The old trees reached high into the air; the branches were so thick I could not see the sky. Moss grew on everything and the ground was soft as I walked through it. The smell lifted my heart into my throat. I could hardly breathe, there was so much air. I touched everything as I found my way through the forest. I thought of my grandmother who had once told me that many years ago people fell from the sky and created us; they were our ancestors, and they lived only in the wilderness of this beautiful place. Today, I understood where I came from.

When the sun came down, I went back home. The doors of our house were left open and I could smell food as I approached. My mother stood in front of a small pile of nickels that were placed on the wooden table we ate. She looked at me, "Come here my beautiful baby," her hand out and her face encouraging. She piled some of the nickels into my hand, and we left for the Big House.

I could feel the drumming as we came close to this huge building in the middle of the reserve. I had a feeling that something was about to happen to me, but I didn't know what. As we entered through the heavy cedar doors, I was deafened by the Song that poured out of the people inside. I followed my mother closely and tried to copy her actions. We handed out money to the families who had stayed here during the spring.

Around the fire the danced. There were masks and feathers; everyone was singing and chanting. Their voices went high and then low. I felt their spirits penetrate my heart; it was unstoppable as the smoke carried their voices through the holes in the roof. They pounded the ground with their feet as they switched directions and kept low to floor like warriors in a hunt. I wanted to join; I wanted to be a warrior, and my eyes were alive with passion.

Sitting in this huge building up high on the benches, with all of these Indians, made me feel safe. The 13 tribes that made up Quw’utsun’ were all here supporting each other and showing respect. I didn't know that people could live like this. I was so proud, in this moment, that I was a part of this place where all was spiritual and respectful. This was not a white world.

As we left the Big House, I could smell the smoke in my hair and on my clothes. I was alive, and I was Quw’utsun'. We walked