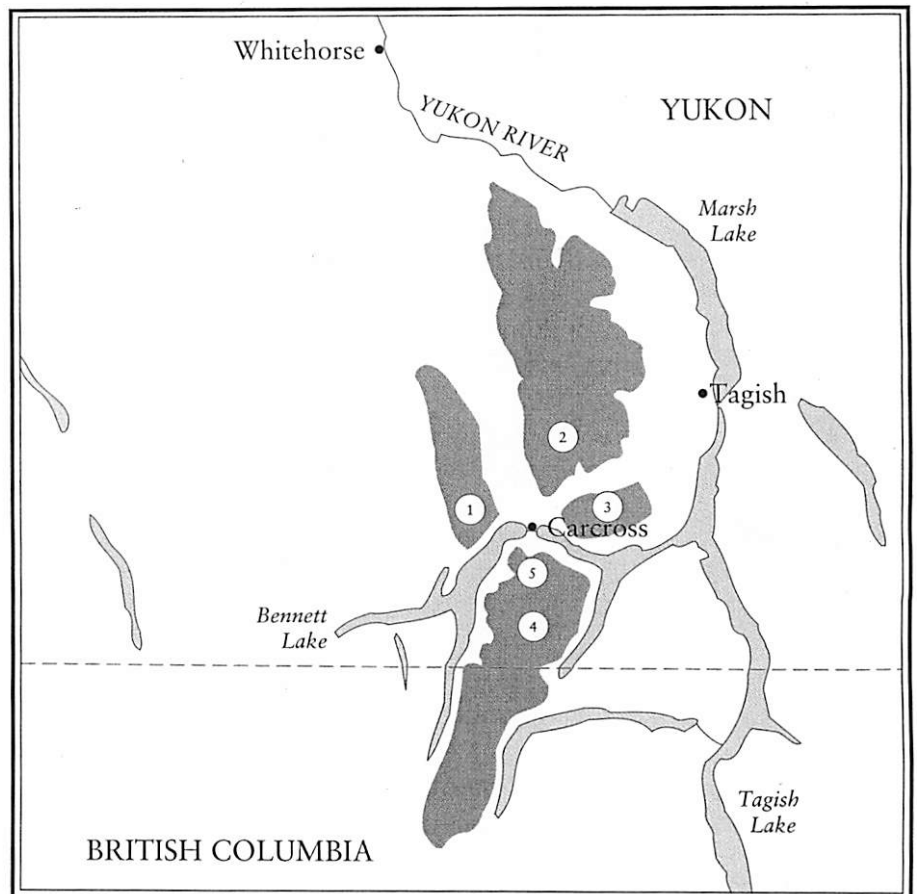
They say he stepped through the skin he's so heavy.
Then the cow comes, then the calf. Each one has its song.
That calf can hardly stand up!

Then the caribou came with its young one –
by that time, they had young ones.
Then came sheep. All that were born, they sat on the swing.
Then wolf came and sang his song.
Then came the rabbit song. He says,
"My brothers always do that for me.
They chop down trees and give me food
and I always play around with it."

After she got through with that skin,
she told them she's going to part with them now.
"You go all into different countries.
Go!" she said.

Somebody was watching all this from way back there.
His name is *Tudech'ade*.

Animal Mother's Mountains. 1 Taaghahi (Tagish) "facing the water" / Takaadi T'ooch' (Tlingit) "charcoal rockslide"; 2 Métáatl'e Shéché'ée (Tagish) "wind blowing on the forehead" / Yaadéduwanúk (Tlingit) "blowing against the face"; 3 Médzih Dzéte' (Tagish) "caribou mountain" / Watsix Shaayí (Tlingit) "caribou mountain"; 4 Chílíh Dzéte' (Tagish) "gopher mountain" / Tsálgi Shaayí (Tlingit) "gopher mountain". At the north end of Chílíh Dzéte' is 5 Xóots Tláa Ta.eetí (Tlingit) "brown bear mother's sleeping place."



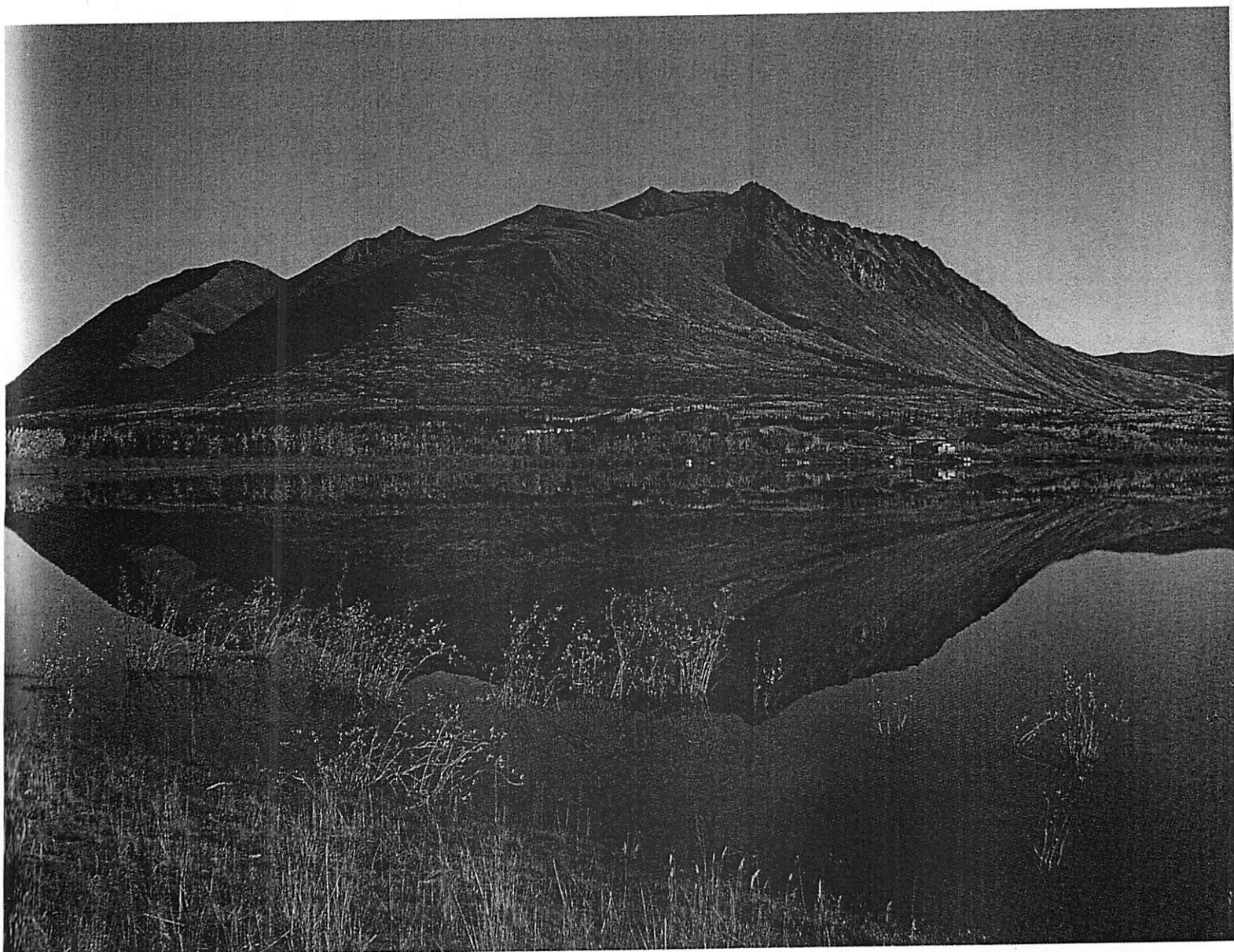
That means "duck head feathers" in Tagish language.
He saw when she parted with them.

She didn't go very far –
right to that *Chílíh Dzéte'* at Carcross.
She camped there – that's where she slept.
They call it "grizzly bear mother's camp" – *Xóots Tláa Ta.eetí*.

Next day, she went to another mountain.
On top of the mountain, you see there's two big dips.
At the first camp she wasn't comfortable in that bed.
So she moved a little way from there to that Lanning Mountain –
Kwákah Dzéte'.

From there she went to Teslin – Three Aces, they call that mountain.
Right there they said there's a little bridge leads to a little mountain.
At that mountain they say there's a dip there, too.
Green grass grows around it.

From there, I don't know. . . .
That's as far as I remember.



Métáatl'e Shéch'ée, seen from across Nares Lake. The Tagish name for this mountain means "wind on the forehead." It now appears on maps as Caribou Mountain, while the mountain known as *Médzih Dzéte'*, "Caribou Mountain" in the Tagish language, has acquired a different name in English. *Photo by Julie Cruikshank.*