Sometimes it is hard for me to be in college because no one in my family encourages me to continue my education.

When I arrived in Montreal, I didn't expect life to be very different from my community back home. The weather is a lot warmer and streets and buildings are everywhere. Traffic lights were new to me. At first I didn't know which lights represent what. Fortunately, I soon became adapted to this new environment.

When I haven't been home for a while, I crave a nice frozen arctic char and caribou meat. I sometimes feel as if I haven't eaten properly if I haven't eaten Inuit food. Imagine you're stranded on a small island somewhere on Hudson Bay. You would crave a hot meal of steak, and baked potatoes, and a nice hot bath. It's like that for me, except I'm in a big crowded city where I can't fish or hunt.

My daily life is totally different down south, too. First thing in the morning, I take my son, Andrew, who is two years old, to the day-care, and from the day-care I commute to the college by bus. When my day ends at school, I do my assignments before I pick up Andrew from the day-care. In the evening, I finish my remaining home work when my son is asleep, trying to finish what I have to do before another big assignment is due.

My great-great grandmother lived in seal skin tents and struggled to survive. My grandmother saw the changes when the Europeans came to the Arctic. Now, I'm facing different challenges—challenges that didn't exist during my great grandmother's time. I struggle to make good grades and raise my child at the same time. Using my ancestors' will to survive, I think I can get my degree.

Rhoda Kokiaepik comes from Inukjuak, Quebec. She has just successfully completed her first year at John Abbott College in the social sciences program.

PATTI FLATHER

Winter Solstice for Housewife/Woman/Mother/Other

After eight and still dark when Erin climbs in asks, is Sophie finished eating? yes, you can cuddle then fall back to sleep because nowhere to be by eight-thirty or nine those times when others wage-earners are commanded to appear for duty after nine and dawn light trickles in ahhh after ten and finally up for pink clouds blue sky sunrise at ten after ten to be exact like it says in today's Whitehorse Star so just five hours and twenty-seven minutes of daylight before dusk dark night the kind of day to cut some branches of wild rose hips and northern sage then light a candle to celebrate the return of light

Patti Flather is a writer who has lived in Whitehorse since 1988. She currently runs a freelance journalism business and writes plays, poetry and short fiction.