My eyes were shut so tightly that I could see tiny shapes appear in blues and yellows on my eyelids. My hands clenched the top of my rolled-up wool blanket as I lay in bed waiting for sunrise. This would be my last day here at St. Mary's Mission and I couldn't understand how to feel. I had spent 10 years learning the white ways and I was thankful for my knowledge, but my heart ached and longed to be with my family.

There were other girls, older and younger than me who hated everything here. They hated what was taken from us and they felt injustice in the way we were treated. I watched their anger build through the years, and then die like a wounded animal will do when its heart is no longer in the fight.

I am always alone; I never join the other girls when they talk; I just watch. Now leaving, I can see that I know everyone, but no one knows me. I think maybe I will belong better with my family. Maybe they are watchers, too. I realize suddenly that they don't know me either.

Because I am sixteen now, I can't go to school at St. Mary's. I was only in school to learn white ways so I could become a good wife. That's what I understood from the others. I don't think I want to be a wife; I don't know what a "wife" is supposed to do back home.