

# Bringing Métis Children's Literature to Life—Better That Way

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**Overview of Story:** *Better That Way* captures, in poetry, the essence of growing up, our wonders and special experiences with our family, and those around us.

## Themes in this book:

- Poetry
- Growing up
- Our wonders/making memories/things we love
- Sacred act of love
- Family
- Things aren't always what they seem to be

## Possible Curriculum connections:

Language Arts

- View, comprehend, and respond
- Poetry: free verse
- Simile/metaphor

Science

- Constellation

Social Studies

- Historical contexts: residential schools
- Families
- Cultures and traditions
- European influence
- Canadian identity

Health/Physical Education

- Positive and negative acts that affect our lives (healthy mind and body)



**Before Reading:** Look at the cover of the book. Discuss the image and what it may evoke. Ask the students what some of their favourite memories or experiences are with their mother/father/guardian. What creates memories?

**During Reading:** Read page by page and discuss each one as something that you might not do every day, but when you do it, it becomes a special memory.

1. Licking salt/friends with cows: How do you make friends with animals?
2. Swimming/clothes on: What activities do you do that make you feel great?
- 3 & 4. Frosted window/father returning/scoop up in the air: What makes you happy when one of your parents come home after being away?
5. Hide/adults: Where do you go to get away in a quiet space?
6. Rooftop/moon: What do you like to look at in the sky?
- 7, 8, and 9: What kind and generous things do you do to help our environment?



10. Steal peanut butter: Tell a story about residential school and not being fed well so sometimes kids would sneak down and steal food. Talk about why they wouldn't just ask for a snack.
11. Mother's love/immensity: How does your caregiver show you love?
12. Believe what you say/say nothing: Discuss the meaning of this statement

**After Reading:**

Sensory Alert Lesson: Go through the book one more time, but this time have the students discuss the senses being used on each page. Record some of the vocabulary they may share.

- Choose your favourite page or image that you connect to and create your own three-to-four line free verse poem. (Free verse has no set conventions for punctuation or structure. They need not rhyme or have a distinctive rhythm. The lines don't need to conform to any pattern. Words choice is important, and should evoke strong images, mood, and emotion. Put all the poems together in a booklet for future independent reading.

