

Descant

I

hiding
here i stand
from the crowds that
loose themselves
in papal cheer and

holy mementos
while my sisters and
brothers do their
quaint little
Indian dances for
the high white
priest and the media

coverage reminds
us again of
the wild life before
christianity and
visions of
ecstatic martyrdom

at Sainte-Marie
they pray

II

in Fort Simpson, in the mist
they wait, the Indians, for
His Holiness to arrive
and all i want
to do is to reach
up and touch the
black wings of raven

and then lie myself
down, press
into the Earth
and listen to her
rhythms while
the Thunderers
and the Sun
sing to me, and

Grandmother Moon
chants her
ancient descant

III

storytellers say
the Trickster disappeared
with the newcomers' advent

Roberta Jamieson

A Profile

Editor's Note: Just as we were going to press, Premier David Peterson announced the appointment of Roberta Jamieson as Ontario's new ombudsman.

Roberta Jamieson, 37-years old, is a woman with a cause. She would like to see dependency, poverty, suicide, sickness, alcoholism and illiteracy replaced with self-sufficiency, equitable standards of living, happiness, health and responsibility. She also firmly believes that she has a part to play in helping to make this dream a reality.

While Roberta, who is a Mohawk, was growing up on the Six Nations Reserve, she wanted to become a doctor because her great uncle had been one and her father had wanted to be one. Her father had a profound influence on her life: she remembers well his questioning mind and his great determination. In 1970, she became a pre-med student at McGill University in Montreal and chose to live on the Kahnawake Reserve just outside the city because she wanted to be among her own people. (Roberta strongly feels that we sustain our culture best by maintaining ties with each other). While studying at McGill, she followed the James Bay

hydro-electric project court case and was so affected emotionally by the proceedings that she vowed to acquire the skills necessary to become part of the fight for Native rights. She then applied to the University of Western Ontario's law school and in 1976 became the first Native woman in Canada to receive a Bachelor of Laws degree. Roberta ar-

titled with the federal Canadian Indian Rights Commission. When the Indian Commission of Ontario came into being in 1978, she became executive assistant to Ontario Supreme court Justice E.P. Hartt whom she later replaced in 1985. This made her the first woman and the first Native to serve as Indian Commissioner of Ontario. Three years later, Roberta served as senior mediator and chairperson for commission negotiations with Natives and government. In 1982, she was asked to sit on behalf of all the chiefs of Canada as a non-voting member on the special Parliamentary Committee on Native self-government — another first (only parliamentarians had been asked to sit on the committee). Roberta has been involved in such crucial issues as land claims, policing, fishing rights, self-government. And she still hasn't forgotten medicine: in 1984 she enrolled in medical school at McMaster University.

Roberta's family life is deeply intertwined with her career. She and husband, Tom Hill, sit down regularly to plan their

hectic schedules and to divide responsibilities. Daughter, Jessica, is very cognizant of mom's activities and often asks profound questions about them. Roberta is held in high regard by all who know her — friends, co-workers, etc. She has deep commitment to her work and challenges us to join her in envisioning a new Canada "in which First Nations hold their rightful place."

